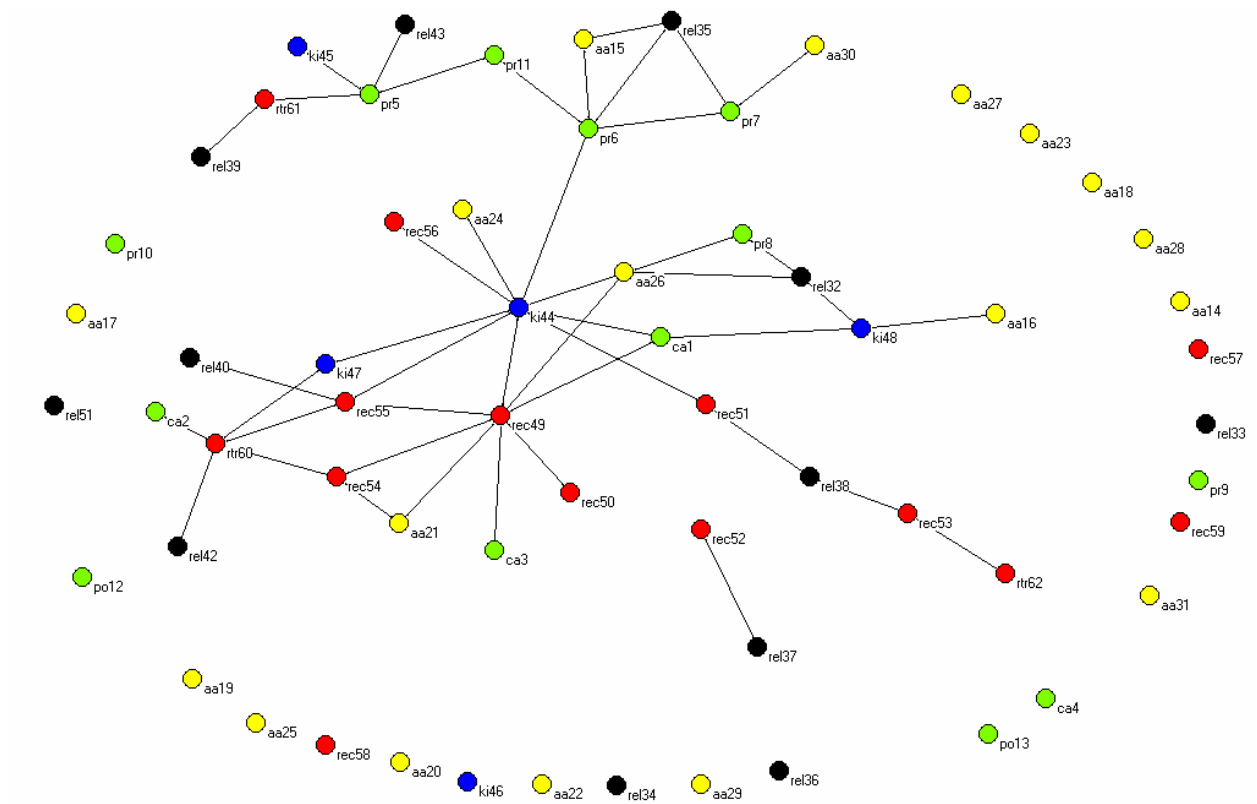


# The Structure of Constraints: Social Networks of Immigrants from Taiwan



**The Structure of Constraints:  
Social Networks of Immigrants from Taiwan**

Dissertation im Fach Völkerkunde  
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## **Vorwort**

Dieses Dissertationsprojekt präsentiert die sozialen Beziehungen von Immigranten aus Taiwan und diskutiert die Interaktionen zwischen Einwandern und Einheimischen. Immigration ist aber nicht nur das zentrale Thema dieser Forschung. Nach Abschluß der Datenerhebung in Kalifornien bin ich selbst zur Immigrantin in den Vereinigten Staaten geworden. Private Gründe und eine Stelle als Dozentin am Department of Anthropology an der East Carolina University in Greenville, North Carolina gaben den Anstoß dazu. Da ich wußte, daß ich deshalb die Analyse und Interpretation der Daten in einem englischsprachigen sozialen Umfeld unternehmen würde, stellte ich 1998 einen von Prof. Schweizer unterstützten Antrag auf Erlaubnis meine Dissertation in englischer Sprache anzufertigen an das Dekanat der Philosophischen Fakultät der Universität zu Köln. Diesem Antrag wurde stattgegeben. Die folgende Dissertationsschrift ist in Englisch geschrieben.

Die Untersuchung der Einbindung von Immigranten in die Gesamtgesellschaft anhand der Struktur ihrer sozialen Netzwerke hat meine Aufmerksamkeit und Wertschätzung von zwischenmenschlicher Beziehungen jeglicher Art und Ausprägung verstärkt. Diese Forschung hat in großem Maße von meinen Beziehungen zu anderen Menschen profitiert. Lehrer, Informanten, Freunde, und Bekannte haben mir Zuspruch und Unterstützung gegeben, die die Entstehung dieser Arbeit entscheidend beeinflußt haben. Allen voran Prof. Dr. Schweizer, der nicht nur meine anfänglich sprunghaften Ideen gewähren ließ und mir damit half ein wirklich passendes Arbeitsthema zu finden. Die großzügige Unterstützung durch ein dreijähriges Stipendium im Rahmen des von ihm initiierten und geleiteten Leibniz-Programms in Verbindung mit der Deutschen Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG), hat die Datensammlung und Auswertung erst möglich gemacht. Dafür bin ich sehr dankbar. Auch wenn Prof. Schweizers viel zu früher Tod unsere Zusammenarbeit leider verkürzt hat, hoffe ich doch, daß seine wegweisenden Ideen mit diesem Endresultat zumindest ein kleines Forum erhalten haben.

Des weiteren wäre diese Forschung ohne die Kooperation der Informanten in Orange County, Kalifornien nicht möglich gewesen. Trotz anfänglichem Mißtrauen, daß in städtischen Umgebung ja oft lebenswichtig ist, haben mich viele Immigranten in ihre Häuser und mich vor allem in ihren Freizeitorganisationen als Mitglied aufgenommen und eingebunden. Ihre

## II

Bereitschaft, mir in langen Interviews Einsicht in ihre soziale Welt zu gewähren, werde ich nie vergessen. Außer diesen Informanten, denen ich Anonymität zugesichert habe, sind mir vor allem Yang Ying Petersen, Teresa Wang und Cathy Hwang zu Freundinnen geworden, mit denen ich abseits von Datenerhebung und teilnehmender Beobachtung persönliche Eindrücke austauschen und in privaten Gesprächen Energie auftanken konnte. Ihnen bin ich zu großem Dank verpflichtet.

Während meines Aufenthalts in Orange County konnte ich auch von Prof. Schweizers Kontakten zum Social Networks Program an der University of California Irvine profitieren. Die Nutzung der Universitätsbibliothek und die Teilnahme an wissenschaftlichen Gesprächsrunden von Doktoranden vor Ort wurden mir zu einer wichtigen Anlaufstelle während der Ausarbeitung und Durchführung meines Forschungsvorhabens. Danken möchte dafür Prof. John Boyd, Prof. Kim Romney, und Prof. Douglas White, sowie den damaligen Doktoranden Narda Alcantara, Bret Breslin, William Fitzgerald, Ben Jester und Silvia Cassasola.

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Weiterhin schulde ich großen Dank Herrn Professor Michael Casimir vom Institut für Völkerkunde an der Universität zu Köln, der bereit war die Betreuung meiner Dissertation als Doktorvater zu übernehmen. Ich habe vor allem seinen klaren Blick für verdrehte Gliederungen schätzen gelernt. Privatdozent Prof. Orywal hatte ebenfalls immer Zeit für mich, wenn ich in Köln einlief. Ihm habe ich vor allem den Ansporn zur Umsetzung von Erkenntnissen in Grafiken zu verdanken. Danken möchte ich auch Prof. Thomas Scharping vom Institut für Moderne Chinastudien für sein Interesse an meinem akademischen Werdegang und Prof. Michael Bollig für seine hilfreichen Kommentare zu meinen Disputationsthemen.

Da ich die meiste Zeit des Schreibens dieser Dissertation in Greenville, North Carolina, verbracht habe, sind natürlich auch meine Kollegen im Department for Anthropology an der East Carolina University in meinen Gedankenaustausch auf der Suche nach Einsichten über Immigranten verwickelt worden. Danken möchte ich vor allem Prof. Linda Wolfe für ihre stetigen Aufmunterungen am Ball zu bleiben, sowie Prof. Holly Mathews und Prof. David Griffith für ihr Interesse an meinen Ergebnissen. Großer Dank gilt Kay Evans, die mir unter großem Zeitdruck in der Endphase beim Redigieren meines manchmal doch sehr verworrenen Englisch geholfen hat. Am meisten habe ich jedoch Jeffrey Johnson zu verdanken. Er hat nicht nur meine Unruhe und Zweifel im alltäglichen Verlauf des Forschungsprozesses mit Humor und Leichtigkeit ertragen, sondern mir auch in unzähligen Diskussionen Anregung und Reflektionen gegeben.

Nicht zuletzt sind es Freunde und Familienmitglieder, die mir das Leben mit ihrem Interesse sprichwörtlich leicht gemacht haben. Hier möchte ich vor allem Katja Teubner and Mario Angelo danken, sowie Helga Grabbe, Stephanie Lang, Julia Pauli, und Brigitte Schwinge, meinem Bruder Moritz und meiner Schwester Gundula. Meinen Eltern, denen ich diese Arbeit widme, danke ich für ihr grenzenloses Vertrauen in meine Fähigkeiten.

Auch wenn ich Unterstützung und Hilfestellung in vielen Beziehungen gefunden habe, so bin ich doch allein für das Ergebnis verantwortlich. Die Arbeit wurde von der Philosophischen Fakultät der Universität Köln im Oktober 2002 als Dissertation angenommen. Die Gutachter waren Prof. Dr. Michael Casimir und Prof. Dr. Erwin Orywal. Die Disputation fand am 11. Dezember 2002 statt.

Greenville, im Herbst 2003

Christine Avenarius

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## Chapter 1

### **Introduction: personal networks, community cohesion and immigrant incorporation**

"Four separate streams of people migrated to the Americas to join Native Americans: the Spanish and Portuguese, who colonized Mesoamerica and South America and intermarried with the indigenous people to create mixed-blood Latinos; other Europeans, who crossed the Atlantic as colonists, indentured servants, and immigrants; Africans, brought to the New World by slave traders; and Asians, who crossed the Pacific to labor in mines, fields, and construction projects. As the immigrants came in ever larger waves, the indigenous population declined in numbers as a result of conquest, subjugation, and death from diseases introduced from the Old World, so that eventually non-natives outnumbered natives in most of the Western Hemisphere" (Chan 1990: 37).

Movement, in the form of such things as migration, has been a major part of who humans are as a species. People move in search of resources or, at the very least, to better their lives politically, socially, or even spiritually. Movement to another place may be temporary or permanent and may involve individuals, families, and even whole societies. Temporary migration, including back and forth movements between two or more places, has traditionally been the basis for the adaptive strategies of hunter-gatherers (Lee and DeVore 1968, Burch and Ellanna 1994), nomadic pastoralists (Dyson-Hudson 1980, Casimir and Rao 1992), and even the migratory patterns of past and present-day fishers (Nimmo 1972, Johnson and Orbach 1990). Seasonal and temporary migrations have usually been associated with movements over shorter geographic distances, thereby encountering only a moderate level of difference in a new environment, both in terms of the topography and the cultural differences with those they came in contact with. Migration that spans larger distances was commonly expected to lead to permanent settlement in a landscape that differed considerably both culturally and geographically. The fact is that humans, throughout history, have been on the move.

There are different implications for the places of origin and destination with respect to out-migration and in-migration. Over the course of history certain destinations have been preferred over others, depending on what the new areas had to offer aspiring migrants. Contact between people of different cultural backgrounds may have various outcomes, especially if the contact is sustained. The outcome depends on several factors including the characteristics of the incoming people, the people already there, the nature of the economy, the political environment, and the geographic characteristics. Relationships among incoming migrants are usually instrumental in the

process of resource acquisition in the new terrain. However, geographic characteristics and the location in space may impact the social structure of migrants, since not all cultural practices can be necessarily transferred to the new environment.

The United States is essentially a country of migrants. Although not the only nation-state faced with a large influx of migrants today, many of the circumstances, processes, and consequences related to immigration have recently taken place on a larger scale and for a longer period of time than elsewhere in the world. The process of immigrant incorporation is one of the realities of American life and culture in general. For other nation-states who have not experienced immigration to the same extent, it appears that this will likely change in the near future (e.g., the European Union).

In the history of immigration to the United States, several waves of immigration have occurred under very different circumstances.<sup>1</sup> The most recent period of immigration, also called the fourth wave of immigrants, was induced by the Hart-Celler Immigration Act of 1965 and is distinct from previous immigration flows.<sup>2</sup> In contrast to earlier waves of immigrants, the most recent immigrants have been mostly non-white and have arrived from a large range of non-European countries of origin. Furthermore, they display a much greater diversity of social and economic backgrounds and have entered an extremely varied range of occupations in comparison to immigrants arriving before the implementation of these new immigration laws (Massey 1981, Portes and Rumbaut 1996). The differences among recent immigrants in levels and marketability of skills (i.e., human resources) and the differences in economic resources they bring with them, have resulted in the socioeconomic polarization of the present foreign-born population in the United States. High-skilled immigrants are usually of Asian origin, low-skilled immigrants are from places in Mexico and Central America. The divide between skilled and unskilled immigrants is especially visible regarding their acceptance and support by the general population of the United States (Waldinger 1996, Ripley 2000).

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<sup>1</sup>The literature distinguishes between four major waves of immigration: the first wave is identified as Northwest Europeans who immigrated up to the mid-nineteenth century. The second wave consisted of Southern and Eastern Europeans arriving between the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth. And the third wave is identified as the movement from the South to the North of black Americans, Mexicans and Puerto Ricans which was initiated by the two world wars. The fourth wave of immigrants coming mostly from Latin America and Asia began after the introduction of the Hart-Celler Act of Immigration in 1965 and is ongoing (Muller and Espenshade 1985, Chan 1990, Waldinger 1996).

<sup>2</sup>Detailed information on this and other immigration acts is presented in the appendix.

Another recent development is that although immigrants continue to prefer to settle in a selected number of regions in the United States, such as the Northeast, Southwest, and California many immigrants no longer reside within close vicinity of other co-ethnics (Massey 1985). Residential clusters are rare among affluent immigrants with high levels of human capital. In addition, the vast open spaces of North America have been increasingly filled with urban sprawl, creating a unique settlement structure consisting of seemingly endless rows of single family dwellings. The resulting metropolitan areas are different from traditional urban spaces, especially with respect to master plan community structures built for well-to-do residents.<sup>3</sup> They are deconcentrated spaces with a low people to land ratio, and an absence of clearly visible city boundaries or public spaces (Gottdiener 1985, Sorkin 1992, Soja 1996, 2000). They lack central locations (e.g., downtowns) but have an extensive infrastructure of highways. This is the particular landscape affluent migrants choose to settle in as their topography for social life.

Further conditions of migration at the end of the 20th century include the fact that recent advancements in communication and transportation technology provide people living in different locations with opportunities to stay connected more frequently, at a faster rate, and at a lower cost than even before (Glick-Schiller et al. 1992, Portes 1999). This allows migrants to move back and forth between places which are separated by greater distances. The conduct of activities, often called transnational activities in the literature, which facilitate these movements, such as frequent phone calls, faxes, emails, air travel, and world-wide media coverage, question earlier assumptions about temporary migration.

On the other hand, while the economic and political spheres of many places in the world have become integrated in the sense of unrestricted and equal association, the same can not be said for social and cultural spheres. The economies of different nation-states have become increasingly intertwined, a process often labeled 'economic globalization', connecting manufacturing, trade, and service institutions all over the world (Appadurai 1996, Sassen 1996). Inclusive, mutually respectful and cooperative political interaction also takes place between a larger number of countries than ever before. Yet social and cultural integration of two or more cultures is still elusive. The condition for any likelihood of a development in this direction is lasting contact between two cultures. Previous theories on the outcomes of cultural contact between migrants and local populations have stated that immigrant incorporation takes places in the form of assimilation

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<sup>3</sup> Characteristics of 'metropolitan areas' and 'master plan communities' are introduced in the section on urban studies in chapter 2.

(Park 1950, Gordon 1964). Such theories were based on the observation that newly arrived immigrants start at the bottom of the occupational scale and gradually move up the economic ladder, meanwhile acquiring the appropriate social skills and the cultural habits of the larger society (Gans 1997, Alba and Nee 1997).

The notion of 'structural assimilation' requires that immigrants leave all formal and informal ethnic affiliations behind and completely blend into the other culture. It implies that the incorporation process mainly takes place at the individual level. The concept of 'integration' contends it is possible to participate in the economic, political and social spheres of the larger society on equal footing while maintain ethnic attachment (Berry 1997). This indicates that incorporation into the mainstream society may occur both at the individual and the group level. Thus, it is important to include an overview of the characteristics of ethnic communities in inquiries about outcomes of migration and contact with other cultures. Although this investigation introduces a number of different ethnic communities, the analysis and findings of this study are based on a relational rather than spatial definitions of community. 'Community' does not refer to relationships within the boundaries of a specific geographic place, but to the set of overlapping relationships of related individuals independent of their location in space (see Wellman 1999).

The altered conditions of immigration to the United States at the end of the 20th century, including the influx of large groups of highly educated, affluent immigrants, their dispersed settlement in deconcentrated spaces, and the availability of time and space compressing communication and transportation technology, gives reason to question the established theoretical assumptions concerning the incorporation process. The relationship between motivations for emigration and the search for resources, and the influence of the social and geographic landscape of the new environment on the social structure of immigrant communities, also needs reevaluation.

### **Study Focus**

This study looks specifically at the social incorporation of affluent first generation immigrants from Taiwan who migrate to the deconcentrated settlement spaces of South Orange County in Southern California. Based on the socioeconomic and demographic profiles of these immigrants, it is assumed that not only will they experience economic and political integration, but social integration into the mainstream society is also likely to occur. At first glance, opportunities for incorporation into the larger society of the United States seem both plentiful and scarce. While some conditions facilitate integration, other circumstances are working against integration. The



present study aims to describe the present conditions for social integration of immigrants from Taiwan. It also discusses the nature of the incorporation process and the relation between spatial structure and social structure.

The likelihood of social integration is best understood by analyzing interaction patterns, specifically the relationships that link co-ethnics to one another and to members of different ethnic groups (i.e., immigrants to non-immigrants). Special attention is given to the relationships that provide access to information and opportunities for various types of social interaction that thereby assist immigrants in making use of a diversified range of resources in order to cope with the challenges of settlement in a new country and adjustment to a new culture.

The investigation of personal networks and the extent of community cohesion created by the overlap of these networks will guide the assessment of the likelihood of integration for immigrants from Taiwan to Southern California. Given that social actors are embedded in social structures that determine their opportunities and limitations to action (Schweizer 1997), the structure of immigrant personal networks can provide insights on the presence or absence of constraints to interaction with both co-ethnics and outsiders. It needs to be clarified how the roles of relationships (i.e., friends, family, etc.), the characteristics of network members (i.e., gender, age, occupation, education, etc.), the presence of strong or weak ties (Granovetter 1973) and their regional or global reach, and the type of whole network structure (i.e., loosely or densely knit) influence both intraethnic and interethnic interaction (Wellman 1999).

Since various types of community organizations are visible formations of overlap created by the membership of individuals in different personal networks, the analysis of the network of community groups provides insights into the extent of cohesiveness in a community (Klov Dahl 1989, Freeman 1992). The relationship between the degree of cohesiveness an ethnic community displays and the likelihood for both individual and group integration into the larger society needs further investigation.

This study proposes to deepen our understanding of the processes by which contemporary ethnic places are created. It attempts to contribute to the body of knowledge on the development and transformation of urban and suburban places in the age of economic globalization. This work also expands on the rather scarce information on immigrants from Taiwan and ethnic Taiwanese in particular.

## **Research Questions**

The two main research questions of this study are concerned with the structure of social relationships that connect immigrants from Taiwan to each other and to members of the larger society. The first question has two aspects and asks: What are the factors that influence the structure of immigrants' personal networks and what are the factors that influence the structure of the network of community organizations? Consequently, the second question is: What effect do these specific structures have on the process of immigrants' incorporation into the mainstream society?

In order to answer these questions, three primary forms of data were needed. It is important to know what the characteristics of the structure of personal networks are, in terms of the kind of support they provide, the presence of social roles, membership composition, the strength of ties, and the degree of multiplexity. Next, there is a need for information on the spatial distribution, regionally and globally, and the role of these social ties in establishing and maintaining connections to Taiwan and other places around the globe. Finally, data is called for that assists in investigating the existence of a distinct ethnic community that is recognized by immigrants from Taiwan. It is essential to clarify the extent to which there is an extensive net of cross-links and overlaps between personal networks of immigrants. The degree of cohesiveness that may or may not result in the formation of a distinct community needs to be determined.

## **Outline**

This study is divided into four parts, theoretical and methodological background, ethnographic background, findings of the data analysis, and finally discussion and conclusions.

The first part introduces a review of the literature that informed the design of this study and the subsequent analysis of the data. The following chapter synthesizes findings from the literature with the development of a typology of different modes of cohesion in ethnic communities across the United States. Its aim is to establish a comparative framework for understanding the place of a community of immigrants from Taiwan in relation to other immigrant groups. Chapter 3 also presents the hypotheses that guided the data analysis and the organization of research findings. The last chapter in the general background section of this study, chapter 4, covers the methods of data collection, including selection criteria for the research site, the informants, and the development of research instruments. It includes an introduction to the analytical tools of social

network studies that were used to evaluate the data. The chapter also makes reference to the circumstances of fieldwork.

The second part presents the ethnographic background of this study based on observations and interview data from fieldwork in South Orange County, California. Chapter 5 describes the setting of Orange County in demographic, geographic, economic and political terms, including a brief overview of general immigration trends in the region. The next chapter, chapter 5, portrays the immigrants from Taiwan. It gives an overview of the ethnicity of immigrants and the demographics of the group of informants for this study, their life histories, and their rationales for emigration and relocation to Southern California.

The third part shows the findings of the data analysis. Chapter 7 presents findings on the structure of personal networks with respect to their function as providers of social, emotional and instrumental support. In addition, it demonstrates the role of mainstream and ethnic media sources in the lives of immigrants. The chapter also describes the distribution of relationships in space and discusses the implications of the presence and type of local, regional and transnational ties for the structure of personal networks. Different types and functions of ethnic community organizations are introduced in chapter 8, as well as the related patterns of participation and membership compositions. This chapter on the network of organizations looks in more detail at the degree of overlapping relations among the different ethnic groups in South Orange County with the intent of determining the existence of a visible ethnic community and its degree of cohesion.

The last part of this study condenses the findings and provides a discussion and conclusions. Chapter 9 presents the results of the hypotheses test on the likelihood for integration both at the individual and the group level based on the analysis of personal networks and the affiliation network of community organizations. It also discusses findings in reference to community cohesiveness and places the community of immigrants from Taiwan within the typology of ethnic communities in the United States introduced in chapter 3. Conclusions of this study are presented in chapter 10 in form of an identification of centripetal and centrifugal forces which shape both intraethnic and interethnic interaction patterns.



**PART I**  
**THEORETICAL BACKGROUND AND**  
**METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH**

## Chapter 2

### Literature Review

"...since culture is constantly changing, a comprehensive program of research must recognize the value inherent in the study of peoples whose traditions have been or are today being influenced by the customs of other folk with whom they are in contact" (Herskovits 1958: 1).

This study examines the incorporation of recent waves of immigrants from Taiwan to the region of Southern California in the United States. What makes this study important is the manner in which the social relationships of immigrants reflect both global and regional processes relating to migration, urban and suburban development, economic development and the definition of community itself. Thus, an investigation of this nature, with a focus on the present structure and maintenance of immigrant communities, will require an examination and integration of a wide body of literature, namely community studies, immigration studies, and urban studies.

To understand the structure of the social world immigrants have created for themselves, both individually and collectively, it is first necessary to look at literature on the social space of communities in general and the development, changes, and variations in ethnic communities of immigrants in the United States more specifically. Communities consist of overlapping sets of individual social networks. Their structure, size, density, and extent of overlap reflect the degree of cohesion within a community. In the case of ethnic communities, the properties of social networks also represent the community's adaptation to life within the host society. Immigrant communities are a special case of communities at the intersection of local and global forces. Thus, they warrant a closer look in terms of the mode of incorporation into the society at large.

The more classic works in studies on immigration which discuss the relationship among acculturation, assimilation and integration need to be reevaluated in light of more recent understandings on the barriers to and facilitators of immigrant incorporation. Recent research on the settlement and distribution of immigrants has produced a plethora of new concepts to capture the nature of current conditions and opportunities for immigration. Terms such as transnationalism, diaspora, and flexible or cultural citizenship will be reviewed and evaluated for their applicability.

In addition, though a sense of community is not tied to a clearly defined location in space, the settlement of immigrants does take place within geographic areas which have distinct characteristics. In order to evaluate the specific conditions of Orange County, the site of this study,

literature from the fields of urban anthropology and social ecology on new urban developments will be examined. The focus is on the context for settlement and social interaction created by different types of spatial arrangement in urban centers and metropolitan areas.

However, it is the literature on social network analysis of personal networks and communities in general and in urban areas in particular that makes it possible to tie the different research approaches together. The social networks perspective provides the framework to answer questions regarding the incorporation of affluent immigrants from Taiwan to Southern California both at the individual and the group level.

### **The social network perspective**

The social networks perspective is a useful approach for understanding the nature of social cohesion and community formation among immigrants, as evident in the discussions on literature in community studies, immigration studies and urban studies presented below. At the level of the individual, the social network perspective (Wellman and Berkowitz 1988, Scott 1991, Wasserman and Faust 1994) can provide insights into the "*social worlds*" of individuals (Fischer 1982). The basic premise is that individuals are influenced by their personal social networks, also called egocentric networks, and are integrated into society through their ties to others (McAllister and Fischer 1983: 77). At the group level social network studies focus on the structure of whole networks, also called sociocentric networks, created by the complete set of all ties among the members of a given group (Johnson 1994).

Whole networks inform about the inner structure of an organization or entity in cases where the group has a clearly defined boundary and is sufficiently small in membership size. The demand for a definition of boundaries for the study of whole network represents a challenging aspect of the social networks framework (Lauman et al. 1989: 70-73). It is often impossible to study the complete network structure of a whole society or social group with a large number of members, such as an immigrant group in a metropolitan area. After all, present-day societies are no longer defined by well-bounded memberships in small, highly connected cooperative groups. Further, there are no truly bounded societies (Kuper 1992: 6). In fact, a society does not have a single observable social structure, as Nadel notes in quoting Firth: "*there is no such isolable entity as the social structure*" (1957: 153).

Almost all large social groups have several structures, some separate, some overlapping, as well as gaps, holes and disconnected parts. Societies are open and not ordered by a unifying,

permanent structure. Encounters between people are a form of 'social action', which constitutes a 'social event'. Interaction between two or more people is always a product of acts and responses (Kuper 1992). From a network perspective, social action is the outcome of the possibility offered by a network position in relation to others in combination with the cultural norms and rules to which the network members adhere. Social networks create a social space, which entails both more and less than the classic definition of 'society'. Individual networks overlap, connect distant persons, and form a multitude of entities (i.e., social, economic, political, etc.) each with their own boundary (Barth in Kuper 1992: 21). None of these boundaries circumscribe a whole group in isolation, they only refer to interdependent clusters within the larger social space. From the point of view of an individual linked to others within any social space, boundaries to interaction do exist. However, at the macro level clear boundaries may be difficult to determine, especially in today's technologically intertwined world of global capitalism.

Along the same lines of interpreting the structure of human interaction as open systems, the notion of 'culture' can also receive a network conceptualization (Hannerz 1992b: 44). Opportunities for contact between cultures brought by global trade, technology and political alliances have caused various levels of culture change in different places of the world. Interpenetration of cultural domains takes place at the local, regional and national level. Depending on the position of a culture in the center or periphery of a nation state or within the global exchange system, some cultures change more rapidly than others or incorporate more elements of other cultures into their own practices. In many central locations a process of creolization, the diffusion of cultural elements creating a new local diversity, can be observed (Hannerz 1992a). However, any culture change is always a product of interaction. Relationships are the agents of alterations in belief systems or systems of meaning. Culture takes place and is created and recreated through networks of people, and is not bound to a certain territory (Hannerz 1992a: 288).

Therefore, the social network perspective is of great importance in understanding the embeddedness of individuals in a local social system and the embeddedness of local social systems within the larger global world system (Schweizer 1997: 739). Embeddedness refers to relationship between systems of relationships. Social network analysis can assess the interdependence between a case and the wider system at the national and even global level. Through the analysis of local, national and global ties researchers can detect the degree of dependency on the social, economic, political and communicative circuits and linkages to which a



specific space belongs. The underlying assumption is that positions in networks give access to economic and social resources, which translate into the accumulation of human, social, economic, cultural, and symbolic capital (Bourdieu 1984, Lin 1998, Lin 1999). The relational analysis of ties leads to a cumulative understanding of basic structural patterns (Schweizer 1997: 755).

This study looks at the specific setting of relations among immigrants and between immigrants and others which can represent the impact and interplay of local and external forces influencing the space of the metropolitan area Orange County. The structure of personal networks and the network of community organizations are expected to reflect the actions, interactions and experiences of immigrants from Taiwan. The nature of a network structure is determined by analyzing its different components. This includes the size of networks (i.e., the number of all ties) and the density of networks, defined as the total number of existing ties in comparison to the total number of possible ties between all network members (Borgatti and Everett 1997: 253). The existence and characteristics of central positions within a network of ties also contribute to knowledge about the structure, as do the number and size of clusters (see further descriptions in chapter 4). In addition, the extent of multiplexity or uniplexity of ties is important. A tie is multiplex in nature, if it links two entities to each other in more than one function, for example the same two people are each other's neighbors and attend the same religious meetings.

This leads to the distinction between strong and weak ties, which serve as important parameters in this study. As discussed in more detail in chapter 4, researchers disagree slightly on the exact characteristics of weak and strong ties. The working definition for this literature review is that, in terms of personal network characteristics, strong ties refer to relations between individuals who frequently interact with each other, usually share similar identities and have several activities in common (i.e., are bound by a multiple number of contexts). Weak ties, on the other hand, describe relationships between loosely connected people who have only one singular interest in common (i.e., are linked by a uniplex ties). Their interaction is infrequent and often instrumental in nature (Wellman and Wortley 1990: 564).

Findings from the analysis of these structural components of social networks presented in part two of this study will illustrate and clarify the parameters of immigrant's social space, the nature of adaptation to the host society and the influence of the specific context of newly built subdivisions within Orange County.

In sum, the literature discussed in this chapter assists in understanding the development and character of immigrants' social space. It also provides the basis for developing a theoretical

framework for understanding the factors that influence the social space and the social networks of immigrants. Such factors include the human and economic resources immigrants bring with them, the role of infrastructure and advanced communication and transportation technology, and lastly, the spatial structure, population composition and history of the urban and suburban spaces into which immigrants move.

## **Community Studies: Interaction with Co-ethnics**

### **Definitions of Social Space and Community**

One of the goals of this study is to determine the existence of a distinct ethnic community in an area of deconcentrated settlement structures. In pursuit of these ends, it is important to clarify the implications of the terms 'social space' and 'community' and distinguish between the different types of community that are associated with either a spatial or relational approach in order to establish its boundaries. To understand the specific characteristics of any social space of immigrants it is also helpful to ask what different types of ethnic communities exist in the United States, a topic picked up again in chapter 3.

### **The concept of social space**

While many social scientist use the expression 'social space' rather casually to describe the world of interactions of individuals with other individuals and groups (see among others in the immigration literature Miron et al. 1998: 659, Rouse 1991: 8), few have made the definition of 'social space' a central topic. Bourdieu is one of the more prominent authors in this group. He describes social space as a space of differences that commands the representations that social actors can create within it. *"Social classes do not exist (...). What exists is a social space, a space of differences, in which classes exist in some sense in a state of virtuality, not as something given but as something to be done"* (Bourdieu 1998: 12).

Individual agents (i.e., actors, persons) define a class by the degree of proximity to one another. Those who have a potential for unity or any other close-together-dispositions may come together for common purposes and against another group. Although Bourdieu claims that classes do not really exist, groups have *"claims to exist as a probable class"*, and are considered to be *"realized classes"* (Bourdieu 1998: 11). So actors and institutions occupy specific positions in the social space which in turn is structured by those differentiated positions defined in each case by the place they have received due to the distribution of a particular kind of capital (15). The two major

organizing principles of any social space are economic capital and cultural capital. They govern the structure and modification of the space of cultural consumption and the whole universe of lifestyles in general (Bourdieu 1984: 176). The positions of actors and institutions derived from this construction and distribution of resources and powers due to the volume and composition of different types of capital direct the representations of this space and the process of taking positions within it (Schweizer 1997).

Although rather abstract in his elaborations, Bourdieu makes the important point that social actors within a group of people are joined together based on the specific features they have in common. The features are characterized by their position according to their cultural preferences and practices, their educational background (human capital) which informs their preferences, and their economic resources that enable them to establish or continue specific cultural practices, among other venues through access to higher education. Within a larger, in some sense all-encompassing, social space exist clusters of people which share a potential for unity due to positions located close together. These groups with "*realized*" similarities constitute a specific "*sub-space*" within the larger social space (Bourdieu 1984).

While Bourdieu in some of his illustrations and examples refers to the shared closeness of actors as partly based on "*its distribution in geographical space*" measurable in average distances and traveling time from goods or facilities and opportunities for social contacts (1984: 124, see also footnote on p. 572) this study seeks to test his requirement for spatial proximity. A social actor who considers him or herself closely positioned to others and therefore identifies with them does not necessarily need geographic proximity. In this respect it is important to establish clearly defined categories of distance. Bourdieu placed his observations on habitus and lifestyles in Paris, he looked at proximities of actors within urban neighborhoods. In this study proximities due to lifestyle preferences and overall resources will be considered which are located within the vast space occupied by the metropolitan area of Orange County, but also reach to other areas of settlement within North American and across the Pacific.

Another attempt at defining social space, albeit a specific type, the transnational social space, has been presented by Thomas Faist (2000). He attempts to clarify the recent explosion of concepts in the literature on immigrants and immigration, including concepts such as transnational social fields, transnational social formations, transnationalism, and transnational social space. He advocates a typology of transnational social spaces. In addition he distinguishes between the different legal rights and regulations faced by the various types of transnational social spaces and

their social actors. The definition given by Faist does fit the approach presented in this study since it considers social spaces to be characterized by positions of actors and the relationships and interactions they engage in based on the resources and types of capital available to them. *"Transnational social spaces are combinations of ties, positions in networks and organizations, and networks of organizations that reach across the borders of multiple states. These spaces denote dynamic social processes, not static notions of ties and positions"* (Faist 2000: 191).

Faist delineates three different types of transnational spaces. Transnational kinship groups are mainly based on reciprocity between social actors such as financial and emotional support among household and family members living in different countries. Transnational circuits, a second type of transnational space, are exchange and trading networks of ethnic groups that span the world. The circuits of expectations and obligations often have a business orientation and are based both on weak and strong ties among their network members. In contrast, the third type, transnational communities, are more socially encompassing and often political in nature. They are based on the solidarity between the social actors involved and their expressed sense of collective identity. Often they involve the notion of diasporas (Faist 2000: 195).

In this respect the term community is rather narrowly defined as socially cohesive groups with members having a high degree commitment and continuity in time (Faist 2000: 196). This raises the question of the place of 'community' within a social space and the problems with providing an operational definition of community. Faist's idea of a transnational community appears to have more explanatory power for a small homogenous groups of immigrants, such as the Hmong, whose members arrived at the same time and settled in only a few different places in the country of their destination (Chan 1994, Koltyk 1998). However, the definition is hardly applicable for a larger, more heterogenous group of immigrants who settled at different points in time and various locations, such as ethnic Chinese and Taiwanese from Taiwan.

Faist's analysis (2000) is strongest in his classification of different modes of immigrant adaptation. While the debate on adaptation will be reviewed more extensively below, it is important to note that he conceives of the rather useful notion of the present-day unfolding of this process. He contends that in addition to assimilation and ethnic pluralism a third response to the challenges of immigrant incorporation needs to be considered that captures the experiences of immigrants interacting in a transnational social space instead of only in the nation space of the host country. He terms it *"border-crossing expansion of social space"* (Faist 2000: 201). Social actors who continue to build new ties and actively maintain existing ties both in host and home

country tend to expand their social space. However there are also social actors who switch their social space from the country of origin to the social space of the new country or the social space of an ethnic community within that host country, often abandoning all links to networks in the country of origin.

Based on the above discussion it can be resolved that a distinct social space, whose characteristics will be described in more detail in chapters 7 and 8, does exist for immigrants from Taiwan to Southern California. The working definition of social space for the purposes of this study will be conceptualized as the aggregation of people's individual networks, which reflect the activities of organizations they participate in and the creation of community due to overlapping individual networks and memberships in various institutions. What has yet to be established is whether there is a single community or several communities of immigrants within the metropolitan area of Orange County. It also remains to be seen to what extent immigrants from Taiwan conceive of their social space as the space of a distinct ethnic community and, if so, of what ethnic affiliation.

### **The concept of community**

According to Aristotle, a community is established when several smaller social units (i.e., villages, themselves composed of families) come together to meet the basic needs of human survival. In developing the social ties of communication and mutual reliance necessary to meet those needs, the community begins to strive for something more than mere survival, it aims for what Aristotle calls "the good life". The good life is not only a higher material standard of living, it's also the opportunity, born of leisure time, for intellectual growth and self-development (i.e., the notion of 'philosophy' in Greek). A community, then, is a union of groups of people who join together to achieve material and intellectual ends they could not accomplish - or perhaps even imagine - on their own as individual or separate family units.

Other historically established definitions include Tönnies' (1887) concept of 'Gemeinschaft' (based on personal relations) in contrast to 'Gesellschaft' (based on instrumental relations) which represent community as a small group of people who have a sense of belonging to one another and share ideas as well as norms for action. Further historic attempts to capture the concept of 'community' come from, among others, Marx (1867/1967) who thought of a community as defined by class struggle and the competition of interest groups within a population. Durkheim (1893/1984) considered community to be characterized by solidarity among people in the division

of labor, while Weber (1947/1978) conceived of community as an entity in which bureaucratic power increases while individual autonomy decreases. Later conceptions of community established the idea of joint membership in corporate groups and the sense of having something in common. Redfield (1956) was one of the first anthropologists to talk about rural communities as opposed to the simple focus on tribal groups and communities viewed as distinctive small and homogenous entities in which membership is held by everyone who is socialized in the group.

One of the first elaborate studies of life in non-rural communities, also called 'modern' communities, that included members of different cultural backgrounds was done by social anthropologists and led to the Yankee City Series (Warner et al. 1941, 1945, 1963). The goal of the team of researchers who selected a single city of 17,000 people in New England was to understand human relations in action within the larger context of the overall community and its social system. They looked at the cultural life of the community, its social classes, the social status system, social institutions, the composition of ethnic groups within the city, and labor relations, to mention a few. The specific location was chosen with the condition that the community was under the domination of a single group with a coherent tradition, "*a group which ordinarily assimilates newer ethnic groups.*" They consciously avoided immigrant communities or communities with several equally dominant ethnic traditions and consequently "*low total-community integration*" (Warner and Lunt 1941: 38).

Among the ethnic groups represented in the Yankee City community study, the second generation immigrants were demographically the most dominant. Therefore, this research makes little in the way of a specific contribution to the study of first generation immigration. The study is mainly known as being an early and very rich source of urban data for the fields of anthropology and sociology (see tables and appendices in Warner and Lunt 1941, Warner and Srole 1945). Of interest to this research are nevertheless their findings on the associational structure of Yankee City. By recording the membership of individual city residents in various community organizations they were able to determine the approximate place of any individual in the society, because residents were integrated into society through the overlap of associations (Warner 1963: 45).

As anthropologists focused more on the study of communities and their embeddedness in the world around them, they began to reflect more on the general sense of community. Anderson (1983), for example, established the term "*imagined communities*". Although members of modern nations cannot possibly know all their fellow citizens, "*in the minds of each lives the image of*

*their communion (...) is imagined as a community, because regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation is always conceived as deep, horizontal comradeship"* (1983: 15-16). The sense of connectedness to others is often more important than a physical presence.

If communities are mostly imagined in the modern day world, they are no longer limited to specific geographic locations. People can consider themselves to be part of communities that are physically removed, or without a physical manifestation (e.g., the internet). They can also be part of communities which are regional, but dispersed at the local level (e.g., membership in a specific religious group which draws followers from different locations within an urban region and meets only once a week at a specific place). Transnational communities, binational communities, and extended communities are all terms which have been developed and modeled after the introduction of the term 'imagined communities'. One approach to evaluate whether or not an imagined community of all immigrants from Taiwan in Orange County exists for the immigrant actors within their social space is to compare and contrast this study with other studies of ethnic communities, as exemplified in the typology presented in chapter 3.

More recent work on the reevaluation of community definitions includes an assignment of three dimensions to any community: area, common ties, and social interaction (Lyons 1987: 86-87). Originally, these spatial, ecological and interaction dimensions of community represented very clear boundaries. For example, a spatially defined community could be easily studied regarding the questions of power, interpersonal relationship and overall community development.

During the last decade these parameters have experienced another revision. Especially network analysis with its focus on the interaction dimension of community has questioned the extent and importance of the spatial community. The most comprehensive and inclusive definition was introduced by Wellman (1999). He considers community to be represented by social networks rather than locations. *"Social network analysis (...) provides a new way to study community that is based on the community relationships that people actually have rather than on the places where they live or the solidary sentiments they have"* (Wellman 1999: 17). Any set of relationships of related individuals independent of their location in space constitutes a community. The latter definition is guiding the analysis of this study as evident in further sections.

### **The concept of community cohesion**

The goal of many immigrant and ethnic community studies is to evaluate the interaction patterns between the immigrant group and the mainstream society. One of the basic propositions of this study is that the degree of group cohesion of an ethnic community living in a new country is linked to their mode of incorporation into the larger society. Relationships between group members have an effect on the incorporation process, but in turn patterns of interaction with the larger society also influence interactions within the ethnic group. The aim of this research is to shed light on this interrelated phenomenon.

The term 'cohesion' is used throughout this study. The expression refers to a group whose members are connected to one another by a common relationship and a sense of purpose. Cohesion is a variable property. Some groups are more cohesive than others and the degree of cohesion within a specific group can increase or decrease over time in response to changes in group size, leadership or the type and efficiency of actions pursued to further collective interests. The degree of cohesion among a number of people is measurable. The operationalization of cohesion in reference to the methods of social network analysis is presented in a the chapter 4.

### **Ethnic Community Studies**

#### ***The concept of ethnicity***

Although ethnicity and ethnic identity are not the main focus of this study, the practice of transnationalism among immigrants to the United States has again made questions of ethnic affiliation important. For the remainder of this study, ethnic communities in the United States are defined as migrant groups that are formed on the basis of a shared cultural identity in correspondence with their country of origin. The terms 'ethnic community' and 'immigrant community' are used interchangeably.<sup>1</sup>

On entering a new society, cultural identities are constructed outside its original context and this transplantation of cultural identities makes them 'ethnic'. In a new environment migrants face

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<sup>1</sup> Immigrants eventually become ethnics after their initial phase of adaptation. The difference then lies in their type of incorporation as discussed in the section on immigration studies below, or as Portes and Rumbaut (1996) phrase it in the fact that they often are "in the society but not yet of it" (Portes and Rumbaut 1996: 94 quoting Lipset and Bendy 1959: 104-105). The acquisition of citizenship does not always ensure the feeling of belonging, as discussed in the section on immigration studies. Foreign born Asians actually have above average rates of citizenship holders, about 38.4% of their foreign born population compared to 32.2% of the total foreign born population of the United States (U.S. Bureau of the Census 1997: 4, 52).



different principles of inclusion and exclusion. Some sections of society embrace newcomers based on perceived similarities (Eriksen 1993). However, once an association is made they are also part of the ongoing competition with members of other ethnic groups (Cohen 1974). At the very least, they are exposed to comparison with others either done by themselves or by members of a third group. *"Thus, ethnicity acquires its Janus face, looking inward and outward at the same time"* (Tilly 1990: 92).

The literature has identified three different categories of ethnic groups based on tribal, national and racial ethnicity (Enloe 1973). There are also three theoretical approaches in understanding ethnicity and its meaning. The primordialist approach, in fashion until the 1960's, states that ethnic identity is the result of deep-rooted attachments to group and culture. The instrumentalist approach sees ethnicity as a political strategy being pursued for pragmatic interests. Here recruitment of membership allows individuals to make use of ethnicity as a strategy for the improvement of their life chances in an ethnically pluralistic society (Gates 1981: 246, Brettell 2000: 114). The third theoretical approach is situational and considers ethnic identity to be constructed in a flexible and continuously changing fashion within a specific historical and social context. The particular location of an ethnic group in time and space influences the outcome of its identification and its stability (Orywal and Hackstein 1993: 601). Urban spaces are especially interesting places for the study of these processes (594).

The most important characteristic of ethnicity is its dichotomy of exclusiveness and inclusiveness into an ethnic group that also provides the basis for social cohesion and allegiance (Cohen 1978: 387). Barth was particularly influential in this view of socially and culturally constituted ethnicity. In the following discussion of ethnic groups and their communities the observations of Barth, who based his definition of ethnicity on the boundaries that define a group, will suffice for an initial identification of ethnicity. *"The critical feature then becomes (...) the characteristic of self-ascription and ascription by others"* (Barth 1969: 13).

Indeed, in some cases of immigration to the United States people identify themselves as a separate group beyond the national identity assigned to them by the host society. This holds true for immigrants from Taiwan, who actually practice several different identifications, among them ethnic Chinese and ethnic Taiwanese. A detailed background of these different ethnic affiliations and the rationales for their formations is given in chapter 8. However, since the literature often considers immigrants from Taiwan to be members of Chinese culture or influenced by Chinese

culture, in the following discussion of the literature on communities no separate distinction is made between ethnic Taiwanese and ethnic Chinese.

### ***Historic overview of Chinese communities in the United States***

Chinese communities outside of China, which used to be called 'Overseas Chinese' have been historically of great interest to researchers due to the generally strong cohesion displayed by their members. In addition, many scholars of Chinese culture studied Chinese communities as a window to Chinese social organization since there was a lack of research opportunities in China itself. While many older studies focused on Overseas Chinese communities in Southeast Asia (Skinner 1957, Fried 1958, Freedman 1961, Topley 1961, Crissman 1967), recent examples include accounts of Chinese leather manufacturers in India (Oxfeld 1993), the documentation of the settlements of the ethnic Hakka in locations worldwide (Constable 1996), and on Chinese communities in Europe (Benton et al. 1998) and Canada (Skeldon et al. 1994) in addition to publications on Chinese communities in the United States discussed below.

The term 'Overseas Chinese' has actually fallen out of favor as a descriptor for Chinese communities in the United States, because it implies that community members have closer alliances with their homeland than with their host country. The connotation of the label is thought to reinforce this separation. Although many early Chinese immigrants came with the intention of a temporary stay as 'sojourners' with the expectation to go back to China once they had accumulated enough resources, until the second part of the 20th century the distance between the two continents and the immigration policy of the United States proved to significantly inhibit return. Eventually, however, Chinese immigrants did consider the United States to be their permanent location of settlement. Recently, "*Chinese transnationalism*" has replaced the notion of "*Overseas Chinese settling all over the world*" (Ong and Nonini et. al. 1997) since it is a better representation of the flexibility and fluidity of associations among Chinese immigrants.

Whatever the label, ethnic Chinese communities are among the best documented of the ethnic groups in the United States. Early descriptions of the Chinese in the United States at the beginning of the 20th century were general accounts of the life of Chinese workers in western railroad camps (Lee 1947) and workers in Chinatowns (Sung 1967). They were followed in the 1970's and 1980's by a focus on Chinatowns and the first systematic descriptions of these ethnic enclaves in San Francisco (Nee and Nee 1972, Lyman 1986) and New York City (Kuo 1977, Wong 1982 and 1988, Chang 1983 and Kwong 1987).

Accounts of Chinese communities in smaller cities and rural areas showed the strong cohesion among ethnic Chinese as well (Weiss 1974 on Valley City, Chan 1986 and Minnick 1988 on Chinese communities of farmers and agricultural workers in California). As Chinese settlers to the United States left the enclaves within large urban centers and moved to the suburbs and smaller independent cities and towns all over the United States, the studies of their communities kept pace with the movement of people and the establishment of new communities. Just as the immigration and ethnicity studies expanded in the early 1990's due to renewed interest in research on immigrants based on the dramatic increase of the number of immigrants after the implementation of the Hart-Celler Act in 1965, so did the number of studies on Chinese communities.<sup>2</sup>

Traditional ethnic enclaves were revisited to examine the changes Chinatowns have experienced due to the conditions brought by economic globalization and a growing number of ethnic Chinese settlers coming in from Mainland China and Vietnam (Loo 1992 on San Francisco's Chinatown; Kinkead 1992 with a journalistic account on New York, and Zhou 1992 and Lin 1998 from a sociology point of view on New York). Yet, researchers also focused on the growing concentration of ethnic Chinese and ethnic Taiwanese immigrants from Taiwan in the suburbs of large cities (Palinkas 1988 on San Diego suburbs, Chen 1992 and Smith 1995 on Flushing, NY, Fong 1994 and Horton 1995 on Monterey Park, CA). The immigrants under study did not necessarily move from urban centers to the suburb as a reflection of their social and economic attainment. Many newly arrived immigrants settled directly in the suburbs. Not only could they afford the generally high cost of living there, the general attitude of acceptance of cultural differences among the more educated, mostly upper middle-class suburban population, made settlement in areas of choice at first a pleasant experience.

As it became more evident to researchers that the role of suburbs was not to be bedroom communities for employees in an urban center, but rather to be part of larger metropolitan areas with diversified settlement in a number of interconnected independent municipalities, they adjusted their geographic focus of studies on ethnic communities. Dispersed settlement of ethnic Chinese in the metropolitan areas of Greater Washington D.C. (Yang 1998), San Francisco (Wong 1998 on Silicon Valley) and of greater Los Angeles, specifically the San Gabriel Valley, (Tseng 1995, Zhou 1998, Li et al. 2000), Toronto (Lee and Tse 1994, Salaff n.d., Salaff 2002), and Vancouver (Olds 1996, Wong 1998, Froschauer 1998, Rose 1999, and Hiebert 2000) was

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<sup>2</sup>For an introduction to the content and consequences of the Hart-Celler Act, see the appendix.

recorded. Li (1999) coined the term 'ethnoburb' to present the observation that ethnic Chinese living in several adjacent towns within a metropolitan area form a connected unit (i.e., a single community) based on their ethnicity.

All of these community studies in metropolitan areas have in common that the settlements were initially established in reference to already existing ethnic enclaves in the urban center and their provision of ethnic goods and services.<sup>3</sup> In addition to New York and San Francisco, San Diego, Los Angeles, Washington D.C., Toronto and Vancouver and other large cities (e.g., Phoenix, St. Louis, see Ling 2000) all have traditional Chinatowns established before the second world war and the onset of large scale immigration after 1965. This connection to a historic ethnic center is also visible in the term 'satellite Chinatowns' labeling the new phenomenon of settlements outside of the ethnic enclave which nevertheless showed a degree of ethnic concentration (Wong 1998).

Studies which looked at Chinese communities established independent of any historic Chinatown are rare. This may be due to the fact that for a long time not many communities of this kind existed in the United States. Most Chinese immigrants did indeed settle in or near the big cities of the East and West coast. However, a few accounts of small groups of Chinese professionals in Midwestern college towns (Huang 1988, Wu 1993), rural areas of New York (Beaudry 1966) as well as on merchant settlements in the South (Loewen 1988) have been written.

Recently a new type of ethnic Chinese community has evolved. Until the late 1980's, an ethnic Chinese or ethnic Taiwanese professional who took a job outside the large metropolitan areas of the East and West Coast of North America would not expect to encounter many fellow ethnic Chinese or Taiwanese.<sup>4</sup> In contrast, the recent overall increases in the numbers of immigrants from Taiwan and China has created a higher density of ethnic Chinese and Taiwanese in geographic areas around Houston, Dallas, Atlanta, Boulder, Fairfax, Boston, and elsewhere. Many of them earn upper middle-class level incomes and prefer to live in the newly emerging master plan communities in these greater metropolitan areas. The availability of communication and transportation technology for people that fit such a profile and the overall newness of these mushrooming settlement areas facilitate co-ethnics to find each other within a larger geographic area and maintain ties despite the lack of propinquity. This study will shed some light on these

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<sup>3</sup>Although Monterey Park with initially established in reference to downtown Los Angeles's Chinatown it became a reference point itself for the later development of the San Gabriel Valley as a home region for Chinese settlers (Fong 1994, Li 1999). See typology in chapter 3 below which elaborates on this notion.

<sup>4</sup>most prominently New York, Toronto, Vancouver, Seattle, San Francisco and Los Angeles.

new types of Chinese and Taiwanese immigrant communities and describe their characteristics based on their personal and institutional network structures.

### *Other studies of ethnic communities*

Chinese communities are certainly not the only ethnic communities in the United States who have undergone changes or experienced new influences concerning new types of community formations. There is a rich diversity of immigrants of various origin who live in different types of residential environments and have specific relationships both among their group members and with the larger society. Instead of a detailed review of these ethnic community studies here, findings on the factors that influence the degree of cohesion in these communities are introduced in the typology of ethnic communities developed in chapter 3.

### **Studies of Social Networks in Ethnic Communities in the United States**

Before investigating what is known about the social networks of immigrants from Taiwan and the structure of their ethnic communities, it is useful to look at what is known in general about the social networks of immigrants that form ethnic communities. Most of the research that includes information on social networks of immigrants has either focused on the process of migration and the networks that facilitate it or the support networks needed in the initial phase of settlement and adaptation to a new environment. Studies on the social networks of established, economically well-off immigrants are rare.

Studies which emphasize the importance of social networks for an understanding of migration processes include research on the decision making process to migrate (Grasmuck and Pessar 1991, Massey 1998), the direction and persistence of migration flows (Wilson 1994 and 1998, Massey 1987, 1998), transnational links (Kearney 1995, Portes et al. 1999) and support relationships among immigrants in the United States to ensure economic survival and psychological well-being (Massey 1987, Boyd 1989, Ho 1991, Hagan 1998, Rose 1998, Menjivar 2000). Most of these immigrant studies use the network paradigm merely as a metaphor and only refer to networks in very general terms. They do not provide detailed accounts of the reach, function and composition of personal networks of immigrants or the structure of ethnic communities. Exceptions are studies on the role of weak ties for the adaptation process of immigrants from Mexico and Central America by Wilson (1998) and Rose (1998) discussed below.

### *Network studies of the migration process*

An important contribution to the understanding of migration processes comes from literature which considers migration to be a product of network relations. *"The most important teaching of recent work on immigration and ethnic experience concerns the ways in which the social organization of migration itself, the highly variable knitting together of sending and receiving networks shaped the aspirations, opportunities, strategies, fortunes, and accomplishments of most Americans. The shaping continues today"* (Tilly 1990: 93). The increase in immigrants from a particular ethnic group is due to the general network effect or the *"friends and family effect"* (Massey et al. 1994: 729), also called chain migration. Wilson (1994) specifically coins the term 'network-mediated migration' which states that migrants have several options due to their ties to different places in the receiving country. Migration networks facilitate rather than restrict the migration experience, creating fluid, expanding social structures for the individual migrant or migrant family (Wilson 1994: 272-275). The probability that other members of the same origin will migrate to a particular place increases, the more people from similar backgrounds live in the same location. Therefore, the rate of migration is a direct product of the number of people already living in a place and the networks created by them (Dunlevy 1992, Hatton and Williamson 1994).

Also, the more often a person migrates seasonally to a country, the more likely it is that he or she will eventually take up permanent settlement in that place (Massey 1986). A close relationship is also reported between the existence of network connections to a migrant already in the United States and the decision to migrate as well. These links between people do predict the additional influx of migrants from the same place of origin. Relationships existing prior to actual migration also have an influence on a migrant's job stability and wages. Or, as Massey et al. (1993) put it *"each act of migration itself creates the social structure needed to sustain it. Every new migrant reduces the costs of subsequent migration for a set of friends and relatives, and some of these people are thereby induced to migrate, which further expands the set of people with ties abroad"* (Massey et al. 1993: 449). These relationships are forms of social capital which operate as investments towards the success of the migration endeavor.

In addition, the United States immigration policy supports the occurrence and perpetuation of this *"multiplier effect"* among immigrants. U.S. law allocates most immigrant visas on the basis of

a family tie to someone already in the country (Jasso and Rosenzweig 1990).<sup>5</sup> This procedure of granting visas along family lines, reinforces and formalizes the operation of immigrant networks. Although not all potential migrants do actually decide to enter the United States, this option nevertheless creates a large pool of potential immigrants. Many of these potential immigrants have not yet exercised their rights due to backlogs for legal entry visas since qualifying family members have to wait until a numerically restricted visa becomes available.

Wilson (1998) distinguishes between "*diffuse networks and dense networks*" of migrants coming from Mexico. Diffuse networks consist of weak ties which provide access to information on job opportunities and settlement options. Immigrants linked in this fashion work and live geographically dispersed from one another. The dense network components, on the other hand, which link close relatives, distant kin and friends are forming geographically concentrated groups, because migrants invite or hire their closest family members and friends to participate in their local opportunity structure.

### ***Studies on social relations that facilitate adaptation***

Present-day chain migration also has an influence on immigrant adaptation, a topic which is discussed at greater length in the following subchapter on immigrant studies. Transnational involvement of immigrants is often thought to impede efforts to interact with the mainstream society. "*Whereas previously, economic success and social status depended exclusively on rapid acculturation and entrance into mainstream circles of the host society, at present they depend (at least for some) on cultivating strong social networks across national borders*" (Portes et al. 1999: 229).

Although more has been written on the transnational interactions taking place between the Caribbean, South and Central America and the United States, a few studies are available on the networks that aid in the adaptation of migrants from East Asia to North America, and Canada in particular (Olds 1996, Mitchell 1997, Wong and Salaff 1998, Hiebert 1998, 2000, Froschauer 1998, Ley 2000). In an unpublished paper Salaff (n.d.) reports research on the networks that facilitate the emigration of families with middle class background from the PRC, Taiwan and Hong Kong. She describes how engineers from each of these places organize their social

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<sup>5</sup>Legal resident aliens within the United States gain the right to petition for the entry of spouses and children, subject to certain numerical restrictions. Immigrants who naturalize to U.S. citizenship gain the right to petition for the entry of their spouses, unmarried children, and parents without numerical restriction, and for the entry of their married children and siblings (and their spouses and children) subject to numerical restrictions.

resources to emigrate and settle down. Her findings confirm the need for information among immigrants of all socioeconomic backgrounds, including people with more financial means. However, those who have opportunities for economic success in both places, the country of origin and the country of resettlement often choose to re-migrate. They lack sufficient ties in the host country (in this case Toronto) which could guarantee them the ability to maintain their high standard of living.

Networks within the settlement country are indeed crucial for immigrants to cope with the challenges of fitting into a new society (Tilly 1990: 93). The basic assumption is that newcomers settling in the proximity of established immigrants of the same ethnic background generally seem to be provided with more emotional and cultural support and various other resources, including initial housing and information about job opportunities; the latter can be translated into access to labor market niches and the acquisition of new skills (Waldinger 1996). However, differences in behavior and network utilization vary by gender and ethnic group.

Recently, more research has focused on the role of women in the immigration process (Grasmuck and Pessar 1991, Ho 1991, Foner 1998, Hagan 1998, Rose 1998, Pessar 1999, Hondagneu-Sotelo 1999, 2000, Mahler 1999, Salaff 2002). Men who work in groups with other co-ethnics have more access to information helpful to the adaptation process than women who work in jobs isolated from one another (Hagan 1998, Mahler 1999). The gender roles in each respective culture, the settlement patterns of ethnic group members and the proportion between the number of female and male migrants from the same country of origin also play a role in the networking activities of women (Grasmuck and Pessar 1991, Ho 1991, Foner 1998). Often, male immigrants have larger and more diversified networks at their workplace but contribute less to the establishment of strong ties in social circles which are needed in times of emergency.

In a study of the networks of Central American refugee women developed in the first six years of arrival in Canada, Rose et al. (1998) showed that most of the strong ties were with family and friends female refugees had met before or during the first three years of settlement (Rose et al 1998: 6). Opportunities to establish additional relations were found in language courses, the work place, through government service, volunteer work in community organizations, churches and the neighborhood. The latter provided diversification and help in areas in which strong ties with family members and friends had not been sufficient. However, access to weak ties with people in the larger community was difficult to establish. Often, immigrant women needed intermediaries,



i.e., strong ties, in the initial phase of settlement to open further opportunities for contact for themselves (Rose et al. 1998: 11).

Studies of gendered migration also reveal that women are usually more discontent with their lives than men when returning to their home countries (Margolis 1998: 117). In the case of women from the Dominican Republic it has led them to sabotage their return to a society where the division of labor by gender and social class would make their employment prospects nil (Grasmuck and Pessar 1992: 156). How these findings compare to the social networks of affluent immigrants, especially with respect to the function of relationships, needs further elaboration.

### ***Locations of network formation: Chinese community organizations***

While literature can be found on business activities (Tseng 1994, Zhou 1998, Li 1999) and political engagement in ethnic communities of immigrants from Taiwan (Chen 1992, Fong 1994, Fong 1996, Zhou 1998), specific information on the network of ethnic community organizations is not available. However, there is an older body of literature that describes traditional Chinese community associations. Since community organizations and the links between them inform about the structure of an ethnic community, an overview of traditional Chinese community organizations is expected to provide some reference points for the investigation of the ethnic community structures among immigrants from Taiwan.

As evident in the literature there are many similarities in the structures of historic Overseas Chinese communities, including Singapore (Friedman 1961, Topley 1961), Hong Kong (Fried 1958), various communities in Indonesia (Ryan 1961), Malaysia, Cambodia, (Willmott 1970), Thailand (Skinner 1957), India (Oxfeld 1993), Peru (Wong 1978) or North America (Weiss 1967, Thompson 1980 and others). Overseas communities used to be based on a system of interlocking memberships in different associations, which ultimately were hierarchically ordered under an all-encompassing 'Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association' (Skinner 1957, 1958, Wong et. al. 1990, Chan 1991). The basic organizing principle was kinship, or better quasi-kinship, that bounded people together on the basis of joint membership in an association. There were surname associations representing clan membership, professional associations representing occupations and trading societies, and association based on native place of origin. Common locality as an organizing principle had several levels depending on the actual composition of the community. Surname associations were basically the equivalent of 'same-village of origin' associations. In addition, some communities had 'same county of origin' associations or 'speech group'

associations, which included members from a certain region united by a joint dialect (Skinner 1957).

All the different types of associations had in common that they became cultural bridges enabling migrants to move from one kind of social universe to another. The segmentary, yet all encompassing and very transparent organization of Overseas Chinese communities of the past, occurred under specific circumstances. These communities were often trading outposts, small in size, geographically clustered (i.e., Chinatowns), and discriminated against by the host society. As a result, the urban Chinese abroad were autonomous and self-governing (Crissman 1967: 200).

The origins of this system have been debated. However, those who argued that the distinct pattern of community organization is a specific product of the overseas experience in response to the lack of extensive kinship ties experienced in the home culture, have been called to task. Today, scholars agree that the segmentary structure which constitutes the Overseas Chinese community resembles the structure of urban communities in the Chinese motherland and the organizing principle of Chinese society in general (Crissman 1967, Elvin 1973, see also Fei 1939, 1990 on concentric circles). *"The urban Chinese abroad are really in the same situation as was the urban population of traditional China. They must govern themselves without having noticeable governmental institutions, and their solution of the dilemma is the same (.....) The basic sociological principles that organize rural life - descent, locality, and occupation - are also used to order urban society - whether in China or abroad - made possible by the putatively temporary nature of immigration to cities"* (Crissman 1967: 200, 203).

In Chinese rural societies there was always a need of organizations to solve local disputes about the allocation of resources, such as the local territorial organizations, which criss-crossed agnatic structures and village units by taking care of specialized interests. When people moved to towns and cities within China the need for agencies that represented interests and regulated social life became even stronger (Topley 1961: 289).

A lot has changed since the days of clearly visible, clustered Overseas Chinese communities. In many countries where Chinese people have settled, the overall number of Chinese has increased, the settlement is dispersed and the people consider themselves to be permanent residents. What happened to the tradition of community associations? Crissman, a leading scholar of community structure observed the following: *"Partially assimilated Chinese participate in their various surname and locality communities inversely with the degree of their acculturation and*

*identification with the host population, their involvement growing weaker as the generations pass"* (Crissman 1967: 192).

Did that tendency persist and grow? The first tendencies towards an increasing differentiation were observed in the late 1950's in Singapore, where associations did not continue to form on the basis of common ancestorship. Instead, associations became more secular, based on education and personal interests (Topley 1961: 312). In Vancouver at the time, most Chinese organizations were still clan/surname/ancestor based and the 'Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association' continued to be dominant. However, with the visibly increased proportion of women among immigrants, youth clubs, sports clubs, and gambling clubs reported existence as well (Willmott 1964, see also Weiss 1974: 231).<sup>6</sup>

Change in the landscape of Chinese organizations in and around major Chinatowns of North America reflects the altered immigration laws beginning in the 1960's (Wong et al. 1990: 218). While traditionally membership in associations had been mandatory and the hierarchical structure of all associations represented by the 'Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Associations' had a despotic character as Wong et al.(1990) analyze, the newly emerging associations were truly voluntary in character. Based on either recreational, educational, employment or political interests (the latter as a response to the Civil Rights movement) they represented the new pluralism among Chinese immigrants (Wong et al. 1990: 228). However, leadership in the individual organizations and for the overall community was still clearly recognized and transparent for all community members.

In his analysis on changes in the Chinese community in Toronto, Thompson (1980) comes to the conclusion that the traditional community structure based on kinship and place of origin had been replaced by a class structure reflecting the changes brought by global economic restructuring. He attributes the changes to a greater number of immigrants present in any geographic locality in North America and the limits of upward mobility due to increased competition. With the influx of students, who became professionals after graduation, a "*new Chinese middle-class*" emerged in addition to the existence of a lower class, the Chinese service workers, and the petty bourgeoisie, the restaurant owners (Thompson 1980: 280). All had different interests and could not be organized according to joint ancestorship or joint locality anymore.

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<sup>6</sup>Willmott lists the ratio of men to women as 30:1 in 1870, 10: 1 in 1919 and 3:2 in early 1960's.

Although class structure continues to affect and determine interaction patterns among Chinese living in North America today, class is not the "total" organizing principle that kinship formerly was (Thompson 1980: 288). The image and reality of a joint Chinese community based on a single unified structure of adaptive organizations, *the Chinatown*, has come to an end. *"Most overseas Chinese communities, however, have become too diverse and the adaptive needs of their immigrants and resident members also too diverse for any set of organizations to monopolize all needed functions or claim all power to represent. Too many differing backgrounds and too many differing needs are now involved"* (Wickberg 1994: 83).

The diversity of Chinese people living in cities and metropolitan areas of North America has also produced some modern versions of community associations. Chinese branches of Lions and Rotary clubs operate as representatives of the Chinese bourgeoisie. Since the late 1980's the largest number of modern social organizations probably comprises the alumni and alumnae associations based on old school ties in the country of origin (Larry and Luk 1994: 157). They all serve the needs of new immigrants to re-establish social, business or professional networks. The principle of shared common background is still in practice for those in search of interaction partners.

It follows for this case study that Chinese culture seems to be fond of social institutions that represent the interests of people who share a common identity. Groups and associations are preferred forums for the establishment of relationships. Chinese culture has the notion of 'sameness' (tong) as a basis for 'guanxi' relationships, i.e., the establishment of obligations and benefits for one another.<sup>7</sup> In network terms it could be phrased that Chinese culture promotes the conscious search for "structurally equivalent people". It is therefore expected, that immigrants from Taiwan are interested in joining community associations as well.

What kind of associations do immigrants from Taiwan to Orange County favor? What role does ethnic identification play? Does a joint organizing principle for all community associations exist? These questions will guide the presentation of data on community organizations in South Orange County.

### **Studies of Social Networks in Communities in Taiwan**

The network studies perspective has not been directly applied to the study of rural or urban communities in Taiwan. However, there is literature that reports on social relations among

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<sup>7</sup> See introduction to the notion of 'guanxi' in the following section on networks in Taiwan.

members of Chinese culture in general. Although studies of overseas Chinese communities across the globe have not identified and measured ties in personal networks of community members, the network metaphor has been used to describe the interconnectedness between different communities and their world-wide spread of business relations (Skinner 1957, Redding 1993, Hamilton 1991, Ong et al. 1992, Weidenbaum 1996, Ong and Nonini 1997).

In addition, network analysis has been conducted within segments of mainland Chinese society. Danqing Ruan used an adaptation of Fischer's network questions (Fischer 1982, McAllister and Fischer 1983) regarding social and instrumental support for data collection on urban networks in Tianjin, PRC. One of the main findings of this study was the importance of co-workers in personal networks in comparison with network compositions in the United States (Ruan 1993, 1995). Bian (1997) collected data on the role of relationships in search of job opportunities in Nanjing. Nevertheless, these studies are looking at a subset of ties with specific functions and are less oriented towards the elicitation of community structure and cohesion. Furthermore, findings on present-day Chinese culture in mainland China are not transferable to generate knowledge on features of Taiwanese and Chinese individuals who grew up or still live in Taiwan.

Yet, general interaction patterns in Chinese and Taiwanese culture on Taiwan have been described by ethnographies (see Wolf 1968, Pasternak 1972, Cohen 1976, Ahern 1981, Gates 1981, Harrell 1982, Greenblatt et al. 1982, DeGlopper 1995, and others) They provide useful information on basic social structures. The main message underlying many descriptions is that the *"culturally distinctive values of Chinese culture give shape to Chinese organizational structure which, in turn shapes patterns of interaction"* (Greenblatt 1982: 23).

Two aspects of the structure of Taiwanese society are of interest for this study in terms of their network characteristics: the 'family' and the notion of 'guanxi'. Chinese and Taiwanese culture have many other relational components. However, these two provide the most reference points for the study of social networks of immigrants from Taiwan.

### ***The network of family relations in Taiwan***

Much has been written on the role of the family in Chinese society (Wolf 1968, Hsu 1971, Ahern 1981, Saso 1999). Traditionally Chinese culture views the family as rope or chain that extends *"endlessly backwards to the ancestors and forever forward to generations of yet unborn"* (Thornton and Lin 1994: 359). An individual is simply a link between the past and the future of family relationships, which is manifested in a complex structure created by reciprocal obligations,

support and exchange among kin group members. The influence of these values is visible in the Chinese business practices, often specified as "familism", and has been considered one of the reasons for the sustained success of Chinese entrepreneurs around the globe (Redding 1993). Small firms are run like a family and often base the selection of their workforce on extended kinship relations (Chang and Holt 1996).

However, changes in economic conditions due to the effects of modernization, such as the practice of flexible accumulation in late capitalism, have changed the structure of the family (Smart 1994, Greenblatt 1982). Greenhalgh (1984) introduces some changes in the urban society of Taiwan visible in the late 1970's. Since the government of Taiwan does not provide public sources of social security and small loans are unavailable for individual entrepreneurs, the family continues to be the most important facilitator of access to resources. The relations within hierarchically organized families are guided by a set of obligations, based on the premise that *"money has no past, no future, and no obligations, relatives do"* (Wolf 1968:23). This requires parents to accumulate wealth to facilitate education and property ownership for their children. In turn, children are bound to the family economy and have to support their parents in old age. *"In this fluid social environment the family emerges as the primary and most enduring claimant to an individual's loyalty"* (Greenhalgh 1984: 532).

Though the traditional model of the extended patrilineally organized Chinese family operating as one single household is less dominating today, the interaction between family members is still vital for economic success (Redding 1993). The relocation of many families in Taiwan from rural areas to urban place in search for better jobs, has loosened some of the grip of the extended family (Gallin 1979). However, the fabric of Taiwanese society is not based exclusively on independent nuclear families. Due to a gradual change after the second world war from families with large sibling sets to fewer family members, the role of women as actors who link families together and provide access to resources has gained importance (Greenhalgh 1984: 549, Ahern 1981, Gates 1981). Other than in the traditional social system, where daughters left the family for good and daughters-in-law severed most of their ties with their own extended family, women in present-day Taiwan nourish their kinship ties and make good use of them for business and other services.

An important effect of the practice of making use of all affine kinship ties, is the geographic spread of linkages between family members over long distances. Family ties integrate an increasing amount of space. This not only holds true for rural-urban spaces within in Taiwan, for which physical separation does not bring complete separation from the web of obligations that

comes with clan, kin group, and family membership, but also for ties across the globe, linking family members who study or work abroad (Greenhalgh 1984: 546). Obligations are felt across large distances. *"These links of goods and obligations tie Taiwan villages to Taiwan cities, and Taiwan cities to American and Japanese cities, making a mockery of our notions of bounded urban cultures"* (Greenhalgh 1984: 547).

Nevertheless, the role of the family continues to change. The family size is continuously shrinking and the separation between rural and urban life-style has become less and less significant. As a result, the opportunity structure for wealth accumulation and security is no longer based on family relations alone. It is likely that the role and extent of family ties for immigrants from Taiwan also has undergone changes in adaptation to family size, wealth accumulation, and other opportunities such as education and occupation. The extent of identification with family among affluent immigrants needs to be evaluated.

***'Guanxi': the network of obligations created by shared identities***

"The Chinese live in many climates, speak many languages, and follow widely differing customs. But they all share at least one thing: a strong and sophisticated belief that human relationships are more important than anything else. They are, indeed, so important that they cannot be left to the chance of individual idiosyncrasy but are governed by clear-cut and well-known rules to which everyone must conform" (Gates 1987: 5).

Extending the reflections put forth above, it is also instructive to look at Chinese concepts of interaction, community and society beyond the reach of the immediate family. Fei Xiaotong, the great anthropologist of China, once wrote that a member of Chinese culture sees him or herself as an individual embedded in concentric circles of society. In the core of all circles is ego, surrounded by his or her family, followed by the lineage, the special interest groups or association he or she is a member of, and lastly the larger society (Fei 1939, 1990). The traditional Chinese social system is not individual-based or society-based, but relation-based. It is rooted in the teachings of Confucius. Man is defined as a social and interactive being, not an isolated, separate entity. The social philosophy of relationships is founded on the Confucian principles of 'lun', which means a 'differentiated order.' The concept of 'lun' stresses differentiation between people, specifically fathers and sons, husbands and wives, seniors and juniors, superiors and subordinates

and so forth (King 1994). It is a system of complimentary social roles with distinct status differences.<sup>8</sup>

A Chinese person sees the world as a reflection of his or her relations to others and to the ways which unite them. The indigenous Chinese category for such a particularistic tie is 'guanxi', a 'significant relationship.' Roughly translated, 'guanxi' stands for 'to care for' (guan) in combination with the word for 'tie'(xi).<sup>9</sup> To have 'a guanxi' expresses the fact that two individuals are engaged in social exchange with each other. Relationships are multidimensional and are ranked in order of importance. Everyone stands at the center of his or her network of 'guanxi' produced by his or her own social influence (Fei 1990).

These ties are major determinants of the strength or closeness of interpersonal relationships in Chinese culture. Existing 'guanxi' can vary in terms of 'closeness' or 'distance' (Jacobs 1982: 210). People are closely bound to each other if they have 'renqing', human feelings, meaning emotional commitment to one another.<sup>10</sup> This 'human-heartedness' is a Chinese ideal that requires that people recognize and act on each other's essential humanity, regardless of externals. The emphasis of 'having renqing' is on the individual's responsibility to know, act and interact with others in certain prescribed ways, to be aware of social obligations and the request of generosity towards others (Tsui 1997). If a Chinese is accused of 'knowing no renqing' it means he is incapable of managing interpersonal relationships. He has violated his duty of proper conduct in his role opposite a superior or an inferior. Therefore the display of 'renqing' is important in establishing and maintaining a significant relationship, a 'guanxi'.

People can rely on those they have a close 'guanxi' with. Utilization of a 'guanxi' based on ganqing makes it either to attain one's objectives. Having a 'guanxi' allows actors to take advantage of the resources and status of the others in return for seeking out and meeting the needs of them (Jacobs 1982: 230). Mutual obligations have the function of claims on one another through personal involvement. The claims are rooted in the commonalities two or more people

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<sup>8</sup>In addition, the building of 'guanxi' always entails the recognition of a hierarchical relationship - and be it in the very subtle sense of "older and younger brother" or the person "seeking" the 'guanxi'-relation and the person "granting" the 'guanxi' relation. The recognition of "seeker" and "giver" is a very conscious and therefore intentional in Chinese culture. Following the principles of Confucius, 'guanxi' arises from the obligation of subordinates to fulfill ritual obligations to those of supposedly greater power and influence (Yang 1957, King 1994, Kipnis 1997).

<sup>9</sup>关系 (guan xi) = 1. relationship, connection, ties, 2. something that matters (as in the expression 没有关系 (meiyou guanxi) = it doesn't matter. The individual characters can be broken down and translated (based on entries from the dictionary) into 关 (guan) = 1. to care for someone, to guard, to involve 2. barrier, turning point; and 系 (xi) = 1. thread, 2. to bind, to attach to, 3. relation, consequences.

<sup>10</sup>人情 (renqing) = human feelings.



share. A Chinese individual can actively cultivate 'guanxi' and can expand the amount of 'guanxi' ties as well as influence the potential for further development of his or her 'guanxi web.'

However, there are limits to the total number of close 'guanxi' an individual can establish and sustain because maintenance requires effort, time and resources (Jacobs 1982: 211). Two individuals have potential for creating a 'guanxi' tie if they belong to a common collectivity such as a village, work group or educational institution. There has to be a common base on which to establish an alliance. According to Jacobs (1982), a base for a 'guanxi' exists when two or more persons have a commonality of shared attributes, identity, or origin. He found the most common factors for 'guanxi' in a township in Taiwan to be kinship, locality (native place), coworkers, classmates, surname, and teacher-student relationship.

The reach of these either ascribed (kin, locality) or achieved (work, school, other) bases of commonality is rather flexible. Kinship ties include in addition to agnatic kin affinal kin extending the web of obligations and benefits. Joint locality can bind two people who come from the same village together, but they can also establish relations in reference to a joint county or joint province. As introduced above, the recognition of joint native place of origin used to be a pillar of overseas Chinese community structures (Fried 1958, Crissman 1967). Chinese philosophy recognizes five of these sameness-relations (wutong guanxi ) which also include co-workers and classmates (Honig 1992, Croll 1994).<sup>11</sup> Ties based on the joint attendance of a school can be either direct, referring to the same class, or indirect, including all alumni of a school or university. Joint university cohorts have stronger bonds than joint elementary school ties (Jacobs 1982: 216). However, this depends on the context in which these 'guanxi' become useful. The elasticity of these bases of 'guanxi' allows individuals to use their social ingenuity to build a web of personal relationships.

People who share more than one commonality with another person or members of a group increase their opportunities for social interaction and mutual interdependence. A 'guanxi' is more beneficial and more binding if it is multi-stranded rather than single-stranded (Jacobs 1982: 229). The social network paradigm of strong and weak ties, as well as the notion of the 'dark side' of strong ties applies here. However, 'guanxi' ties are not based on choice but on obligations due to the joint belonging to an achieved or ascribed collectivity. Perquisites for such a ritual

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<sup>11</sup> 五同关系 (wutong guanxi) = five similarity relationships. The concept is applied in chapter 7.

acknowledgment of a relation is the identification of shared attributes two people have in common.

In absence of such a joint membership, a third person with overlapping associations to both parties, can act as a go-between and create the necessary link. 'Pulling guanxi' with remote persons or groups is the mobilization of a chain of interactive relationships to establish or deepen one's ties (Tsui 1997, King 1994, Jacobs 1982: 232).<sup>12</sup> People are very aware of this possibility and make use of it in times of political or economic crisis. Since 'guanxi' ties can be the basis of dyadic activities as well as group activities, they function as integrative forces bringing together people and groups through overlapping bases (Jacobs 1982: 223). 'Guanxi' are essential for the maintenance of community cohesion and solidarity (Greenblatt 1982: 20).

The basic function of 'guanxi' is to insure alliance in times of need. It binds people together beyond choice or sympathy. For this study the following questions are of interest. What is the role of 'guanxi' in Chinese culture today outside its continued usefulness in business and political interaction? Do immigrants from Taiwan still consciously establish 'guanxi' after settling in Southern California?

## **Immigration Studies: Interaction with the Larger Society**

### **Introduction**

Until the revival of large-scale immigration studies in the mid 1980's, the common wisdom was that once immigrants leave their ethnic enclave and move to the suburbs or other locations with diffuse settlement patterns and mixed ethnic residence there would be little chance that separate ethnic communities would develop, leading to the complete assimilation of immigrants (Park 1950, Lieberman 1961, Gordon 1964). As more recent work has shown, the maintenance and continuation of ethnic communities is less a matter of distribution than the extent of adaptation and incorporation into the larger society (Portes and Rumbaut 1996, Farley 1994, Portes 1995a, Chavez 1998, Hiebert 2000). The degree and mode of interaction with the mainstream society can be both a product of choice or a response to the forces of discrimination. Although ethnic groups may not disappear, there may be a change in the degree of co-ethnic cohesiveness. Even first generation immigrants who need little or no economic support from fellow ethnics group members

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<sup>12</sup> 拉关系 (la guanxi) = acquiring (dragging, pulling) guanxi ties, establishing a relationship through active coordination of acquaintances.

tend to prefer a less densely connected community structure.<sup>13</sup> Yet despite a reduction in ethnic spatial concentration and reductions in the degree of community connectedness, ethnic communities may continue to strive.

Investigation of the literature on immigration and immigrant incorporation is expected to yield insights and provide clarification for the set of questions that guided data collection and analysis of this research on immigrants from Taiwan. It is vital to learn about the nature of incorporation into mainstream society for immigrants from Taiwan. Are they considered acculturated, culturally assimilated, structurally assimilated, or integrated? Is structural assimilation still a necessary precondition for economic success outside the ethnic enclave? In addition, recent advances in transportation and communication technology have made opportunities for contact between geographically distant places such as the home country and the host country of immigrants more frequent and less expensive than in previous periods of immigration to the United States. Therefore, it is important to investigate the effects of these developments on the incorporation process.

### **History of Immigration Studies: the Classic Canon of Assimilation Research**

Historically, immigration studies that have explained the state of immigrant inclusion have produced a vast array of conflicting findings and interpretations. Some have assumed assimilation of immigrants as inevitable, while others have claimed that acculturation paired with the retention of ethnic characteristics, is the primary form of adaptation. However, the different circumstances of 'old immigrants', who arrived in large waves until 1924, and the 'new immigrants', who entered the United States after the implementation of the Hart-Celler Act in 1965, have forced researchers to reconcile between the two distinct periods to find appropriate terms to capture the process of immigrant incorporation. A few have created new concepts such as 'transnational migrants' or 'cultural citizenship' (Ong 1996, Mitchell 1997, Miron 1998, Faist 2000). Others have concentrated on specific aspects of old concepts and have developed closely related, but different terms such as 'segmented assimilation' (Rumbaut 1994, Portes 1995b, Zhou 1997a, Neckerman 1999).

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<sup>13</sup>This statement is based on a comparison of recent ethnic communities with ethnic enclaves established by immigrants of previous decades. It is also a response to economic resources the 'new immigrants' (i.e., those who arrived from countries in Asia after 1965) bring with them. Poor immigrants continue to choose strongly connected immigrant communities.

In examining the applicability of these often conflicting concepts for this study, it is important to be cognizant of the difference between studies that focus on second generation immigrants and those that focus on first generation immigrants. Furthermore, one needs to be cautious of some findings in immigration studies published over the past four decades in light of potential problems stemming from researcher bias (Gans 1999a and 1999b). Many recent studies of new immigrants have been compiled by 'insiders' who have immigrated themselves or were members of the ethnic groups they studied. Such 'outsider' versus 'insider' difference among researchers may have lead the former to interpret the adaptation process as acculturation, while the others consider it to be representative of ethnic retention and pluralism.

Recently, scholars of immigrant life have become increasingly concerned with the persistence and the adaptive role of immigrant ties and institutions rather than the process of change (Rouse 1991, 1992, Basch 1994, Smith 1997, Wong 1997, Ong 1997). The shift in focus from assimilation to adaptation reflects a reaction to the straight-line assumption of inevitable assimilation which, among other things, overestimates the success of the Anglo-Saxon ways of life.<sup>14</sup> It also emphasizes the conscious choice (i.e., agency) of immigrants in shaping their lives based on the strength and resilience of their relationships with both people and institutions as opposed to being passively "*acted on by the forces of change encountered in a new country*" (Kivisto 1990: 463).

Given this theoretical clash in the vocabulary used by scholars, past and present, who write about immigrant incorporation demands a closer look at the history of immigration research. Terms like 'assimilation', 'acculturation', 'pluralism', and 'melting pot' are loaded with historical baggage based on questionable assumptions and values. An overview of the different concepts and terms developed historically in the field of immigration and ethnicity studies will help in laying a proper foundation for an analysis of the present case study of immigrants from Taiwan.

### **The early anthropological view of acculturation and assimilation**

Anthropologists, in attempting to understand cultural change, were most likely the first group of social scientists to study the interaction patterns between ethnic groups. Culture change brought

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<sup>14</sup>This shift of some immigration scholars to a focus on immigrant adaptation and their efforts in retaining their cultural distinction in opposition to assimilation is discussed further below as the notion of "retentionists" (a term to identify scholars who argue that immigrant communities are successful in keeping their original lifeways and social structures alive). Related to the interpretation of immigrant life as adaptation to changing circumstances but not assimilation are recent writings on transnational activities, also discussed later in this chapter.

about through external factors, such as contact between different cultures was termed 'acculturation' by American anthropologists. British social anthropologists continued to call the process of change following sustained interaction 'culture-contact', while German anthropologists adopted the term 'acculturation', though only to a certain extent (Thurnwald 1932, Herskovits 1938). Anthropologists were particularly interested in the manner in which particular aspects of culture are modified more readily than others and some ethnic groups change more quickly than others.

Acculturation in general was considered to imply relative equality between the giving and receiving cultures during which some cultural aspects were adjusted and modified, whereas assimilation was defined as the process of transformation of a conquered culture through replacement by the ruling culture (Herskovits 1938: 7). Although it was assumed that acculturation did not entail a complete loss of indigenous culture, the definition included a directional component between a dominant and non-dominant group. In some cases, the direction may have depended more upon prestige than upon power.<sup>15</sup> However, in most observed cases the group who was ascribed higher prestige, also had more power, therefore driving the direction of acculturation towards an adaptation of the cultural aspects of the dominant group (Shibutani and Kwan 1965: 471).

### **Acculturation and assimilation according to the Chicago School**

While anthropologists were concerned with the dynamics between ethnic groups throughout the world, it was the field of sociology, specifically American sociology, that began to study immigration in a systematic fashion and had a major influence on the way immigrant communities have been studied, evaluated, and presented since the beginning of the 20th century (Persons 1987). In the early days of the so-called Chicago School, immigrants and their circumstances were the focus of many groundbreaking studies. This group of scholars' work on immigration, ethnic, and urban studies laid the very foundation of American sociology (e.g., Park and Burgess 1921; Park 1913, 1928, 1950; Thomas and Znaniecki 1927, Wirth 1928). Many members of the Chicago School who produced the now classic immigration research based their studies on second

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<sup>15</sup>The distinction between prestige and power is evident in the case of Chinese culture vis-a-vis the conquerors of China such as the Mongols and Manchus. These neighboring ethnic groups had more power and strength than the Han Chinese and were able to invade and control China as well as take over the throne of the emperor. At the same time they also admired the achievements of the Chinese culture in place, over time adjusted aspects of their own culture due to the sustained interaction with their subordinates, and added Chinese cultural elements to their own cultural repertoire.

generation immigrants mainly for reasons of accessibility and comprehensibility. In addition, they often used secondary source materials instead of directly interviewing immigrants. Further, their assessment of the process of adaptation and incorporation of immigrants has become the standard for comparison, but has also contributed to various controversies in immigration research (Gans 1999: 1304).

Subsequent research either built upon their conceptual notions or rejected them outright. To varying degrees the scholars of the Chicago School all expected that the integration of immigrants in the United States would lead to assimilation. The fundamental characteristic of assimilation theory was simple. 'Assimilation' was expected to be a straight-lined process that would be natural and evolutionary, and that, as time passed, would yield an inevitable outcome. In the early part of the 20th century, the Chicago School emphasized this "natural history" of ethnic relations, as best expressed in Park's race relations cycle (Park 1950). According to this theory the race relations cycle consists of stages of interaction through which immigrant or racial groups progress irreversibly: contact, competition, and adjustment, eventually culminating in assimilation (1950: 138-58). Evidence for the completion of this cycle was the presence of achieved upward mobility. Park's hypothesis regarding the contact between established populations and the populations of newcomers was that traditional forms of identification, including ethnicity that formed in a pre-urban setting, inevitably must weaken as individuals leave the insulated, protected rural environment and become exposed to people with radically different backgrounds, values and interests. A period of possible conflict is followed by the loss of traditional distinctions between groups.

While the Chicago School produced a theoretical model of the stages of the interaction between immigrants and the larger society, scholars failed to discuss what assimilation actually meant. Historically, the word has had two distinct meanings. According to earlier usage it meant 'to compare' or 'to make like'. Later usage of the term expressed the notion 'to take up and incorporate' (Park 1950: 204, original 1913: 66). That ambiguity remained until Milton Gordon (1964) broke down assimilation into several dimensions to better clarify the concept. He saw the concept of assimilation as being more multidimensional. Although the seven aspects of assimilation he

eventually identified are too detailed to be helpful for this research, the elaborations on his first two categories, cultural and structural assimilation, made an important contribution to the field.<sup>16</sup>

As Gordon defined it, 'cultural assimilation' required acculturation on the part of the immigrants becoming 'like' in cultural patterns, such as language, behavior patterns, and values. 'Structural assimilation', on the other hand, occurred only when the immigrants had been "*taken up and away from their previous ways*" in the sense that they moved out of formal and informal ethnic associations and other social institutions and were incorporated into the host society's groups and institutions. That included the large-scale entrance of immigrants and their descendants into the social cliques and clubs, including intermarriage, as well as the major educational, occupational, and political institutions on a primary group level (1964: 71). Yet acculturation of immigrants did not guarantee structural assimilation. According to Gordon's insights most immigrant groups were considered to be culturally assimilated. Structural assimilation had not occurred to any great degree, and was assumed unattainable for first generation immigrants.

Gordon's distinction aimed to provide a more exact conceptual tool to reflect the reality of the assimilation of immigrants and racial minorities in America. His assumption was, however, that structural assimilation leads to the destruction of ethnic group cohesiveness if primary relationships with the core society took place on a large enough scale and if there was increased intergroup marriage.

### **Early evaluations of the straight-line-assimilation model**

At any rate, students of immigration in the early part of the twentieth century were concerned with what the experience of immigration had done to immigrants' lives, and with the outcomes related to the process of incorporation. When the outcomes were conceptualized as acculturation and subsequent assimilation it usually meant "*becoming like the dominant population and conforming to Anglo-Saxon ways*" (Gordon 1964). Competing ideologies of immigrant adjustment discussed in American sociology, history and philosophy consisted of the 'melting pot hypothesis' and 'cultural and structural pluralism', also called 'ethnic pluralism'. In the same fashion social scientists discussed the concept of 'ethnicity'. The controversy was between the position that racial and cultural characteristics of a certain ethnic group were tied to specific classes and would

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<sup>16</sup>Gordon developed seven types of assimilation: cultural assimilation, structural assimilation, marital assimilation, identification assimilation, attitude recreational assimilation, behavior recreational assimilation and civic assimilation (Gordon 1964: 76). It was his assumption that once structural assimilation occurred, the other types would naturally follow.

disappear with upward mobility and that the characteristics of any ethnicity represented a separate and autonomous dimension of social structure (Portes and Stepick 1993).

Although the metaphor of the melting pot, first introduced in the late 18th century by historian Frederick Jackson Turner, became embedded in the ideals of immigrants entering the United States, and has been persevered in the American beliefs even to this day, it turned out to be mostly an illusion. In the places where melting may have occurred, it did so in a selective fashion. As a result, scholars developed several modifications. Some saw the melting of European immigrants as more of a three-way process. Protestants from different countries of origin intermarried, so did Catholics from Ireland, Italy, Poland and France and Jews of different previous destinations. Gordon thought of this process more as a 'multiple melting pot' which included the different religious dividers, the strata of intellectuals who actually did mix both religiously and ethnically, and the racial groups that were barred from becoming a part of this melting pot of people. While the cultural developments of the different subsocieties, as he called them, seemed rather similar, they all remained structurally separate, giving rise to the notion of 'structural pluralism' (Gordon 1964: 130-131).

These theoretical assumptions were supported by the famous accounts of different ethnic groups living in New York by Glazer and Moynihan entitled "Beyond the melting pot" (1963). Still others compared various ethnic groups further to assess the validity of the assimilation and melting pot hypotheses. Hraba (1979), for example, argues a kind of ethnic evolution whereby ethnic groups change their behavior, composition and representation over time because of contact with each other. Feagin (1978) sought to demonstrate in his examples that competition for power, and subsequent conflicts, between Anglo Saxon Protestant groups and other ethnic groups was making structural assimilation impossible, especially with respect to the black population.

However, ultimately it was Glazer and Moynihan's book that looked at the relationships between ethnic groups and the prospects for the elimination of ethnic boundaries. Their overall finding was that the melting pot did not happen and ethnic divisions were alive and well. Despite this reality, they ended the first edition of the book published in 1963 on an upbeat note and expressed their view that eventually ethnic groups would move closer to one another in this ongoing evolutionary process and any remaining differences would primarily be in terms of religion and race (1963: 315). However, by the time the second edition was printed seven years later, the authors had taken a more pessimistic outlook. As they pointed out in the new foreword, it was less religion that divided people, but rather ethnicity and race that dominated New York City's



ethnic group relations. Whereas in 1963 they debated the explanatory power of concepts such as assimilation and continued ethnic group recognition, by 1970 their focus had shifted to the relationship between ethnic group recognition and the separation of groups.

Ethnic identity had continued to persist. Ethnic self-consciousness, often fueled by emotions rather than any visible differences, helped to inhibit any kind of assimilation. Ethnic divisions endured because people chose to retain them. As Glazer and Moynihan summarize the limits to overcome ethnic differences, "*the adoption of a totally new ethnic identity, by dropping whatever one is to become simply American, is inhibited by strong elements in the social structure of the United States. It is inhibited by a subtle system of identifying, which ranges from brutal discrimination and prejudice to merely naming. It is inhibited by the unavailability of a simply American identity. One is a New Englander, or a Southerner, or a Midwesterner, and all these things mean something too concrete for the ethnic to adopt completely, while excluding his ethnic identity*" (Glazer and Moynihan 1970 -introduction: xxxiii).

Selective identities were especially active along class lines and often lead to voluntary segregation particularly with regard to settlement patterns. One example of voluntary segregation is that reported by Rosenthal (1960) who, in the late 1950's, studied a Jewish community in Chicago. He observed that the conscious choice of community members to live in high-status suburbs in combination with an emphasis on Jewish education for their children and adherence to Jewish rituals and celebrations all helped to keep the intermarriage rate stable for a while. This once again reflects the active avoidance of complete assimilation and the endurance of self-expression.

It also supports one of the most important contributions of Glazer and Moynihan to the understanding of persistent ethnicity, namely the role of ethnicity in the competition for scarce resources. Ethnicity continued in importance and even experienced somewhat of a revival in New York City in the 1960's primarily in response to the realities of American politics at the time, specifically several elections for mayor and governor (Glazer and Moynihan 1970: 301-310). Yet, this is not an isolated case. Similar scenarios have continued to be played out all over the United States. In many cities ethnic groups have become political interest group and ethnicity is now a legitimate way to make resource claims.

The view that ethnic groups, or more precisely groups who claim a common origin upon arrival in America, do compete with each other for resources thereby contributing to the continued awareness and maintenance of a group as an ethnic entity, is captured by the idea of 'cultural

pluralism' (Newman 1973).<sup>17</sup> This philosophy of immigrant adjustment claimed that newcomers will naturally settle in enclaves and strive to preserve the customs and ways of their country of origin, even planning to create a replica of the old society within the new society. Cultural pluralism considers the existence of distinct ethnic subcultures in a society which affect the way people think, feel, and act, as an expression of democracy, a cooperation of cultural diversities on equal footing. According to this theoretical perspective intermarriage can continue to be low while political, economic and civic interaction with other groups and their members thrives (Gans 1997, Reitz and Sklar 1997).

This idealistic picture of cooperation and tolerance between groups does not represent the situation of immigrant incorporation into American society, neither the situation of the 1960's and nor the situation of today. After all, maintaining separate subsocieties could also be interpreted as a conscious response to the exclusion from participation in the social activities of the core society. Along these lines Gordon viewed the continuation of ethnic affiliation more as a matter of structural pluralism than cultural pluralism (1964: 131). Ethnic differences are less obvious in behavior and values, because in many areas cultural assimilation has been realized. Instead, it is ethnic identity which continues to play a role in social interactions. The barriers between the social organizations of ethnic groups and the core society continue to exist. Since structural assimilation cannot be attained, structural pluralism represents the reality of minority life in America (1961: 284).

### **Studying Structural Assimilation at the Group Level**

Although Gordon has undeniably made important contributions to the study of immigrant adaptation, his approach was tailored to look almost exclusively at individual-level assimilation and failed to take into account how the embeddedness (i.e., linkages) of an ethnic group to other entities within a larger system influenced an individual's choices and actions. His argument does not adequately explain the reasons why individual actors prefer to stay involved in their ethnic group. In all fairness, it is important to note that he does make references to barriers of entry put up by the core society as well as the unwillingness of ethnic groups to surrender their own institutions. However, Gordon does not clarify the mechanisms underlying either the emergence or absence of assimilation. Nevertheless, his writings provides scholars with a framework for

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<sup>17</sup>According to Gordon it was Horace M. Kallen who coined this term in his 1915 publication "Democracy versus the melting pot".

determining the extent of assimilation present among members of any given ethnic group (Alba and Nee 1997: 837).

Overall, his preoccupation with linear assimilation as *the* model to understand immigrant behavior is too one-dimensional and insufficient to capture the range of variation in immigrant experiences. In addition, his definition of structural assimilation, though an important contribution to the clarification of the concept, is too narrow. It is hard to argue against his credo that it is only by entering into primary group relations that a separate ethnic identity will be erased, thus leading to the complete merger of immigrants with the core society. Nevertheless, I suggest that we should instead question the necessity and desirability of such a complete merger. After all, immigrants to the United States have found entrance to secondary institutions of occupational, educational, political, and religious life in the mainstream society. My argument is that their participation in these secondary groups is a form of structural assimilation. Therefore, it is much more critical to identify the mechanisms underlying secondary group structural assimilation, primarily because it contributes to a better understanding of the persistence of ethnic group affiliations. This is particularly important given the findings of recent studies that have shown ethnic attachment continues to be influential despite the entrance of immigrants into the economic, educational, and political spheres of the mainstream society (Foner 1987, Markowitz 1993, Waldinger 1996, Wong 1997, Zhou 1998). In this respect, it is more constructive to leave the individual approach to research on assimilation processes behind and move onto the research that examines the incorporation process at the group level.

An important focus of this work is the analysis of the mode of immigrant incorporation from a social boundary perspective and in reference to a self-defined and recognized community of immigrants. The rationale behind this approach is that an individualistic perspective looking at single immigrants and their success in fitting into the mainstream society is only interesting in terms of the reciprocal effect between group process and individual attainment. The main assumption is that individuals who have ethnic institutions at their disposal, such as community associations, religious groups, and political representations to name a few, might get involved in them and use their services. Yet, in cases where individuals participate in institutions of the larger society and there is no influx of new immigrants to keep the ethnic institutions alive, the ethnic community will cease to exist (Alba and Nee 1997, Breton 1964, Gordon 1964). Also important from a group perspective, is the fact that the number of immigrants with similar ethnic background who settle in a geographic area has a direct influence on the nature of interaction patterns of

individual immigrants. The more immigrants from the same place of origin are living in an area, the greater the need to understand the group structure and dynamics as well as the interaction between the ethnic group and the larger society.

Although it is often assumed that assimilation is an individual process, I argue that the process has also an important collective component. Individuals are part of networks of relations that can take on a variety of structural forms. The development and change in such structures is inextricably linked to the extent of overlapping relations among members with ethnic and mainstream identities. Migration involves not only a series of individual transformations in the direction of a dominant culture, in this case the American culture, it also involves negotiation of new relationships both within and across networks (Tilly 1990: 87). Those endowed with the human and financial capital among the new wave of immigrants arriving after 1965 had less need to rely on collective efforts to meet the challenges of adaptation. This stands in contrast to earlier immigrants who had limited knowledge of the new culture and language, and had limited financial and human capital. As a result, there was a greater need for the adaptive benefits associated with social interaction with co-ethnics and fellow immigrants.

Social interaction within ethnic groups and with members of other groups, i.e., the mainstream society, is the main focus of this study and is expected to reveal insights about the nature of the incorporation of immigrants from Taiwan.

### **Barriers to Structural Assimilation?**

#### ***Institutional completeness***

Reduced opportunities and incentives for interacting socially with members of other ethnic groups may result from conditions within the ethnic groups themselves. An ethnic group that provides all the social, political, and economic services essential for their members have less incentive to see interaction outside the group. Breton (1964) labeled this phenomenon 'institutional completeness'. He viewed immigrants as having three options upon arrival in the new country: 1) to be integrated in the native community, in other words the core society; 2) form their own ethnic community; or 3) become members of another ethnic community different from their own. The degree of involvement in one's own ethnic community will depend on the type of relations and organizations available within that group. In cases where only informal relations exist and there are no formal organizations, affiliations can develop in either direction, towards more contact with fellow ethnics or towards incorporation into the core society. The more ethnic related associations an

ethnic group has, in which the majority of social relations take place, the more influence the associations have on the personal networks of immigrants (Breton 1964: 201).

Whenever the existence of formal organizations in the mainstream society restrict social relations to unfold almost exclusively among ethnic group members, immigrants will be much more inclined to integrate with their co-ethnic community than the core community. In this case the ethnic community simply offers substitute institutions to those found in the mainstream society (Breton 1964: 199). Breton defines the most developed form of an ethnic community as follows: *"Institutional completeness would be at its extreme whenever the ethnic community could perform all the service required by its members. Members would never have to make use of native institutions for the satisfaction of any of their needs, such as education, work, food, clothing, medical care, or social assistance"* (Breton 1964: 194).

Breton's recognition of the various degrees of completeness in these processes is important. Some ethnic communities supply some services but rely on other ethnic communities for the joint provision of other important institutional functions (e.g., medical care, training and job opportunities). Ethnic communities experience a kind of life cycle unfolding from an almost exclusive reliance on informal group relations to fairly well-structured informal multi-purpose groups, to groups that have more formal organizations as well as dominant all-inclusive organizations that represent the whole community. Communities may disappear over time if no new migration occurs or integration into the core society increases. Breton makes the claim that even though institutional completeness is achieved within an ethnic group, it will not necessarily prevent integration into the larger society from eventually taking place (205).

Certainly, his elaboration on the life-stages of communities and degrees of completeness is a useful and important contribution. But the description of achieved institutional completeness in all areas of life is still too conceptually narrow to be applicable to a wide range of cases. For example, institutional completeness might lead to separation or even marginalization of an ethnic group. Historic Chinatowns are good examples for illustrating ideal types of institutional completeness. Whereas institutional completeness definitely helps to maintain boundaries between groups, I argue that it is the completeness of social rather than economic and political organizations that foster the persistence of ethnic attachment.

***Social capital and group cohesion***

The production and maintenance of social capital is another reason to sustain ethnic networks in well established and "institutionalized" ethnic communities (Portes and Sensenbrenner 1993).<sup>18</sup> Ethnic communities can act as centripetal forces drawing members together based on claims, for example, of solidarity, particularly when there is friction with the host society. The resulting social embeddedness of individuals within the web of ethnic social relations has both positive and negative consequences. The social capital accumulated through dense interactions among group members can produce greater trust, emotional support, and social and economic security on the one hand, but can also lead to a highly constricted social environment marked by restrictive norms. Social capital can facilitate further contacts, help to move others towards political goals, and contribute to economic success. Access to social capital, the possibility to create connections with others, and the value of social capital, the actual outcome of a relationship and interaction between two parties, varies across individuals. Yet having social capital always comes with the expectation to involve others towards some outcome. Portes and Sensenbrenner redefine social capital as: *"those expectations for action within a collectivity that affect the economic goals and goal-seeking behavior of its members, even if those expectations are not oriented toward the economic sphere."* (Portes and Sensenbrenner 1993: 1323).

For immigrant groups the relation between group cohesion and social capital can be grounds for tension. The existence of social capital among members of an ethnic group can be a source for economic and emotional support and security. Yet at the same time the resulting high degree of group cohesion also restricts group members' ability to engage in relationships with non-ethnic group members. A groups' social capital can actually be an obstacle to change and further adaptation. Relationships outside a cohesive ethnic group could provide access to further economic advancement in form of, for example, education and jobs. On the other hand, for immigrants who actively strive to diversify their ties in order to accumulate more social capital without concern for ethnic affiliations, added ties could undermine their legitimacy within the very ethnic group that provides support.

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<sup>18</sup>A detailed discussion of the literature on "social capital" goes beyond the scope of this study. Suffice it to say that most contemporary discussions are based on the definitions of the concept originally presented by Bourdieu (1986) and later Coleman (1990). The concept of social capital simply points out that individuals, families and groups benefit from sociability. Later discussions on the boundaries of the concept and its applicability took place. Recently scholars have acknowledged the "dark side" of social capital, which can force individuals to do things out of obligation to others or a larger entity without gaining personal benefits, possibly even leading to the loss of benefits.

The crucial distinction for the individual immigrant is whether an ethnic group tolerates a variety of in-group and out-group relations or requires ethnic group members to interact exclusively with co-ethnics. Discrimination towards immigrants notwithstanding, adaptation to and interaction patterns with the mainstream society differ tremendously in response to the acceptance of ethnically mixed social networks. When an ethnic group accepts members from the outside, it opens up the option for group members to be both integrated and ethnically attached at the same time (Fugita and O'Brien 1991).

However, reflecting back on Gordon's assumption that structural assimilation leads to the destruction of group cohesiveness runs counter to the above assertion. If primary relationships with the core society occur on a large enough scale, it ultimately leads to group intermarriage. These propositions were first questioned by Reitz (1980) who saw structural assimilation and ethnic group cohesiveness as two distinct and different phenomena. He considered both participation in the social institutions of the larger society and in those of the ethnic community as separate, yet compatible forms of social participation. This insight was later validated by Fugita and O'Brien's study (1991) of Japanese American communities.

### *Ethnic solidarity*

Is structural assimilation impossible to attain for immigrants whose ethnic groups have a high degree of cohesiveness? Gordon's notions would be supported if it can be demonstrated that only individuals might be able to break out of their group and assimilate, but the majority of members in an ethnic group will not be successful to assimilate as a group. Yet it is often the membership in a group that enables people to make use of the opportunities within the framework of American society.

Supporters of the 'ethnic solidarity theory' each have a slightly different take on it. All of them look at immigrant incorporation from an economic point of view. For them assimilation to the mainstream society is first of all a question of economic assimilation. Under classic assimilation theory, economic assimilation is one stage in the process to complete structural immersion of a minority group. An introduction and discussion of the concept of 'economic assimilation' follows in the next section. Bonacich and Model (1978) see racial discrimination as the main force that pushes minorities to huddle together and develop their own economy. Light (1972, 1988) considers ethnic solidarity to be a product of the respective culture of any ethnic group. Ethnic traditions and an effective system of kinship networks make business success possible. Absence of

such values and networks will not lead to economic success. Based on a study of Korean merchants in New York, Min (1996, 2000) found that ethnic solidarity arises out of the context of specific situations. When Koreans were unable to find adequate employment, their collective perception of disadvantages and expectations of economic mobility lead them to cooperate in establishing small businesses.

These different contributions have supported the interpretation of others that enclave economies are viable alternatives to assimilation. Yet as mentioned earlier in discussions of institutional completeness for post-1965 immigrants, the need for a complete set of ethnic economic institutions does not exist for immigrants who arrive with various forms of human and financial capital and sometimes even with social capital already in place. More importantly, however, are the types of social interaction in which they are engaged. Interacting with co-ethnics is a source of comfort and acceptance as well as a framework for building relationships that can help to sustain the assets brought to the host country. They also ensure the availability of further opportunities.<sup>19</sup> Economic survival and mobility are still the driving force for immigrant choices and actions, yet they are no longer executed in exclusively or predominantly ethnic workplaces or businesses. These goals are secured through the social sphere, which is the main focus of this research.

### ***Ethnic attachment***

Continued ethnic attachment, also labeled "ethnic retention" by some, has long been considered to be an obstacle to the upward mobility of immigrants (Reitz and Sklar 1997). This assumption needs to be reevaluated in light of the characteristics of present day immigrant groups. Recent research has reversed the negative connotation of ethnic retention viewing it more as a successful strategy for socioeconomic improvement. Indeed, ethnic attachment has persisted despite early predictions of the fading influence of ethnic affiliation for subsequent generations of immigrants. Furthermore, the type and consequences of attachment have changed over time, even for first generation immigrants, due to changing immigration policies, changing global circumstances, and the changing profiles of recent immigrants.

The theory of the race relations cycle assumed that all immigrants would have to start at the bottom of the economic scale and work their way up over time. The more assimilated they were

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<sup>19</sup> Although often a product of perception, not all anticipated types of discrimination by the majority culture are actual discrimination. Many affluent immigrants from China also shun interaction with people of different educational and class background out of sense of superiority justified by a worldview based on Confucian guidelines (see Ong and Nonini 1997).



the higher would be their economic achievements. As it turns out, immigrants can be culturally assimilated and yet experience little upward mobility, as it is the case for many immigrants from Central America and the Caribbean today. On the other hand, upward mobility is possible for highly skilled immigrants who work in well-paid professions or as entrepreneurs. If they are engaged in extensive traveling between the United States and their country of origin they might not even be exposed to extensive cultural assimilation. Thus leading to upward mobility with little or no assimilation.

It is with respect to these observations that recent scholars have proposed a revision of the proposition that ethnic attachment leads to reduced opportunities for social and economic advancement in the United States. For the specific case study to be discussed here, it is particularly important to look at the divisions in the economic and social spheres of interaction for first generation immigrants. Immigrants have less need to participate in the primary social groups of the mainstream society if they have equal opportunities for participation in the broader economic system. While many views of immigrant incorporation consider ethnic attachment as having economic costs and inhibiting access to economic resources, this study questions these assertions and suggests a theoretical caveat.

As long as immigrants establish and maintain a range of weak contacts with other people in the overall economic sector of a society, few economic barriers will remain. Personal relationships outside the economic sphere that function to provide emotional support and opportunities for recreational activities do not necessarily need to overlap with work or business relationships, since there is no strong incentive for the combination of social and economic relations. It has also been observed that interethnic discrimination tends not to take place in the realm of business and work relations rather in non-work setting as in choices of partners for after hour social interaction. Individual choices to interact with people of different ethnic backgrounds does not merely have economic costs, it has first and foremost social costs. *"By social costs, we refer to the exclusion of minority group members from informal groups, social networks, and community organizations and institutions typically dominated by members of the majority ethnic and racial groups* (Reitz and Sklar 1997: 267).

Although exclusion from the majority group's social sphere may not have economic implications, and is therefore rarely seen as a punishment, it eventually keeps ethnic group members from participating in higher level economic and political decisions by imposing a 'glass ceiling' to upward mobility (Woo 1999). It may also serve to reinforce the cohesion of the ethnic

group, something that might not always be desirable depending on the value system of the society at large. Interestingly, Reitz and Sklar found in their study of immigrants to Canada that while economic costs do evolve and accumulate for European immigrants, who do not engage in social activities with members of the core society, that is not necessarily the case for non-European immigrants (Reitz and Sklar 1997: 269). This represents a very specific form of discrimination along color lines. It also provides further support for the idea that entrance into the primary groups of a society is not a satisfactory condition for successful integration of non-European immigrants.<sup>20</sup> In regions with sufficient numbers of co-ethnic immigrants, individuals may be able to interact and participate on an equal footing in the economic, educational and even political sectors of a society, but may refrain from extensive social participation.

Such choices are often responses to experiences with discrimination, especially on the part of phenotypically different immigrants. Even for individuals with high socioeconomic status and a long history of settlement in the United States there may not be a possibility for social and structural assimilation in the sense of entry into primary group institutions. Some members of ethnic groups actually practice 'adhesive sociocultural adaptation' (Hurrh and Kim 1984: 189). The term refers to ethnic group members who are assimilated into American society in terms of both cultural practices and social interaction patterns, while still maintaining ethnic attachments and practices. Immigrants retain their own culture to satisfy their primary group needs while adapting to the demands of the new society as much as possible (i.e., as facilitated by the majority). The acquisition of American culture is not accompanied by a detachment from their culture of origin. Immigrants do not replace one culture and set of relations with another (Hurrh and Kim 1984: 205).<sup>21</sup>

To settle the question regarding the relation between degree of ethnic group cohesion and mode of incorporation into the mainstream society, including the possibility of structural assimilation, an analysis of the personal networks of ethnic group members is expected to be instructive. In addition, the study of associations and organizations within an ethnic community, their types, functions, evolution, and interconnections will give greater insights into the factors underlying the process of ethnic incorporation and integration.

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<sup>20</sup> Again, primary group refers to social clubs such as fraternities, churches, self-help groups, but also families - which would requests wide-spread intermarriage.

<sup>21</sup> A prominent example of a combination of assimilation to customs of the mainstream society and continued attachment to one's own ethnic group is the conversion to Christianity among Chinese immigrants (see Palinkas 1988, Lee 1996, Yang 1998).

### **Extensions of the Classic Assimilation Literature: Economic and Spatial Assimilation**

Returning to the discussion of sustained ethnic attachment among ethnic groups created by the new wave of immigrants after 1965 and its relationship to the development of immigration studies, I now turn to the work that modified and extended the idea of straight-line assimilation.<sup>22</sup> The interest in immigration studies started to wane in the late 1960's due to reductions in the number of immigrants. But the increased interest in ethnic participation in the civil rights movement was also a factor. Scholars began to realize that the straight-line assimilation model could not deliver an adequate explanation and that the process of immigrant incorporation was far more complex and differentiated than previously thought.

More recently Gans (1992) coined the term 'bumpy-line assimilation' to capture the variations in development and different stages of economic and social attainment but still upheld the notion that distinct immigrant groups would eventually disappear. In the meantime, the differential and selective mode of structural assimilation needed further scrutiny. The economic and political success of some immigrant groups accomplished without complete immersion in the core society needed to be explained. In an extension of the classic assimilation literature, scholars created two new foci for investigation, the process and degree of 'economic assimilation' and the extent of 'spatial assimilation' (Massey 1981, 1985, Farley 1994, Portes 1995a, Chiswick 2000, Logan 2000, among others). Both concepts, including related terms such as 'socioeconomic assimilation' and 'residential assimilation', were considered to be levels of immigrant immersion achieved on route to complete structural assimilation (Alba and Nee 1997).

#### **Economic assimilation**

In a typology of economic activities of ethnic group members, economic assimilation is viewed in opposition to an 'ethnic enclave economy'. The common notion of an 'ethnic enclave' or ethnic niche such as a Chinatown, Little Tokyo or Little Italy in large American cities conceives of them as clearly outlined geographic space with a high degree of co-ethnic residential clustering and an almost exclusive concentration of ethnic businesses. These businesses and firms cater to outsiders as well, but the ethnic enclave economy is largely self-sustaining. 'Economic enclaves' or 'ethnic enclave economies' are special cases of a general 'ethnic economy' (Light et al 1994).

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<sup>22</sup>Straight-line assimilation is often associated with the writings of Warner and Srole (1945) and their prediction that each subsequent generation of immigrants will be one step closer to complete assimilation. Park and Gordon do indirectly, though not outspokenly, support this view as well. They are all representatives of the old canon of immigration and assimilation literature.

An ethnic enclave economy is spatially defined as an overlap of ethnic business districts and ethnic residential clusters. They offer job opportunities for ethnic group members who do not have the necessary language abilities and other skills to compete in the mainstream economy. Ethnic businesses find protected markets, cheap labor, and adequate financial support. The large body of literature regarding ethnic enclaves and ethnic enclave economies contributed greatly to the development of segmented labor market theory, that posits that a two tier system of economic differentiation and operation exists in the United States and elsewhere (Light and Bonacich 1988, Zhou and Logan 1989, Waldinger and Bozorgmehr 1996, Portes and Stepick 1993, and others).

However, among post-1965 immigrant groups ethnic enclave economies are not very common. Nevertheless, strong ethnic cooperation in specific business areas continued to thrive. Such specialization include, for example, Korean operated groceries, German beer breweries, and Taiwanese computer hardware stores. In the cases where larger numbers of immigrants settle in a geographically dispersed pattern it has also been observed that one can still find a large variety of ethnically owned business providing a complete line of services (Zhou 1998, Li 1999). But these ethnic businesses no longer fit the spatial criteria of an ethnic enclave or ethnic enclave economy. It is therefore more accurate to speak more generally of an ethnic economy.<sup>23</sup> In this respect economic assimilation is a step further towards complete participation in the core society. It is defined as "*an ethnic population that is widely dispersed, with business owners offering goods and services typical of the majority business population*" (Waldinger et al. 1990: 125).

### **Revisions to the economic assimilation model: the concept of 'segmented assimilation'**

A related stage of economic assimilation, socioeconomic assimilation, is reached when economic assimilation has taken place in combination with occupational mobility (Alba and Nee 1997: 835). It is assumed that the possibility for immigrants to enter the occupational and economic realm at all levels within the core society will serve as incentives to strive for structural assimilation in the social sphere as well. Indications for increasing trends in social and occupational mobility were thought to include increasing rates of intermarriages, educational attainment, job skills, length of

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<sup>23</sup> Portes and Jensen (1992) emphasized the spatial aspect of an ethnic enclave economy. For a more detailed discussion on the ethnic labor market and conflicts between ethnic employers and employees see Waldinger (1990) on the dual labor market and informal economy. On the ethnic mobility trap see Wiley (1967). Bonachich (1977) was the first to introduce the term middlemen minority, a stage between ethnic enclave economy and general ethnic economy. Middlemen minority relationships between a business owning immigrant group and its customers, leads to a more dispersed pattern of settlement, as the distribution of the group's businesses then increasingly resembles the distribution of the general population (Bonacich and Model 1980).

stay since immigration, English proficiency, and levels of exposure to American culture (Lieberson 1961, Greeley 1976, Alba 1985).

Instead, studies on post-1965 immigrants showed that some groups achieve upward mobility faster and with fewer constraints (e.g., Taiwanese, Indians, Iranians), while a vastly greater struggle has been faced by other immigrant groups (e.g., Mexicans, Salvadorians, Haitians). Some new immigrants bring their high social status with them and often are able to sustain a comparable status in the United States. Of course, these 'high status' immigrants have entered during earlier waves of immigration as well. What is remarkable about the present environment of immigration are the large number and overall proportion of well-to-do immigrants among all new immigrants (Waldinger and Bozorgmehr 1996). *"In upscale middle-class suburbs, wealthy immigrants with 'bags' of monies buy up luxurious homes and move right in, jumping several steps ahead and bypassing the traditional bottom-up order"* (Zhou 1997: 979).

A related type of immigrant, the 'high human-capital' immigrant, does not arrive with large financial resources, but rather with extensive human resources. Education and training enables these immigrants to achieve occupational mobility in a shorter time span and without the need for structural assimilation. This is simply due to the fact that they are needed in the American workforce (Chen 1996, Ripley 2000: 27). Many well-educated immigrants from Asian countries, the Middle East, and Russia experience accelerated occupational and social mobility without having to replace the social and emotional support residing in attachments to their ethnic community. Their incorporation into the secondary level institutions of the American society happens much faster and with less hurdles in comparison to West and East European immigrants arriving before the 1920's.

In contrast to these highly mobile immigrants are those immigrants whose origin is in Central America or the Caribbean, as well as from areas of some areas of Asia, and who have fewer opportunities for occupational mobility. Many people entering the United States from these regions arrive with lower levels of education and financial resources. The economic restructuring of the U.S. economy has created a bimodal immigrant labor market. There is increased demand for highly skilled workers, while there is only moderate demand for unskilled labor, labor that provides limited opportunities for economic mobility (Alba and Nee 1997: 855).

In fact, within some second generation immigrant groups there has been a visible decline in the social status of the parent generation. Such immigrants are part of a vicious cycle, which forces many poor immigrants with little education and menial jobs to reside in the poorer urban areas of

the United States, areas that mostly home to poor African Americans. The schooling offered in these neighborhoods is often insufficient, and thereby fails to give the second generation the necessary skills to get ahead in the U.S. economy. In addition, youngsters identify with the community in their neighborhood. This in turn influences how they are perceived by the core society. They are considered to be part of the inner-city culture of poverty and low socioeconomic attainment. Despite economic and cultural assimilation among co-ethnics there are limited avenues for occupational and social mobility. They lack the same opportunities to pursue the higher education needed to obtain high-status jobs when compared to the more "fast track" immigrants. Thus interaction between these poorer groups of immigrants and the host society will lead to a downward path of incorporation (Zhou 1997).

The original notion of socioeconomic assimilation is not applicable here. The opportunity structure which facilitated upward mobility for most immigrants during the previous peak period immigration of the pre-World War I era became much narrower. Chances for pursuing higher education and high status jobs have become differentiated due to the various forms of capital brought by immigrants to the United States (Alba and Nee 1997: 835-836). Assimilation today might work very differently for different groups of immigrants. While it was class not color which shaped the fate of the white ethnics arriving at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century, today it is often the color of the skin which can be an obstacle to upward mobility, particularly if immigrants lack sufficient levels of human capital. This is especially true for the second generation of darker-skinned immigrants with less marketable skills.

Gans (1992) calls this the 'second generation decline', and Min Zhou (1997a) and Alejandro Portes (1995b) label the differential process of immigrant mobility 'segmented assimilation'. Segmented assimilation has been a very influential idea in framing discussions in immigration research over the past several years, particularly with regards to recognizing the bimodal distribution of socioeconomic attainment for different immigrant groups.

One way for parents to prevent their children's identification with lower status groups is to delay acculturation. Otherwise acculturation will lead to the experience of an economy of declining real wages and the "oppositional" culture of the American poor for the second generation. Zhou (1993, 1997) sees a third possible way for second generation immigrants to escape this downward assimilation by remaining tied to ethnic economies and subcultures. Adhering to the cultures, values, and communities of their parents, the children of immigrants may enjoy a better chance at economic success and even, paradoxically, social acceptance by natives,

but only if they remain separate from the less successful minorities in the United States into which they are at risk of assimilating.

The segmented assimilation theory mirrors the fact that nowadays immigrants are absorbed by different sections of American society, ranging from affluent middle-class suburbs to impoverished inner-city ghettos. Yet an explanation for the reasons why some immigrant groups are susceptible to the downward path of incorporation or to a permanent stand-still, while yet others experience upward mobility, despite a lack of resources, is somewhat problematic. Both together and separately Zhou (1997a) and Portes (1995b, 1997) have pointed out that strong networks and community cohesion, characterized by the multiplexity of relationships and low incidence of structural holes, will foster upward mobility even for immigrant groups with less resources. The more social capital available to members of a strong ethnic community, the lower the probability of downward assimilation (Portes 1995b: 258, 262). Dense social networks, which are assumed to facilitate the accumulation of social capital are thought to keep group members integrated with one another (Zhou 1997a).<sup>24</sup> Although it is certainly an important finding that some immigrant groups are more successful than others due to community cohesion, it may be misleading to explain this in terms of strong and tightly bound networks. One of the goals of the present study is to shed light on the relationship between sustained economic success of immigrants and ethnic group cohesion.

### **Spatial assimilation**

Another extension of classic notions of assimilation research can be found in work on the residential location of immigrants. Scholars of the Chicago School early on identified a relationship between the choice of housing location and the process of assimilation (Burgess 1967). They assumed that immigrants arrived with few resources and therefore had to move to in less desirable neighborhoods thereby creating spatial clusters of fellow poor immigrants. As immigrants moved up the social ladder and their economic situations improved, they were able to save more money eventually being able to afford better housing in better neighborhoods (Fong and Wilkes 1999). Neighborhood attainment, therefore, has been considered to reflect the degree of assimilation among immigrants. Settling in close proximity to Anglos, or in other words, living in neighborhoods with a high percentage of non-Hispanic whites, is supposed to reflect interaction

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<sup>24</sup>Both authors cite the communities of Vietnamese in Orange County and Cuban-Americans in Miami as successful examples and Mexican and Haitian ethnic groups as unsuccessful examples.

with the majority and socialization of immigrants at the individual level. On a structural level, location of residence allegedly influences access to resources such as health care services, educational facilities, employment opportunities, and public safety services (Massey and Denton 1985).

Over time, the spatial assimilation model gained importance in the quest to better explain developments in the incorporation of immigrants. The model grew out of the status attainment perspective and the ecological model of settlement patterns that saw as important the structural characteristics of an environment and the population demographics.<sup>25</sup> It predicts that cultural assimilation and upward mobility will eventually lead to the dispersed settlement of immigrants. *"As social status rises, therefore, minorities attempt to convert their socioeconomic achievements into an improved spatial position, which usually implies assimilation with majority groups"* (Massey and Denton 1985: 94).

The focus on location attainment of immigrants is particularly important because of the rapid suburbanization in the United States that has taken place since the building boom of the 1950.<sup>26</sup> It has changed the spatial structure of North American cities from concentrated and highly centralized clusters of buildings into scattered, decentralized and sprawling metropolitan areas (Massey and Denton 1988: 592). With the exception of some traditional regions in the United States, such as the Northeast, that controlled the influx of newcomers through varying policies, financial means are generally the only barriers to entry into these neighborhoods.

In the field of sociology researchers have aimed to capture existence and absence of residential segregation and integration in terms of ethnic group separation or inclusion, both at the individual and the aggregate level (Massey and Denton 1985, 1987, Logan, Alba and Leung 1996, Alba and Logan 1993). Several components in different analyses have been selected to assess the applicability of the spatial assimilation model. Studies which measured increased residential exposure to the majority population included variables such as occupational status and income (Alba and Nee 1997:859). The latter was often attributed to the fact that immigrants with professional skills will move to any location which offers them the desired occupation, independent of the settlement locations of co-ethnics. Level of education completed before arrival

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<sup>25</sup>The ecological model stressed that both residential segregation and residential assimilation should be explained based on structural characteristics of a city in conjunction with demographic forces: the growth rates of different populations, the growth rate of suburbanization, the rate of new housing construction and the occupational status of groups. In other words, researchers should take into account the history of migration, of housing development and the socioeconomic configuration of populations and neighborhoods (Taeuber and Taeuber 1965: 70-77).

<sup>26</sup> For further information see section on urban studies below.



or in the United States, proficiency in the English language, and citizenship were expected to have an effect on residential integration as well (Lieberson 1961). Access to desirable locations was also facilitated by the demographic composition of an immigrant household (married couples with children were expected to invest more in locations), the age of the household head, and generational status (Alba and Logan 1993: 1407). In addition, chances of moving to the suburbs were thought to improve with the duration of immigrant stay in the host country (White, Biddlecom and Guo 1993). Lastly, desegregation was considered more likely to take place for immigrant groups who had weak ethnic identification.

Findings from tests of the spatial assimilation hypothesis based on census tract data (i.e., demographic information for a specific area of land) showed that, indeed, the model did predict desegregation for Hispanic and Asian immigrants based on socioeconomic attainment and other variables.<sup>27</sup> In fact, Asians were found to be more likely to share a tract with non-Hispanic whites than with other Asians (Massey and Denton 1988: 622, Farley and Frey 1994). However, the model failed in predictions for African-Americans. Segregation between white and black residents continued to be strong in both inner-city and suburban locations throughout the United States well into the 1980's.

Changes to these patterns began to emerge in the 1990's. The lowest segregation between blacks and whites could be found in recently built metropolitan areas in the South and the West of the United States (Massey and Denton 1985: 104). The construction of new subdivisions in young metropolitan areas was fueled by the overall economic restructuring and brought higher degrees of integration for blacks and whites of equal socioeconomic status. However, along with this process came lower degrees of interaction among different minority groups (i.e., ethnic groups) (Farley and Frey 1994: 35-36).

Therefore, a closer examination of the explanatory variables of the spatial assimilation model and recent findings from related research on immigrant behavior, called for a revision of the standard spatial assimilation model. Recent studies have found that length of stay in the United States or Canada had no effect on the residential choices of immigrants coming from Asia.

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<sup>27</sup>General findings from other countries confirm this tendency as well. A study done in Sydney, Australia (Burnley 1999) finds that immigrants with lower income and less ability to speak English are more likely to live residentially clustered than others (including Greek, Croatian, Serbian, Spanish, Arab and Asian groups)., yet even under adverse circumstances complete ethnic segregation does not exist. The clustering which has developed is not based on preference or active choice for settlement near other Asians. Instead it is a product of economic disadvantages (lack of social welfare for non-refugees) and discrimination on the part of the wider society (Burley 1999: 1312).

Instead, many Asians bypassed the stages of the classical ecological model of settlement and moved directly to the suburbs in close proximity to Anglos (White, Biddlecom and Guo 1993, Fong and Wilkes 1999). Education and socioeconomic status played a role in the process, but not in terms of individual assimilation status (Alba and Logan 1993: 1423). This insight was confirmed when further research revealed that the ability to speak English well was not a criteria that regulated locational attainment. Barriers to entry into suburbia have fallen in these regards as well (Alba and Nee 1997: 862).

More recently, researchers have realized that the absence of visible clusters of immigrants does not reflect lessened ethnic group cohesion and ethnic identification. In some instances it has been reported that Chinese immigrants are willing to invest more resources than other immigrant groups on housing in order to stay within driving distance of other ethnic members and family (Fong and Gulia 1996). Other observations have confirmed that suburbanized residential settlement does not occur in isolation. Ethnic cultural clusters in the suburbs are served by institutional and commercial services, just as in the inner-city areas that are home to poorer immigrants. For example, Chinese-Canadian owned shopping centers have been spotted in the suburbs of Toronto and Vancouver (Olds 1996, Hiebert 1998, Rose 1999). Similar types of Asian theme malls can be found in Los Angeles County, specifically in the cities along the San Gabriel Valley (Tseng 1994, Horton 1995, Zhou 1998, Li 1999). These malls are directly linked to extensive networks of Chinese capital extending across the Pacific Ocean, networks that exemplify globalization (Li et al. 2000 on Chinese banking sector). They represent an emerging "*global residential and commercial property market*" (Olds 1999).

It is not surprising then, that the assumption that the immigrant professionals are choosing jobs over ethnic group affiliation in decision as to where to settle may not be valid anymore. Certain large metropolitan areas around San Francisco, Seattle, Vancouver, Houston, Dallas, and Los Angeles, among others, offer both good job opportunities and relative proximity to co-ethnic group members. Residential clusters in the sense of door-to-door settlement are no longer required to fulfill the desire of contact with co-ethnics. As long as infrastructure makes travel sufficiently easy, residences may be spread out and still give immigrants a sense of availability and relatedness (see Zhou 1998 on computer businesses in the San Gabriel Valley). The extent of dispersion of both immigrant residences and businesses, as discussed in reference to the 'ethnic economy', could be deceiving. Any detection of the presence or absence of ethnic clustering in a given area is only

of relative importance, as long as the infrastructure does not compromise easy access to ethnic group members.

All these recent developments reflect the effects of a growing absolute number of immigrants from Asia and Central America. The more favored metropolitan regions of North America's southern and western regions have begun to experience a slight increase in ethnic separation. The level of residential concentration of ethnic groups is rising and will increase as continued immigration takes place and more and more newcomers settle in a specific geographic area (U.S. Bureau of the Census 1998). Findings from research on immigrant settlement in Canada have demonstrated that in Vancouver the growing number of immigrants living in suburban municipalities has actually brought a slight increase in the degree of spatial separation between ethnic groups (Rose 1999, Li 1999, Hiebert 2000). In addition, sub-group specific clusters based on place of origin and level of human capital have developed (Hiebert 2000). They are testimony to the fact that suburbanization and higher locational attainment have not lowered all aspects of actual residential isolation.

Although the spatial assimilation model is adequate for explaining much of European immigration to the United States, it fails to explain the residential choices of Asian immigrants, especially for more recent immigrants (Fong and Wilkes 1999: 618). Macro-level studies of metropolitan-wide levels of segregation disguises a great deal of individual variation in residential situations. Individual-level analyses can help in seeing how residential situations correspond to personal and household characteristics. More research is needed that involves the inclusion of the larger context of settlement and the resulting interaction patterns of co-ethnics with each other and with members of other ethnic groups. In addition, a closer look at the pattern of growing ethnic segregation within affluent neighborhoods is also warranted.

### **Alternative Explanations of the Process of Immigrant Incorporation**

A review of the profiles of ethnic communities in the United States regarding their position in the assimilation process reveals that many of the conditions put forth by assimilation theorists have not yet been fulfilled. Recent evaluations of immigrant incorporation have yielded a number of paradoxes. For example, the economic mobility of black immigrants from the Caribbean is blocked despite their cultural assimilation (Stepick 1991). On the other hand, affluent immigrants from Asian countries attain spatial assimilation despite their lack of social interactions with the

mainstream society and, in some cases, the lack of proficient English language skills (Fong and Gulia 1996, Fong and Wilkes 1999).

In addition, a few scholars of immigration came to the conclusion that some ethnic communities are economically successful based on behavioral acculturation to the workplace while maintaining strong attachments to their own culture (see Rubel 1966, Gibson 1988, Lessinger 1992 to name just a few). This group of researchers, which has grown in recent years, essentially contends that several distinct ethnic groups can exist side by side. This idea was first put forth in the form of cultural and structural pluralism.

In fact, it is actually not feasible to compare the case studies of immigrant incorporation of recent immigrants with the case studies that have informed earlier immigration literature. Scholars of immigrant groups arriving prior to the implementation of the Hart-Celler Act generally examined second generation immigrants, and sometimes even third and fourth generation immigrants (e.g., Warner and Srole 1945, Gordon 1964, Glazer and Moynihan 1970). Studies of recent immigrants are based on data elicited from first generation immigrants and their children. Many of the immigrant group arriving after 1965 have not yet completed a generational cycle, which makes an assessment of their incorporation process based on the classic structural assimilation model impossible at this point in time.

Nevertheless, the authors of the studies on cultural, economic, and spatial assimilation cited above all hold onto the idea that immigrants will eventually assimilate completely. They argue that classic assimilationism has simply been unable to anticipate recent trends and events such as different economic incentives and opportunities caused by economic restructuring in the United States (Alba and Nee 1997). Since assimilation has been achieved in the past by pre-1924 immigrants, contemporary immigrants will eventually assimilate as well, though each group at a different rate (Alba and Nee 1997: 863-865).

Yet the overall conditions for incorporation are different in today's global economy. After all, immigrants arriving after 1965 from both sides of the human-capital divide have adapted faster than any other immigrant cohort before them. Information technology, especially movies and other images of America's consumer society (e.g., advertisements) have prepared immigrants for the incorporation process before their arrival and during their initial stages of adjustment. However, familiarization with the superficial aspects of American life, shopping opportunities and job markets, is not an indication of eventual structural assimilation. In addition, assimilation does not

guarantee an improved quality of life for all immigrant groups. For some groups it may indeed be advantageous to stay separate from the mainstream society.

Therefore it is not surprising that there is another set of literature on recent immigration that questions the assumption that present-day immigrant incorporation is simply in a phase of prolonged transition towards complete assimilation. They also disagree with predictions put forth by Zhou (1997a) and Portes (1995b) that assimilation will work differently for different groups, i.e., in a segmented fashion.

### ***The concept of transnationalism***

With the recent increase in immigration research several new concepts such as 'transnationalism', 'diasporic citizenship', and 'flexible citizenship' have been developed to capture the realities of present day immigration. The concept of transnationalism has gained the most recognition in this respect. It pays particular attention to the aspect of human agency, the active choices people execute when shaping their lives while adapting to continuously changing circumstances brought on by the effects and circumstances of economic globalization. Among the first scholars to promote this outlook, Glick Schiller, Basch, and Blanc-Szanton (1992, 1994) declared that the terms 'immigrant' and 'migrant' fail to capture the present day conditions of people who are foreign to a country other than their own. They observed that a new kind of migrating population has emerged. The networks, activities and lifestyles of these populations include both their host and their home societies. *"We have defined transnationalism as the processes by which immigrants build social fields that link together their country of origin and their country of settlement. (...) Transmigrants develop and maintain multiple relations - familial, economic, social, organizational, religious, and political that span borders"* (Glick-Schiller, Basch, and Blanc-Szanton 1992: 1).

The new analytical framework Glick Schiller et al. propose, attempts to explain how transmigrants use their social relationships and their multiple identities to cope with their situation as people living in two worlds, while being potentially alienated in either of the two or more locations. The framework has two aspects. They advocate overcoming the boundedness of studies in the social sciences which have previously restricted analysis to single states and single groups of migrants. They also suggest to reconceptualize the meaning of 'class', 'nationality', 'ethnicity', and 'race' (Glick Schiller et al. 1992). Rethinking these terms questions the established concepts on immigration and assimilation of immigrants under the changed circumstances of transnationalism.

Transnational migrants are exposed to multiple influences, their historic experience, the structural conditions they encounter, and the ideologies of their home and host societies. According to the authors, it is important to look at the profound internal cultural differences of ethnic groups independent of the labels attached to them as immigrant groups on the basis of their citizenship or the location of their ancestors. Present day immigrants have to cope with the race terminology prevalent in the United States. On the other hand, they have their own notions of nationality, ethnicity and race as well. The process of migration and return visits to their home country brings changes to all these perceptions. The result is that transmigrants become "*culturally creative actors in an arena that they do not control*" (1992:19).

The changed conditions that initiated the phenomenon of transnationalism have also brought new ideas about the dynamics between countries and their populations. According to Rouse (1991) instead of studying the formation of ethnic communities within nation-states, communities should not be reduced to the notion of clearly visible boundaries. He suggests the image of "circuits" as a better representation of the movement of people that overcome spatial distances and link two or more places through frequent travel. Nevertheless, borders continue to exist, but they are rather flexible, creating social, economic and political divisions between populations within a home country, within a host country, and at any other location in-between (Rouse 1991: 15-17).

The novelty of transnationalism according to Rouse is the potential for actors to be rooted in one geographic region while acting in another. That alone is not necessarily a departure from classic immigration experiences. The difference lies in the flexibility of association with several locations at once, the flexibility for loyalty to several places and groups and the option to stay in continuous contact with people in other locations throughout both the host country and the home country.

### **Transnationalism - a new phenomenon?**

The emphasis by Glick Schiller et al. and others that transmigration is a new phenomenon needs a closer evaluation. Other than world systems theory, which considers present day transmigration to be caused by classic push and pull processes in two or more nation-states, these scholars emphasize that transnationalism is a product of world capitalism. Recent advances in technology and changes in the economies of nation-states in the sectors of agribusiness, tourism, as well as manufacturing industries of transnational and global corporations, have introduced connections between local market places all over the world (Glick Schiller et al. 1992: 8-9).

Other voices argue that transnationalism is nothing new, it is just that transnational practices are quantitatively and qualitatively different today (Smith 1997: 111). Comparing earlier immigrants with contemporary immigrants to New York, Foner (1997) showed that many transnational patterns have actually a long history. At the turn of the last century, many immigrant groups experienced what is now called transnationalism. For example, Italian and Russian immigrants kept relationships with family members back home by living in what are called transnational households today. Some family members remained in the home country and others lived abroad sending back remittances, including political contributions for particular causes, such as the Irish support for the nationalist cause. Moreover, except for Russian Jews who fled from political and religious persecution, the return rates for many immigrant groups, most notably Italians, were extremely high. About one-third of all migrants returned back to Italy, a proportion which is even higher than today's return rates of immigrants from Central America, the Caribbean and Asia (Foner 1997). In fact, present day transnational immigrants often display characteristics similar to temporary workers, guest workers, and 'sojourners' (see introduction to the term sojourner in the historic overview of Chinese communities in chapter 2).

### **The influence of technology**

That is not to say that there is nothing distinctive about the current type of transnationalism. In the global economy, changes in transportation and communication have enabled immigrants to maintain closer and more frequent contact with their home country. They can participate both actually and vicariously in the social and cultural sphere of their home country, so that they *"take actions, make decisions, and develop subjectivities and identities embedded in networks of relationships that connect them simultaneously to two or more nations"* (Basch et al. 1994: 7).

Staying in close touch is also a source of comfort easing the initial difficulties of adaptation and the lack of acceptance in America, a situation which was felt much more bluntly by previous waves of immigrants. The technological conditions of the present, that are available to a larger number of immigrants, are the most outstanding feature of today's transnationalism. The more access to communication and transportation technologies an immigrant group has, the more often they will engage in calling, emailing and flying home. It is also expected that *"immigrant communities with greater average economic resources and human capital (education and professional skills) should register higher levels of transnationalism because of their superior access to the infrastructure that makes these activities possible"* (Portes et al. 1999: 223-224).

Frequent shuttles between the country of origin and the country of settlement have also been facilitated by the absence of wars or unfavorable political relationships between countries which could have halted the influx of new immigrants or the accumulation of wealth and travel between both territories.

The applicability of the above proposition that higher levels of transnationalism can be found among people who have better access to the tools that enable people to move frequently due to financial means and personal abilities needs to be evaluated for the case of immigrants from Taiwan. However, another proposition by Portes et al. challenges that the further away the nation of origin is from the new host country, the less dense and frequent will be activities and enterprises linking the two countries and the lower the number participants due to higher costs generated by longer distances (Portes et al. 1999: 224).

The importance of space and time compressing technology as a change agent has been emphasized extensively in postmodern theory. Harvey (1989) leads the field in stressing that the ability to influence the concepts and activities surrounding time and space stems from the developments in capitalist political economies and has radically altered interaction patterns around the globe, including economic exchanges and political decision making. Time compression results from the imperative in capitalism to constantly shorten the average turnover time between investment and the taking of profit. With the onset of worldwide economic restructuring changes have been made that markedly reduce turnover time by shrinking barriers to production, marketing, and profit taking. In addition, the now customary practice of repeatedly relocating production to countries with a cheaper labor force has the effect of disrupting worker solidarity. According to Harvey, *"it is exactly at such moments that major shifts in systems of representation, cultural forms and philosophical sentiment occur"* (Harvey 1989: 239). However, the resulting era, postmodernism, is not a definitive historic break. It simply is a reflection of the technological, social, and cultural changes initiated by contemporary capitalism on a global scale.<sup>28</sup> The annihilation of space through time has always been a central motivating force of capitalism (Harvey 1989: 293).

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<sup>28</sup>The jargon of postmodernist studies often describes the changes in capitalist practices as having evolved from "Fordist modes of capital accumulation" - which is a reference to industrialization and assembly line production where it was clear who manufactured what and where - the means of production and the results of it - to "flexible modes of capital accumulation" which means that world wide trade and dispersed modes and strategies of production and exchange spread all over the world in a rapidly changing fashion are what make some individuals wealthier than others. The latter often is difficult to monitor for outside observers.



**Transnational activities: a closer look**

Even when accepting the scope of present day 'technology-induced transnationalism' as a phenomenon in its own right, there is still need for further clarification of the concept in regard to other forms of immigration. In their attempt to operationalize transnationalism for further research projects, Portes et al. (1999) propose to limit it to "*occupations and activities that require regular and sustained social contacts over time across national borders*" (Portes et al. 1999: 219). The exchanges need to be of high intensity and the activities involving movement between two countries have to take place frequently, not occasionally, and be sustained over time as opposed to back and forth travel in the initial stages of migration to a new country (Portes et al. 1999).

Transnationalism and globalization has many faces. The circumstances for migrants are very complex and vary for different cultures and nation-states of origin. The many aspects of transnationalism can be best addressed in a distinction of "*transnationalism from above*", which refers to the activities undertaken by powerful institutions, multinational corporations and states operating worldwide and "*transnationalism from below*" which represents the activities of individual migrants linking two countries (Portes et al 1999: 221). Activities differ according to their type and direction. 'Economic activities' engage people in trade and business conduct, 'political activities' refer to actors involved in any political process and the related search for influence, and 'socio-cultural activities' include associations in the host country to maintain and foster ethnic identity as well as the cultural exchange and promotion of cultural exports between two countries (Portes et al. 1999).

The literature in the newly emerging field of 'transnationalism and globalization studies' often presents analysis derived from the compilation of exemplary stories, also called "vignettes", introducing anecdotal evidence (see such authors as Appadurai 1991, 1996, Ong and Nonini 1997, Ong 1999). Other representations include the description of transnational effects on sending communities and the efforts of home governments to encourage migrants to invest in their country of origin. Although this case study is ultimately interested in the community of immigrants from Taiwan which has manifested itself in the host country, this study is more in agreement with Portes et al.(1999), who advocate that transnationalism should be defined and studied at the individual level. The unit of analysis for transnationalism and its related activities is the individual migrant and his or her network of social relations (Portes et al. 1999: 220). The analysis of the personal networks of immigrants is expected to reveal the existence and practices of transnationalism in action.

***Revival of the diaspora concept***

Many recent scholars of migration patterns and the emergence of transnational and global circuits have revisited the old concept of defining dispersed clusters of culturally or religiously distinct people in a majority culture as diasporas.<sup>29</sup> With the use of this term they describe the importance of advancements in technology and the economic connectedness around the globe that have brought mobility for people world-wide without forcing them to change much of their own culture while living within a different culture (Pan 1990, Rouse 1991, Gupta and Ferguson 1992, Appadurai 1991, 1996, Cohen 1997, Ong and Nonini 1997, Karim 1998, Laguerre 1998, Okamura 1998, Ong 1999, and many others).

Different types of diasporas can be identified. There are 'religious diasporas', 'victim diasporas' or refugee communities, 'labor diasporas' created by either slavery or imperial dictate to resettlement for construction, 'trade diasporas' such as the famous Overseas Chinese Communities throughout the Pacific region, and more recently, the notion of 'cultural diasporas' referring to ethnic groups traveling back and forth throughout the Americas and the Caribbean (Cohen 1997). The diasporas of today are transnational in scope and socially constructed (Okamura 1998: 14). Diasporas of groups from the same place of origin scattered in places all over the world are connected through more than the notion of common history and hardship. A single diaspora is not necessarily equivalent to an ethnic enclave in terms of settlement clusters in space (Laguerre 2000). Technology has enabled them to create communities whose members interact with each other over large geographic distances. The linkages between people transcend national, cultural and spatial boundaries. Appadurai considers diasporas to be at the heart of an emerging global culture representing the very dynamic of present-day possibilities for individuals and groups (Appadurai 1996: 22-23).

People who migrate to a new country of residence take their cultures, customs, national and ethnic identities and social relationships with them. They create and extend the social space of diaspora by investing more in the maintenance of personal and economic relations with people and institutions in the homeland than in their new environment. Other than ethnic minorities who are permanent settlers of a nation state, members of a diaspora allegedly resist assimilation and even

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<sup>29</sup>The etymology of the word "Diaspora" indicates a translation as "to be scattered." The word has its origins in the ancient Greek word "diasperein" which referred to the "fruitful scattering away or seeds" from a parent body that both dispersed and reproduced the organism (Tololyan 1996: 10). The Webster dictionary defines Diaspora in reference to the original use as description of the dispersion of Jewish communities outside of Palestine: "A dispersion of an originally homogenous people, a dispersion of an originally homogenous entity such as a language or culture."

acculturation (Okamura 1998). The latter hypothesis often put forth by scholars of transnational activities of migrants needs further investigation and empirical study.

For example, it remains to be tested whether the recently labeled 'diasporas' of transmigrants will continue to form visible clusters among members of their second and third generations. To a certain extent, diasporas are a first generation phenomena. They are temporary in nature due to back migration of first generation immigrants and the actions of immigrant children who often have few incentives to maintain the exclusivity of the group. Although second generation immigrants often emphasize their ethnic heritage and identify with their homeland, these displays of attachment mainly serves the formation of their identities and as a distinction in a postmodern world in which people continuously reinvent themselves.<sup>30</sup> In everyday life, many of the practices are rather symbolic in nature (see Gans 1979 on this notion). Most second generation immigrants do not act on their fantasies of returning to the homeland and also do not engage in frequent travel back and forth between locations (Okamura 1998: 16).

Many of the word concoctions, or neologisms as they are often called, of postmodern studies overlap in their attempt to characterize new social phenomena. The rediscovery of established terms such as diaspora sometimes does not come with a clear and binding definition. Scholars often use the term simultaneously with 'community' or 'ethnic group'.

It is understandable why the notion of diaspora got rediscovered and promoted. Starting in the early 1960's and 70's migration took place in a much larger scale, more visible and more widespread than previously observed. This phenomenon was particularly interesting among Asian countries. Large numbers of people left their homelands in response to the opportunities of emerging contemporary global capitalism and settled in many different counties in a similar fashion (Ong and Nonini 1999). Taiwanese and Chinese migrants, for example, went to countries in South America, to South Africa, to North America, to many countries in Europe and even the Middle East. All these different locations were approached roughly at the same time. This kind of exodus resembles to some extent the classic formation of diaspora among people of Jewish faith. Nevertheless, it is important to evaluate whether the intrinsic notion of a diaspora as a place of cultural conservation and absence of acculturation, let alone assimilation, does apply for these

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<sup>30</sup>This is especially the case in the society of California where images and labels are created and changed at an even faster pace than elsewhere in the United States or the world (see Soja 2000, Scott 1996 and others on the idea of constant self-invention).

migrants who left their homelands, yet are able to maintain close relationships with people in the homeland thanks to advanced technology.

The revival of the notion of diaspora to capture the realities of transnationalism created another new label, the idea of 'diasporic citizenship' (Laguerre 1998). This notion refers to the continued political involvement of migrants in their home countries, including voting rights, that is actively encouraged by their home government (Rouse 1991). It is a set of practices that a person is engaged in and a set of rights acquired or appropriated that cross nation-state boundaries and indicate membership in at least two nation states (Laguerre 1998: 190). Thanks to diasporic citizenship migrants can enjoy the majority status they cannot exercise in their adopted country. Through the link with their homeland they escape "*complete minoritization*" in the United States, especially if they have dark skin color (Laguerre 1998: 192).

In addition, though the term diasporic citizenship was conceived at first to express a social practice of migrants, it has contributed to the development of a new conception of citizenship that is dual in two senses (which applies only for countries which allow dual citizenship). First, when immigrants are in their home country they are its citizens, and when they are in the United States they are Americans. Second, members of the diaspora can participate fully in the social and political life of both countries, exerting influence on the course of the political life in the home country. This gives the diaspora a role in homeland politics that is much larger than ever before, and removes the future of citizenship from a necessary location in the nation-state (Laguerre 1998). Further variations of this duality are the invitations for investments on the part of home governments who see departed migrants who have acquired wealth and education abroad as a major resource for advancement of their country (Lessinger 1992).

### ***Cultural citizenship/Flexible citizenship***

A different take on the notion of citizenship as a set of rights and practices related to membership in a nation-state is the recent differentiation between legal and cultural aspects of 'citizenship' (Ong 1993, 1999, Miron et. al. 1998). It was developed in response to nativist movements in the United States and elsewhere, which discussed the requirements for becoming a citizen in terms of language acquisition, and overall acculturation to the dominant cultural norms. The original idea of citizenship within a nation state was that the attainment of citizenship by immigrants would lead to cultural unification of the nation as well as security and prosperity due to the reduction of cultural separatism and conflict (Ong 1993: 748). Yet today, the territorially defined spaces of

western nation-states are not culturally homogeneous communities anymore and cannot facilitate these cultural mergers. While the legal aspect of citizenship bestows certain rights on immigrants, the legality alone does not enable migrants to navigate the new environment successfully. Similarly, the absence of citizenship rights does not hinder immigrants, legal or otherwise, to become successful players in the social, cultural and economic spheres of their host country.

Immigrants can become cultural citizens through their acculturation to national traditions, giving them the 'cultural capital' necessary to maneuver within the space bounded by such conventions. At the same time, due to the opportunities and challenges presented by a globalized economy 'cultural citizenship' involves not only acculturation to local or national traditions but also to the rules and customs of transnational activities as well as global practices of interaction (Mitchell 1997: 229). In other words, since many migrants live lives that cut across national boundaries, it is important for them to maintain a cultural repertoire essential for maneuvering in a transnational or global space. As Miron et. al (1998) state in their study on migrant children from Mexico attending public schools in California, *"what we are witnessing, then, through these transmigrants, is a world in which significant social ties are no longer simply confined within the boundaries of a single territorial national space. (...) Citizenship must be thought of in terms of the strategies migrants use to navigate transnational spaces"* (Miron et al 1998: 661).

Concentrating on the transnational activities of Chinese actors throughout the Pacific rim area, Ong also calls these practices of adaptation 'flexible citizenship' (Ong 1999). There has been a lot of fascination with Asian migrants and their economic success which led to superficial descriptions as *"the model minority"* (Fong 1998) or as Ong summarizes it *"the postmodern image of Overseas Chinese as enlightened capitalists creating a Pacific century"* (Ong 1993: 760). Often overlooked in this interpretation is the fact that migrants from Asia have very different class backgrounds, levels of human capital, and consumer attitudes as well as spending abilities, not just in comparisons between ethnic groups (such as the differences between Laotians, Filipinos, Malaysians and Taiwanese) but also within a single ethnic group.

Nevertheless, the flexible practices and strategies employed by Chinese people who traverse the countries surrounding the Pacific Ocean are not single events but occur on a relatively large scale. They create a culturally distinct, yet constantly changing and adapting space (Ong 1999: 19). The mobility offered by travel and the flexibility offered by various strategies to accumulate capital, creates numerous possibilities for people previously trapped by a lack of options due to overpopulation and few channels for influencing the means of production. For example, a

structural engineer born in Taiwan might work for one or two decades in the United States and then take a job for a European company overseeing construction sites in mainland China. Cultural competence in navigating the spaces of temporary settlement are the keys to successful advancement and accumulation of wealth and further opportunities. Citizenship no longer requires complete assimilation to any single cultural environment.

Studies on transnationalism have challenged the unidirectional theories of assimilation. They have demonstrated the importance of agency and fluidity in the process of adaptation to a new place of living. In addition, they emphasize that ethnicity is socially constructed. As a result, the question arises as to whether transnational migrants are exempt from any forces of assimilation.

### **Implications for this study**

Research on the effects of globalization and transnationalism and its many manifestations, such as diasporas, notions of citizenship, and flexible adaptation strategies have mostly been based on interpretation of specific cultural practices, cultural differences and subsequent culture change. Although they acknowledge that global processes are first of all interaction processes and that cultural change as well as identity formation are products of the increased opportunities for interaction between cultures all over the world, the focus of their investigations are the influence and politics derived from specific cultures or cultural creations (Rouse 1991, 1992, Grasmuck and Pessar 1991, Faist 2000). What is missing is an analysis of the structural aspects of human interaction creating and perpetuating transnational activities. Although "*a look at the structural component*" is often mentioned, few attempts have been made in the way of structural analysis (Ong 1999: 66).

Transmigration in its definition of frequent movement between two countries often implies the involvement of either seasonal laborers or business owners who operate in both countries. Not much detailed attention has been given to members of ethnic groups who are potentially involved in transnational activities but hold stable, high paying jobs outside of global or transnational business interactions. There is need to evaluate the actual type, extent and frequency of transnational activities among immigrants who are neither employed in highly volatile, low paying jobs nor engage in the export and import of goods and services. In this respect, both the influence of readily available technology that links people in geographically distant places and the local opportunities for socializing, i.e., interaction patterns, are of interest for this study.

## **Reconciling Competing Theories on the Process of Immigrant Incorporation and the Notion of Integration**

### **Assimilationism versus Retentionism**

In seeking to resolve the conflict between assimilationist and pluralist views, Gans clarifies the concepts of analysis and their role in describing the path of immigrant incorporation. The rift between findings have become polarized. Old school assimilationist on the one side and pluralists on the other side stress different models to explain the adaptation process after cultural contact and predict the direction of its outcome. Retentionists started out being pluralists, but Gans notes that the term 'ethnic pluralism' and its variations, 'cultural pluralism' and 'structural pluralism', has become too fuzzy to be useful. He uses the concept of 'retentionism' instead to capture the mode of interpretation of immigration scholars who demonstrate that the culture of an ethnic group is kept alive (Gans 1999: 226).

It is necessary to make a clear distinction between 'cultural assimilation' and 'structural assimilation', or to use more general terms 'acculturation' and 'assimilation'. Researchers do agree that acculturation is the form of adaptation attainable by almost all first generation immigrants. In contrast, assimilation in the strict sense of social interaction at the primary group level is often not even accomplished by the third generation of ethnic group members. The observation that subsequent generation of immigrants continue to keep ethnic social ties, particularly at the primary group level, among family members, confirms the findings of the retentionists who emphasize the continuation of cultural practices and social interaction patterns.

Cultural assimilation is hardly preventable given the consumer culture of the United States. Yet structural assimilation is difficult to accomplish, because it also requires the acceptance and invitation of the majority culture in the society. Discrimination, however subtle, can cause immigrant groups to react with a renewed emphasize of the value of ethnic group membership (Hurh and Kim 1984: 215-216).

While ethnic communities continue to thrive as a social entity, the preservation of their culture becomes less important over generations and ceases to be influential. What is really distinctive is the question regarding which kind of processes happen voluntarily and which do not (Gans 1999: 228-229). Gans is particularly insightful in reminding us that the trajectories of immigrants are largely determined by how they negotiate the obstacles thrown up by the native population. Ethnic discrimination in the everyday practices of the majority culture, which may or may not have a

basis in legal discrimination of members of different ethnic groups, is not an incentive for immigrants to seek entrance to majority institutions or interpret such an attempt as beneficial to their economic advancement (Gans 1997, 1999). Assimilation, as opposed to acculturation, is a two-way street. An immigrant's willingness to assimilate obviously depends in part on terms under which the host society is willing to have him or her do so.

Retentionist attitudes have also been fueled by the focus on ethnic economies and entrepreneurial activities. Immigrants arriving in the United States with some amount of economic capital have often turned to storekeeping or petty manufacturing as the fastest road to socioeconomic status and in order to be able to provide education and subsequent higher-status jobs for their children. So it comes as no surprise that they are tied to their ethnic group because their income often depends on co-ethnics who are their main source of income.

Yet the different positions in interpreting immigrant incorporation are merely a result of the viewpoint of the individual researcher (Gans 1999a). When investigating the process without ideological coloring it becomes obvious that assimilation always comes much later than acculturation. The division between assimilationists and retentionists will continue if it is separated by 'outsiders who analyze' and 'insiders who illustrate' the fact that ethnic groups keep their identity. What we need is a new picture which combines the two in a more realistic fashion.

Faist (2000) makes it clear that the concepts of assimilation and ethnic pluralism have actually a lot in common when comparing their strongest versions. Both frameworks consider *"culture to be a fixed and essential phenomena; assimilation theory does so with core cultures and ethnic pluralism with minority cultures. This container concept sees cultures as essentially territorial, based on a shared language and somewhat static. In this view culture stems from a learning process that is (...) localized. This is culture in the sense of a culture; the culture of a social group. (...) In an extreme version, it imbues a hypostasized notion of places as bounded and unchanging spaces with a fixed meaning, identified with rather strong communities"* (Faist 2000: 215). Certainly, the *"container concept of culture"*, as Faist has labeled it, has to be extended and needs to be used more inclusively, as some researchers representing the teachings of assimilation and retentionism have already demonstrated.

Fluidity instead of fixed concepts and spatiality instead of the notion of locality are steps in the right direction. Furthermore, it is vital to study incorporation processes not only as they unfold for individuals, but also in reference to the groups to which immigrants are able to stay attached. As mention earlier, the classic assimilation theory excludes the possibility of group incorporation.



Members of ethnic communities do acculturate, or in other words culturally assimilate, to the practices of mainstream society to the extent necessary to function in that society. Structural assimilation is often not attempted, or only attainable in respect to the secondary institutions of the larger society. Table 2.1 presents a summary of the above discussion by juxtaposing the factors that are likely to influence structural assimilation to the secondary institutions of the larger society, that is its occupational, educational, political and religious institutions.

**Table 2.1 Social, political, and economic factors that predict the likelihood of structural assimilation for immigrant groups**

	Structural assimilation not likely	Structural assimilation likely
Attachment to homeland	Attachment and identification to the homeland, desire to return. Myth of the homeland kept alive for children	Attachment to homeland limited to cultural practices, no desire to return due to political situation, lack of economic opportunities or loss of face if return would be attempted (no acceptance of homecomers in country of origin)
Reachability of homeland	Homeland is reachable through frequent visits, geographic proximity might be a factor	Homeland is geographically far away and/or travel to foster interpersonal relationship is not affordable due to financial and/or time constraints
Discriminatory environment in host country	Social discrimination is experienced often based on historic legal discrimination (laws might have changed in the meantime though)	No social or legal discrimination is experienced
Economic incentives	Solidarity with ethnic group members secures employment	No economic advantages in being with ethnic group members
Occupational milieu	Workplace: immigrant either runs his/her own business, employs co-ethnics, or is employed by co-ethnics	Workplace: immigrants employ members of other ethnic groups and join workplaces with ethnically mixed workforce
Cultural practices in the new settlement area	No traditions or meeting centers in the host society which would foster interaction between ethnic groups, even the Christian churches are separated along ethnic group boundaries	Social practices, traditions (e.g., urban meeting places, or comradrazgo relations, or religious patterns...) that integrate members of different ethnic groups and bind them together

Although this study cannot predict the eventual outcome of the generational process in regard to assimilation, it can illustrate the present conditions of immigrant lifestyles, as well as interaction patterns between members of the larger society and members of the group of affluent immigrants from Taiwan. It cannot, however, provide an all-encompassing theory of immigrant incorporation

at the end of the 20th century. Yet it sheds light on a subset of scenarios and interactions both at the individual and group level.

### **Integration - an alternative concept of immigrant incorporation**

In concluding this discussion of assimilationism and retentionism and their related constructs, a third concept regarding the adaptive strategies of affluent, well-educated immigrants is the most useful, and that is the notion of integration. The term integration expresses a condition in which different ethnic groups are able to maintain group boundaries and uniqueness while equally taking part in the essential processes of production, distribution and government in a society. This notion includes the cohesion of various social relations and different cultural systems within a large group of people (Seymour-Smith 1986: 154). Although closely related to ethnic pluralism in its basic definition, integration as a concept goes beyond the notion of pluralism. While pluralism simply represents the scenario of many different entities co-existing in a space, it does not imply how this coexistence should unfold and be managed. That is one reason why the concept has become so fuzzy in its interpretation in recent years (Gans 1999, Faist 2000).

Integration, on the other hand, explicitly refers to the interaction of two or more entities, and defines the result as an association which should be unrestricted and equal. The direction of the interaction is towards a new whole, not merely a co-existing of two groups next to each other. Countries with multilingual and multicultural populations such as Switzerland, Belgium, and Canada are considered to be examples of integration of different ethnic groups (Ludwig and Koester 1999: 345). Integration can also be understood as forms of engagement between two or more entities. Interethnic engagement might lead to peaceful arrangements. If only intraethnic engagement takes place without interethnic engagement, ethnic conflict might arise (Varshney 2002: 46).

The field of cross-cultural psychology provides an interesting model of incorporation strategies. Berry (1997) uses research findings to develop a four-fold classification model which groups people according to their attitudes and strategies towards their process of incorporation into a host society. He uses two questions to elicit respondent's opinions and behavior patterns. One question asks about the attitude towards maintenance of cultural identity and characteristics. A person or a group may either want to stay true to its cultural heritage and identity or be willing to include additional or alternative cultural values and characteristics in their life. The other question targets the attitudes towards the value of maintaining relationships with the larger society. A person or

group may either want to establish and develop contact with members of other groups and the core society, or decide to engage exclusively in relationships within its own cultural group.

The model depicted in table 2.2 labels a person who feels the need to maintain his or her cultural identity, values and beliefs, yet wants relationships with others, as someone using the strategy of integration. Individuals who are willing to entertain other cultural values and engage actively in interaction with others, are considered to use the strategy of assimilation. Somebody who strives to uphold his or her own identity and excludes other values, and in addition does not engage in relationships with the larger society, is employing the strategy of separation or segregation. And a person who rejects both questions and does not want to maintain the culture, but despite his or her openness to other values does not engage in relationships with others, is exposed to marginalization (Berry et al. 1997: 10).

**Table 2.2 Model of different incorporation strategies as a result of sustained contact between two cultures**

		Is it considered to be of value to maintain one's identity and characteristics?	
		yes	no
Is it considered to be of value to maintain relationships with the larger society?	yes	INTEGRATION	ASSIMILATION
	no	SEPARATION/SEGREGATION	MARGINALIZATION

(source: Berry et al. 1997: 10)

Immigration studies have produced a wide array of terms to categorize findings on the outcome of interaction between immigrant cultures and the culture of the larger society. Though the assumption that integration is attainable for the new types of immigrants who arrived in the United States after 1965 may be admittedly naive and overly optimistic, it is used interchangeably with the more general concept of immigrant incorporation in the remainder of this study. Research findings are tested regarding their ability to predict or reject integration as the result, or future result, of interaction between immigrants from Taiwan and the mainstream society in Southern California.

## **Urban Studies: Interaction in Space**

### **Introduction**

Although a sense of community is no longer exclusively linked to a clearly defined location in space, the settlement of immigrants does take place within geographic areas which have distinct characteristics. The site of this study, the metropolitan area of South Orange County, provides a specific, yet continuously changing context for settlement and social interaction. In order to better understand the conditions for community building and maintenance a closer look at different approaches in the social sciences in studying urban living, different concepts on urban form and use of space, and their influence on human interaction patterns will be helpful. Generally speaking, there are two aspects to studying urban areas from a social sciences perspective. The spatial dimension relates to the development of urban form over time as a product of human action; the social dimension studies social structure and interaction patterns facilitated by specific urban forms. Although the two dimensions are interrelated, this research conducted with informants living in the newly constructed houses and building communities of South Orange County is mainly interested in the social ties present within the spatial environment. However, a look at the use of space for settlement in the United States and the 'experience of place' at those locations is important for gaining an understanding of the context in which social interactions take place.

Over the course of the 20th century the shape of living spaces for large aggregations of people has evolved from dense clusters in urban centers to the emergence of suburbs, which served a nearby city, followed more recently by independent, polynucleated, extended metropolitan areas without any central focal point. The latter structures of settlement, also known as 'new urbanism' or 'postmodern urban spaces', are characterized by the extensive spread of its territory and the vast distances between separate locations for living, working and playing (i.e., recreational activities). In terms of urban studies, the two guiding questions for this research are how the conditions created by the new forms of urban space influence immigrant group cohesion and how they influence the incorporation process of immigrants into the larger society?

### **Urban Studies in Anthropology**

Historically, anthropologists have studied whole populations such as bands and tribes. When research interests switched to include the cultures of larger and more complex societies

anthropologists at first studied small social groups as representative units of the whole. However, comparisons of several small groups or villages within a larger society were seldom made since it was assumed that the context of specific locations was independent of a particular environment and did not influence the representative character of the selected unit of investigation (Rollwagen 1975, Sanjek 1990b). Thus, until the early 1970's, the newly emerging subfield of urban anthropology studied groups *in* cities, treating the city environment as one of many possible settings for the cultural production and social structure of the group under study. The research movement to look at cities as a context for action and interaction evolved from an evaluation of the former practice of merely doing anthropology *in* cities but not researching the anthropology *of* cities (Rollwagen 1975: 3). This inclusion of context as an independent variable has influenced urban anthropology ever since. Urban environments are not considered as generally alike and context is no longer treated as a constant. Urban anthropology vowed to focus on the comparative function of cities, their building structures, communication networks and historical development (Rollwagen 1975: 57).

### ***Anthropology of cities***

Several attempts have been made to develop a system for making comparisons among cities. To name just two examples, Richard Fox originally created a typology of cities using a historical approach and labeling the five different types regal/ritual, administrative, mercantile cities and city states, colonial cities and industrial cities (Fox 1997). Setha Low has developed a slightly different approach to capture the differences between cities at the end of the 20th century. She distinguishes between the ethnic city, the gendered city, and the global city (Low 1996, see discussion of 'ethnic city' below). The notion of global cities was promoted by Sassen (1991) who wrote about the mobility of capital and its effects on the spatial characteristics and social compositions of cities, which is discussed later in this section.

At any rate, anthropologists also have to take into account that 'the city' is not merely a category of possible living spaces which has very similar attributes all over the world. Instead, the form of the city differs from one culture to another, especially since any specific culture varies according to geographic characteristics and historical context. The actual similarities between cities all over the world are reduced to high population density, comparatively larger territorial space than other forms of collective living space and an influx of residents from other parts of the region, country or world. Certainly, places which are placed in the category 'village' and often studied by

anthropologists, are not comparable in every aspect either. However, the small population size and the agricultural basis of their livelihood they all have in common creates a smaller set of variable outcomes despite environmental and historic differences. It makes villages more comparable within their category than 'cities'. To compare the cultural productions and social structures of cities several subcategories of cities have to be established and defined according to their historical development and geographic distinctions.

North American cities, for example, are often built on a grid pattern around a central business district. Most of today's cities have either have been founded or experienced their major growth after the second world war. The more recently founded cities usually contain an agglomeration of housing, commercial and administrative sections without any central district at its core. Both types of cities have been erected within a short time period and are spread out over large areas. In general, North American cities have plenty of space left for expansion without sacrificing opportunities for food production, as faced by cities in other countries where expansions come at the expense of scarce fertile land.

Many other cities in the world do not have this luxury of space. The function of a large number of cities in the world is more often to serve as administrative and cultural centers than as industrial and business centers, which is so common in North America (Low 1996). The nature of urban housing in the cities of Europe causes immigrants to settle scattered throughout a city at first. The very distinct socio-economically and ethnically differentiated neighborhoods found in North American cities develop much slower in European cities, though eventually comparable patterns evolve as well (for example the settlement of Turkish people in city districts of Cologne and Berlin). However, the type of settlement structures created by newly evolving metropolitan areas such as Orange County, CA, Phoenix, AZ, Fairfax, VA, counties around Atlanta, GA and others are a specific to the United States and reflect the abundance of available space.<sup>31</sup>

Although the ambition to establish a comparative typology of cities has not been attempted by many researchers, urban anthropology has made important advancements in the study of urban space as context (Hannerz 1980, Sanjek 1990b). One of the newer developments in the field is the investigation of the role of places, their characteristics and building structures, on the cultural

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<sup>31</sup>The notion of availability is, of course, a question of political decision making. Administrations of municipalities decide for or against the expansion of housing. It is part of the American worldview to believe that space is endless and can be used without any repercussions. The consequences are nevertheless felt. Other cultures might not declare land available for building at the same rate as most counties and their local governments do throughout the United States.

creations and the social structures of the people and their communities who use them. This research approach tries to capture *"the meaning of urban spaces through the knowledge of people who live within them"* (Rotenberg and McDonough 1993: xi). For example, Rodman (1993) studies the relationship between buildings and the type of communities they foster. The question here is whether or not specific structures of places are more or less beneficial for the development of community. The history of anthropological studies does not include an emphasis on place as a concept. Culture was considered to evolve independent of place (Rodman 1993: 125).

### ***Cultural notions of 'space'***

However, culture has a distinct influence on the understanding, usage and representation of space. European and Western thought in general, emphasize the separation of place and person, the difference between the physical world and people. No direct creative relation is assumed between the form of a building or its symbols and the people who live in it. The construction process is one thing and the lives of people another, separate thing. In many other cultures the process of building construction is an interactive one. Division and use of space is contextual and relational in response to the activities of the people living in it. The building and use of space continuously adapts to changing needs throughout a year's seasons and a person's lifecycle (Rodman 1993: 128). It is the western idea of separation between spatial structure and social structure that influences our scientific inquiry into the relation between space and human interaction.

A new way to understand the relationship between buildings (built form) and communities is to study the social production of place and the experience of place (Rodman 1993: 137). In recent years urban anthropologists have embraced the idea that the nature of space is socially constructed and contested (the relation between space and the social construction of it has been addressed by Bourdieu, Castells, Foucault, Giddens, Harvey, King, Rabinow among others, according to Lawrence and Low 1990). The 'social production of space' - perspective intends to explain the development of living spaces in technologically advanced modern societies as products of social processes, structures, and transformations. The specific characteristics of inner cities, suburbs, and metropolitan regions are thought to be influenced and maintained by local, national and global processes of advanced industrialization and mobility of capital (Gottdiener 1985: 68, Sassen 1991: 33-34). The shape of urban structures is a result of a complex social system. The focus here is obviously on the forces, i.e., human action and environmental conditions, that shape urban form.

However, the emphasis among scholars using this notion is on social, political, and economic dimensions of this creative process and not on the experience of place. Studies which are indeed concerned with the experience of place are not based on a dichotomy between built form and culture. Instead, everything can be understood through the experience of the dimensions of a place which are its people, its culture, its buildings and its design. In recent years, this way of grasping the meaning of place has gained influence (Scott 1996, Soja 1996, 2000). After all, the decision-making process of people living in the United States regarding their choices for settlement is less and less influenced by job opportunities and more often guided by locational preferences. Cities in the so-called "sunbelt" of the United States, America's Southwest and Southeast, have experienced large population increases and extensive urban sprawl. Traditional centers of industrial production in the Midwest and Northeast have lost population despite attempts at urban renewal. Economic restructuring throughout the United States from an economy based on manufacturing and industrial production to service industries fueled by flexible technology has facilitated this move to warmer and pleasant regions with large open spaces for new housing developments (Farley and Frey 1994, see also discussion in the section on spatial assimilation).

The role of specific places in social life is visible in the attachment of community members (for further elaboration on attachment to place versus territorial behavior, see Taylor 1988: 102 ff.) Community formation often evolves through participation of individuals in associations, at organizational meetings and during general activities of associations, all carried out in the vicinity of certain places (Rodman 1993: 132).<sup>32</sup>

### ***Urban anthropology and the study of immigrants***

Urban anthropology has also given new insights to the study of immigrant groups. Once the subfield had extended its subject matter to study the context which cities provide for cultural and social interaction, exploration of the relationship between immigrant groups and the city space was called for as well. Scholars proposed to look at preferences for specific locations and characteristics of cities which are more or less inviting towards immigrants. Conditions for immigrant adaptation and livelihood which are either advantageous or disadvantageous also needed further study (Rollwagen 1975: 58).

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<sup>32</sup> Further discussion on different perceptions of space as well as the relationship between time and space can be found in Giddens 1985, Gupta and Furgeson 1992, Massey 1994, Harvey 1996, and Bridge 1997)



As a response, the ethnic dimension of cities began to be explored. True to the research approach of city as context, all urban, metropolitan and suburban spaces are expected to have varying characteristics which influence the insertion of immigrants. Some of the factors are the history of immigration in any given city, the existence of residentially segregated immigrant living areas and the nature of the immigrant labor market, that is the presence or absence of ethnic enclaves, in the economic environment of a particular city. Setha Low summarizes anthropological interests in the study of "ethnic cities" as follows: *"There are two dominant streams of research in the study of the ethnic city: the ethnic city as a mosaic of enclaves that are economically, linguistically, and socially self-contained as a strategy of political and economic survival, and studies of ethnic groups that may or may not function as enclaves but are defined by their location in the occupational structure, their position in the local immigrant structure, their degree of marginality and/or their historical and racial distinctness as a basis for discrimination and oppression"* (Low 1996: 405).

Ultimately, the relationship between cohesiveness of an ethnic population and the size and character of a city, as well as the attitude of its population towards immigrants, needs to be investigated (see also Rollwagen 1975 who called for this approach). Although the Journal of Urban Anthropology has published a few articles which discussed the characteristics of a specific cities and the related development of immigrant communities (see for example Goode 1990 on neighborhoods in Philadelphia and the response of Portuguese, Korean and Indian immigrants to the offered conditions), there are not many anthropological studies to date which have concentrated on the relationship between spatial structure and immigrant cohesion. Often immigrant groups are considered to be self-contained, or are seen as a single unit in response to economic or political challenges. What is needed is an exploration of the degree of cohesiveness when the number of constraints and the occurrence of challenges to immigrants' survival is low.

Some anthropological studies have presented findings from specific cities (e.g., Fong 1994 on Monterey Park, Schweizer et al. on Costa Mesa). However it is mostly the fields of geography (Hiebert 1998 and 2000, Rose 1999, Li 1999 and others), urban planning (e.g., Laguerre 2000) and the subfield of immigration studies in sociology (see Foner 1987, Portes and Stepick 1993, Tseng 1994, Horton 1996, Logan 1996, Waldinger 1996 and Waldinger and Bozorgmehr 1996 to name a few) which have addressed the role of spatial structures in the formation and development of social groups of immigrants. This research will add a few insights to this aspect from an anthropological point of view.

### **Urban Studies in Sociology, Economics and Geography: Spatial and Social Dimensions**

The study of spatial environments in modern societies is not a traditional subject matter of anthropology. Urban sciences, to use the general term, have found a home in the disciplines of sociology, economics and geography (Gottdiener 1985: 25). As mentioned earlier, learning about people living in clusters together has both a spatial dimension and a social dimension. While the social dimension, the look at social structure and interaction patterns that develop in specific urban spaces, is ultimately the main interest of this study, the spatial dimension needs some attention as well in light of the urban forms which have emerged in the United States. The spatial dimension of urban sciences seeks to explain how land is used and what forces shape the constantly changing urban form. In the United States a few competing theories on spatial production have evolved over time which reflect, among other aspects, local, national and global changes, urban policies and actual realities of building structures in space.

#### ***Urban ecology and competing theories of spatial production***

Before the second world war the Chicago School was influential in laying the foundations of urban studies in sociology. After all, immigration studies with its inquiry on stages of assimilation evolved as a byproduct from the concentration of the Chicago School on understanding social life in cities. One of the early approaches of the Chicago School, often called urban ecology, was to study the city as a result of specific processes of social organization. Urban settlement patterns were thought to reflect the adaptation of social organization to its physical environment (Gottdiener 1985: 26). A biological analogy was implemented to explain land-use patterns and urban form in general. A cycle of competition over spatial location between populations of living organisms, invasion, competition, succession, and accommodation, was used to explain how different economic functions or ethnic groups move spatially through various areas of the city.<sup>33</sup> They later developed a zone model of urban form which depicted the dual process of central agglomeration and commercial decentralization as a response to competitive economic advantages (Gottdiener 1985: 31). This approach of studying the dynamic shaping process of urban areas is helpful to understand the role of human agency. On the one hand, humans create barriers of entry

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<sup>33</sup>The stages in the cycle describing the relationship between social organizations and urban form, first introduced by McKenzie in 1925 (invasion, competition, succession, accommodation) correspond interestingly with the race relations cycle promoted by Park. He identified the stages of that cycle as "contact, competition, accommodation and assimilation" (1926).

due to economic advantages acquired earlier. On the other hand, humans are excluded from access to these advantages due to social or racial discrimination.

After the second world war, explanations of spatial production began to differ in response to the rapid changes taking place in urban formation throughout the United States. Cities changed in shape and degree of expansion; the structure of the different spaces in a city and what they were home to also changed. The old model of center and peripheral districts became less and less applicable to describe the reality of American cities. Regions rather than concentric circles and zones around an urban core emerged as important units (Gottdiener 1985: 35). The increasing speed of growth in combination with decentralization of living space and administrative locations, introduced new approaches in sociology, economic and geography that aimed to explain the changes in urban spatial production.

The field of urban ecology has continued to emphasize that urban spaces are produced by adjustment processes, now involving larger numbers of relatively equal actors who are guided by a self-regulatory invisible hand according to the principles of 'social Darwinism'. Growth processes are considered to be "*organic developments*" just like "*communal populations of lower life forms within biological kingdoms*", nowadays caused by technological innovation and demographic expansion (Gottdiener 1985: 264). The effects of class, status and power differences in the construction and division of space are disregarded (Gottdiener 1985: 38). It follows from this theory, that the social organization of space is inevitable and does not warrant any interference. This approach to the analysis of spatial development has had consequences for public policy since urban ecologists have been repeatedly requested to direct the urban planning efforts of local and federal agencies (Gottdiener 1985).

Economists who are interested in urban studies view technology as the main agent of change in the society; spatial patterns of organizations change as a result of changes in industrial development (Gottdiener 1985: 45). Urban geography makes its biggest contribution in the description of contemporary structures of space as systems of cities. Extending the initial findings of the central place theory (Christaller 1933), geographers are able to depict the hierarchy between cities, their ranks and linkages. They also map the flow of resources, ideas and people between the points in the system which helps them to reassign roles and ranks of cities within a region (Irwin and Hughes 1992, Hughes 1993, Gottdiener 1985). This has led to an understanding of comparable urban units and the realization of the shift from city centers to a multitude of important nodes within a larger space.

However, urban geographers can not explain which forces produce the newly emerging forms of spatial organization. Like economists and urban ecologists they refrain from interpreting the existing spaces in relation to the human experience (as good or bad). Therefore, Gottdiener (1985) calls for new approaches to the analysis and evaluation of spatial form. He proposes to look at institutional and structural factors which influence the shape and extent of living spaces. Socioeconomic and political organizations are important players in a capitalist society when it comes to decisions about land use patterns and the type and direction of growth (Gottdiener 1985: 265). *"A science of settlement space forms must be based upon a knowledge of the articulation between social organization and space. Places and forms by themselves do nothing and produce nothing - only people within social organization networks posses that power"* (Gottdiener 1985: 265).

The process of spatial structuring involves economic, political and cultural forces which are identified as follows. Economic forces are a result of changes in production modes and decreased importance of location in the linkages between manufacturers; these changes started the process of Late Capitalism which led to decentralization. The interests of land developers and among people who work in the real estate sector who promote growth and profit of settlement spaces, are also crucial economic influences. Political forces are represented through policy making by local and state agencies which direct urban planning. For example, they intervene through tax incentives for home owners, building of infrastructure to increase property values, or military spending in certain areas which effects the spatial patterns of residential building as well (Gottdiener 1985: 270).

In terms of cultural forces, the ideology of U.S. culture that "bigger is better" has effected the expansion of urban spaces. The ideology of growth has often gotten the upper hand in the political and economic struggles between urban planners, the local public and land owners or developers. The social costs of growth, such as environmental problems and increased crime rates, have been neglected in the strife for enlargement and expansion. Other consequences of decentralization, such as the spatial segregation of social groups according to class, status, race and age, for social interaction patterns have just begun to gain attention (Gottdiener 1985: 272).

### ***'New urban studies': from suburbs to polynucleated spaces in the United States***

There are many other effects of spatial changes in the United States which started to unfold since the second world war. To list and discuss them in detail would be beyond the scope of this

research. In fact, observations and analysis of spatial formations have increased so much in volume in recent years that a new subfield, 'new urban studies', has emerged (see among others: Davis 1990, Poster 1990, Kling et al. 1991, Sorkin 1992, Soja 1992, 1996, 2000, Scott 1996, Laguerre 2000). This rather postmodern approach to the understanding of urban places is mainly concerned with the description of the new spaces created by global, national, and local forces of economic restructuring and cultural cross-fertilization (Dear and Flusty 1999: 74). Many of the writers in this new subfield consider spatiality as a distinctive characteristic of the experience of urban life itself and not as a mere outcome of historical or social processes (Sorkin 1992, Soja 1996, 2000).

The exploration of the spatial dimension of life is based on the teachings of the French urbanist Henri Lefebvre and his notion of "*third space*." The category 'first space' represents space as perceived by human beings, their general use of space in their way of life. The 'second space' equals 'conceived space', how humans imagine and design their space. 'Third space' is the category which captures "*fully lived space*" as a holistic experience and directive for action (Soja 2000: 11). In this respect, the focus of postmodern urban studies is more on the interpretation of new forms of human agglomeration as "*hyperspaces and theme parks*", than on theory building to explain the reasons for changes in living patterns (Soja 1996).<sup>34</sup>

However, some of the descriptions, analogies, and citations of writings in the 'new urban studies' are insightful and can help to introduce the actual changes in spatial production which have taken place over the course of the last 60 years. After the second world war the process of suburbanization got a jump start and altered previous conceptions on spatial and social dimensions of cities, which were based on the notion of cities as an urban core surrounded by city districts with distinct neighborhoods (Gottdiener and Kephart 1991: 31). Suburbs got founded consisting of rapidly built houses for the emerging middle class, primarily to meet the needs of the growing families of war veterans, each house looking exactly like the other to allow faster construction based on a single blueprint. An agglomeration of houses built on a designated space in a specific

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<sup>34</sup>"Hyperspaces" and "hyperreality" refer to the observation of researchers that the real and the imagined have merged in spaces like Southern California. Subdivisions of houses are designed like sets in a Hollywood movie or a village section of Disneyland. The construction of artificial spaces such as gardens or malls in the desert of California removes people from the experience of nature. The borders between a naturally evolved meadow and a artificially created one are invisible for the resident of such a region. People are dislocated from their original reference point. Everything seems possible, everything can be altered, fixed. Boundaries of human capabilities are moved (see also the reproductive market in the United States with sperm banks, in-vitro-fertilization and research on cloning of human cells).

zoning area of a city (i.e., a tract) in a similar design with few alterations, is called a subdivision. People living in these subdivisions often specify the area in which their house is located as their neighborhood. However, the label 'neighborhood' is used in various ways and includes one or several subdivisions depending on the perception of the individual speaker.

Early on, beginning with the first introduction of suburban settlement patterns, popular opinion in the United States and elsewhere in the world considered suburbs to be representative of the white Anglo-Saxon, middle-class, white-collar life-style (Berger 1966). Whoever moved to the suburbs was thought to adjust to these stereotypes in a similar fashion as the housing structures had been molded after each other. Just as the image of small town America with its picket fences had represented the American dream before the second world war, suburbs became the new embodiment of the American dream; the dream of a homogeneous society with the suburb as a place where all classes and ethnic backgrounds merge into one cohesive community. As Berger states, *"The myth of suburbia fosters an image of a homogenous and classless America without a trace of ethnicity but fully equipped for happiness by the marvelous productivity of American industry: the ranch house with the occupied two-car garage, the refrigerator and freezer, the washer and dryer, the garbage disposal and the built-in range and dishwasher, the color TV and the hi-fi stereo. Suburbia: its lawns trim, its driveways clean, its children happy on its curving streets and in its pastel schools. Suburbia, California style, is America"* (Berger 1966: 85). It was the media who created the image of conformity, homogeneity, and the nuclear family among the suburb population.

In reality, separate tracts within a suburb offered different housing models designed to accommodate different income groups. As people upgraded their location or type of house and moved to newer neighborhoods, others, among them blue-collar workers and immigrants, moved into older neighborhoods. Over time the suburbs have become the most common place of living for Americans. By the 1990's nearly half of the total U.S. population resided in suburban areas (Gottdiener and Kephart 1991: 33, Population report 1993). At the level of the suburb as the unit of analysis, the population is diverse in terms of ethnic background, class, education and occupation. However, at the tract or neighborhood level, residents are rather homogeneous. This homogeneity is less pronounced in terms of ethnicity (see section on spatial assimilation), but is present at the class and demographic level. Neighborhoods are characterized by the average price of houses and the corresponding income of home owners. Houses come in a limited array of designs and therefore, are easy to classify.

Yet the borders between subdivisions are hardly visible from a distance. They can be inserted anywhere, into an open field or near an old center of town. In addition, certain neighborhoods are home to families with young children, others more to people whose children have left home or who are retired. Many people do indeed move when they start a new phase in their life-cycle or select their new residence in case of a job related transfer to a new location according to their adjusted situation in terms of age and number of household members (Alba and Logan 1993). In this respect, the myth of the suburb as the homogeneous melting pot of Americans seems to be fulfilled in a superficial way. As another early observer of suburbanization interprets *"Suburban tracts are so attractive to people because they offer ways to escape modern complexity and recreate a homogeneous surrounding. They cater to the human desire to reduce uncertainty"* (Moffit 1972: 99).

Further structural properties of settlement space in suburbs are of interest since they have led to continued expansion of residential areas. There is a reason why many Americans call the suburbs 'horizontally stretched cities'. Suburban houses usually are surrounded by lawns and are located alongside cul-de-sac streets, which fork off from each other. A cluster of related cul-de-sac streets usually represents a single subdivision. These residential streets are connected through one main outgoing road to a major thoroughfare, called arterial roads. Along these wide arterial roads separate subdivision are located left and right of them like pearls on a string. Residents have to travel on these roads to reach any location, from shops to schools to friends, making the use of an automobile necessary to cover the distances and to avoid the dangers of walking or using bicycles on these main roads which connect the neighborhoods to highways (Lacayo 1999: 48).

Often, congestion occurs on arterial road and highways because no alternatives, such as other modes of transportation or additional roads cross-connecting neighborhoods, are available. To ease the problem of traffic jams new highways are paved, which in turn work as incentives to build new residential spaces and bring even more congestion to an area. This process is aided by the zoning rules of existing or newly created city administrations whose guidelines commonly forbid any mix of homes and shops within the same tract, thereby creating larger distances for the mastering of even the simplest tasks of everyday life (King, Olin and Poster 1991). However, the expansion of residential areas has also brought the building of consumption centers, the infamous shopping mall, on open spaces at various intersections between clusters of subdivisions. In large settlement areas many of these agglomerations of shops under one roof are specialized to host certain groups of stores. Some malls carry mostly clothing, others offer furniture and home

improvement stores and others provide consumers with food and drugstore items (Venkatesh 1991).

The result of this building strategy are centerless residential areas dislocated from an original urban center. Residents of the above described spaces are not orienting their consumption or their occupational and recreational activities towards a traditional urban center anymore. They frequent shops and work at places scattered within the vast array of the building sprawl around them. A single suburb is mainly an administrative unit but not a cohesive social entity. The boundaries of a community are difficult to determine. How many neighborhoods form a community? What is the location of focus? Is it the nearby shopping mall or the distant traditional city? Answers to these questions vary for each resident and their places of work, play and education.

As the degree of suburbanization increased and developed a life of its own, observers came up with a new label to describe the allegedly continuous concentric enlargement of a city. The term *urban sprawl* captures the phenomenon of fast spreading human settlements in ever bigger circles around a traditional urban center which consume vast areas of farmland (Lacayo 1999). In addition, scholars realized that the previously assumed hierarchy and direction between suburb and city center no longer applies (Gottdiener 1985, Kling et al. 1991, Sorkin 1992, Scott 1996). Many residential areas are actually not administratively subordinate to a nearby city. They may be part of a newly founded city municipality or residential area built by a county government surrounding a city. In this particular pattern of land use, the administrative boundaries between suburbs of a larger city and newly founded municipalities or unincorporated residential areas are not visible anymore. A new type of urban form and spatial use has emerged: *the metropolitan region*.

Some of the new municipalities were built from scratch on open land, within a short period of time, and according to a coherent plan. They consist of many different subdivisions and often have room for further extension of building areas. These type of cities are called *master plan communities* (Kling et al, 1991). Depending on the vision of planners and developers these communities have more or less diversity in terms of housing types or prices and the availability of shopping malls, service centers and industrial parks. Public spaces, other than shopping malls, are obsolete and physical proximity between residences and shopping or office facilities is not offered. Movement in these spaces is not possible without the use of a car. Sorkin comes to the conclusion that due to the experience of living in these spatial structures "*collectivity is not experienced anymore*" (Sorkin 1992: xv).



The main characteristics of these new urban settlement structures are its high degree of deconcentration both in terms of population and land use patterns. Advances in communication and transportation technology enable residents to pick and choose locations for their activities independent of absolute distances or the need of proximity to a central place. Nevertheless, these particular spaces are not centerless, they are multinucleated, also called *polynucleated*, with many small centers distributed throughout the area (Gottdiener 1985, Gottdiener and Kephart 1991).

Although no single center of interest is central to all people in the region or serves in all functions at one location, for example as a combination of office structures, service structures, medical facility, cultural and entertainment center, and shopping center, these small centers are connected to each other and are hierarchically organized. This accounts for a high degree of urbanization (Gottdiener and Kephart 1991: 33). There is no single reference point for the population of a vastly expansive space of houses and institutional buildings. There is no line between urban, suburban, or rural areas. Nevertheless, such an area combines all three types of traditional use of space in one and offers all amenities of a city. So it is appropriate to speak of these areas as *urbanized counties* or as urban spaces (Kling et al. 1991).

The change of urban spaces from an urban-suburban dichotomy to a new type of urban settlement structure is described by one representative of the subfield of 'new urban studies' as follows: *"the metropolitan forms we have become used to - with (...) definable zones of residential and other land uses concentrically and sectorally radiating outward from the tightly packed inner city to sleepy dormitory suburbs (...) - are now seemingly in the midst of a profound socio-spatial deconstruction and reconstitution. The new metropolis is exploding and coalescing in multitudes of (...) improbable cities where centrality is virtually ubiquitous and the solid familiarity of what we once knew as urban melts into air"* (Soja 1996:239).

### **Spatial Structure and Community Cohesion**

The above discussions of cultural notions of space and the spatial dimensions of deconcentrated urban areas have introduced findings on the general circumstances of immigrant settlement in metropolitan areas. It is now important to turn to sources that can provide insights on the influence of these specific conditions on the degree of group cohesion. In this respect it is necessary to understand the relationship between spatial structure and characteristics of social interactions within a specific geographic space. This includes the need for information on the spatial distribution of social ties, frequency of contact, and size of networks. *"The major connection*

*between social structure and personal relations is the set of social contexts within which given individuals form relations" (Fischer 1977: 3).*

To assess the existence of communities and their extent of cohesion, we need to know whether the use of space and the type of settlement structure make a difference in the number of opportunities for social interaction. Different research approaches diverge in their interpretation of findings regarding the role of deconcentration and concentration of spatial structure for community building processes. However, while researchers disagree about the role of urban concentration on human relationships and community building, not much has been written on the role of deconcentration in polynucleated metropolitan regions.

Before presenting an overview of research regarding social interaction in urban places, here are a few selected statements that mirror the different assumptions on human relationships in cities and suburbs. In his discussion of social space in general, Bourdieu talks about urban space as an area where the quality of social contacts is improved by spatial proximity (1984: 572). Others argue that in modern urban communities important social relationships often link people living in very distant places (Fischer 1984, Schiefloe 1990, Henning and Lieberg 1996). Neighborhoods are just one of many places where relationships can be established and nourished. Spatial proximity does not impact the quality of contacts, only the frequency of interaction (Henning and Lieberg 1996: 22).

In comparison with the conditions of spatial clusters in inner cities, suburban tracts are supposedly creating homogenous surroundings and are a good environment for the development of community (Mofitt 1972). In contrast, other research argues that relationships based on homogeneity alone may not flourish. The myth that a large number of relatively equal social actors living in a suburban area will interact intimately and frequently based on their common characteristics does not hold up to scrutiny either (Gottdiener 1985: 23). According to which research approach can these conflicting statements be ordered, tested, confirmed or rejected?

### ***Ecological approach to the study of social interaction in cities***

The beginning of a combined sociological and psychological approach to study the interaction patterns in urban communities was made by Durkheim, Simmel, Park, Wirth, and others (Milgram 1970, Fischer 1981). Sociological ideas about social interaction started to develop when cities were still understood in their traditional form, consisting of center and periphery. Urban places were defined as dense clusters of dwellings, an agglomeration of humans and their personal space

which posed a stark contrast to the rural living spaces with plenty of distance between individual households. The assumption at the time was that the effects of *"urbanism as a way of life"* are social disorganization and individual alienation (Wirth 1938). Wirth promoted the hypothesis that the concentration of large and heterogeneous populations eventually leads to the weakening of interpersonal relationships, primary social structures, and normative consensus. This was part of the ecological tradition of urban studies in sociology assuming that crowding causes people to be exhausted and feel disturbed and tense. Although this hypothesis has been contested and rejected in recent years, the 'urban alienation thesis' has continued to contribute to the famous anti-urban bias in the popular opinion of Americans. Large cities are considered to be *"a world of strangers"* (Lofland quoted in Fischer 1981). They are thought to be dangerous places, unsafe, where neighbors do not trust each other and close relationships between people are nonexistent.

In response to Wirth and his contemporaries other scholars argued that contrary to the ecological assumption people do maintain close relationships with one another in urban areas and that alienation does not take place (Gans 1962, Young and Willmott 1957). Later, research findings demonstrated that neither hypothesis was capturing the situation in urban areas adequately. Cities do not inevitably bring alienation, but their social interaction patterns do not resemble rural areas either. A study conducted by Fischer (1981) that analyzed the frequency of relations, proximity of relations, and trust of others among urban residents, revealed that the private sphere of urbanism does not estrange people from close associates. However, in the public sphere, in encounters beyond close relationships, the 'urban way of life' does cause people to keep their distance from anything *"unknown, socially dissimilar, and potentially threatening"* (Fischer 1981: 315).

This particular form of urban behavior (i.e., to keep distance from strangers) was also studied by social psychologists. In search of an understanding of urbanity they were interested in the mechanisms individuals use to cope with the challenges of city life (Milgram 1970). The main assumption was that high population density and the heterogeneity of an urban population create a constant "overload" of impulses that a person living in the city has to react to and digest. How urban residents deal with these conditions in comparison with non-urban dwellers was subject to experiments. Data was collected on the role behavior of urbanites in terms of bystander intervention, willingness to assist strangers, and general interaction styles (civility). The analysis showed comparatively low levels of engagement with others in concentrated urban centers. This result was explained as a heightened sense of vulnerability among urban residents as well as a

preference for anonymity due to its advantages in processing overloads of information and dealing with an increased number of people (Milgram 1970: 1462- 1465). Now an assessment is needed to what extent these findings on behavior towards strangers apply to the interaction patterns found in the deconcentrated living spaces of polynucleated metropolitan areas.

### ***The subcultural theory of urbanism***

Further inquiries by sociologists into the social effects of urbanism, found that population concentration produces a diversity of subcultures, that is, urbanites are more likely than rural residents to behave in ways that diverge from the central or traditional norms of their common society (Fischer 1975, 1995). In his "*subcultural theory of urbanism*" Fischer developed several propositions regarding social life in cities which are instructive for this research. His assumptions are arranged around the notion that city spaces are home to a variety of groups with distinct practices. He calls these groups, which for example can be social classes, common-interest groups, occupational groups, or ethnic groups, subcultures. The diversity in practices which differ from the behavior of non-urban residents are labeled "*unconventionalities*", meaning that cities are home to new inventions and fashions, crime, and deviant practices such as divorce, illegitimacy, drug use, etc., which contravene the standard behavior and attitudes of the society elsewhere (Fischer 1975: 1322). The main question, then, is how the greater degree of unconventionality of subcultures in cities can be explained. The assumption is that urbanism itself is an independent variable beyond the characteristics of the people living in a city space.

According to Fischer's propositions, deviance and disorganization in human behavior are not functions of alienation and lack of relationships among urbanites, but a result of large numbers of people in a given place. The more urban a place in terms of population concentration, the greater is its subcultural variety created by forces of economic competition and in-migration of people from other areas. From this basic assumption follows that the larger an urban place, the more numerous and varied are the institutions and services of its subcultures which promote the internal ties of any subculture and its cohesion (see also findings on institutional completeness by Breton 1964). The existence of subcultures itself depends on the number of people living in a defined and designated space. These "*critical masses*" have to be big enough to maintain unconventional subcultures (Fischer 1975: 1325).

In sum, the rates of unconventionality in a urban place depend on the size of the place and population. The larger and more urban a place the more numerous are the sources of new

influences as well. However, diffusion of new elements from outside into subcultures takes place faster and in greater scope than between subcultures. Therefore, urbanism guarantees continued innovation and change but does not necessarily reduce boundaries between subcultures and barriers of entry (Fischer 1975: 1330). Table 2.3 summarizes the different theories developed by sociologists on the relationship between urban form and social structure.

**Table 2.3 Sociological theories on the relationship between urban form and social structure**

Theory	Content	Urban/rural comparison and effects on cohesion
Ecological theory (Wirth)	The form of spatial environment causes specific interaction patterns (e.g., alienation in cities)	Social life is different in cities and villages. Lack of cohesion among people
Non-ecological theory (Gans, Young and Willmott, others)	Interaction patterns of individuals and their communities are consistent and independent of the spatial environment	Social life is flourishing equally in city and village. No lack of cohesion within small groups
Subcultural theory of urbanism (Fischer)	The larger a spatial environment in terms of population concentration, the more numerous and varied are the institutions and services of its subcultures	Social life is more unconventional in cities than in villages. Cohesion is present in small subcultures, yet subject to outside influences.

### **Ethnic communities and the subcultural theory of urbanism**

In terms of understanding ethnic subcultures in particular, it follows from the above propositions that urbanism, as present in traditional inner city structures, reinforces ethnic cohesion and identity and keeps group boundaries intact. Fischer, however, hypothesizes that assimilatory pressures are less strong in cities than in rural areas (Fischer 1975: 1333). For the study of the relationship between urbanism and maintenance of ethnicity, he suggests not to focus on an individual's commitment to an ethnic group. Instead, he deems it more feasible to conduct an examination of group properties, such as their institutionalization, to find out to what extent an urban place fosters ethnic subculture development and sustainability (Fischer 1995).

Other studies on ethnic groups have shown that when the number of co-ethnics increases in a geographic area, the activities of individuals might no longer need to be tied to membership in ethnic associations (see illustrations in chapter 3). However, even though urbanites do not participate in ethnic organizations, they often have more co-ethnic friends for socializing than rural residents who find others with similar background exclusively in designated institutional

settings, such as ethnic organizations (Kendis 1989, Fugita and O'Brien 1991: 115, Fischer 1995:557). Ethnic enclaves and their role in the economic globalization of a city, on the other hand, are a separate issue of ethnic community building in cities (Sassen 1991, Laguerre 2000). The typology of ethnic communities presented in chapter 3 sheds more light on the activities of ethnic group members in the urban space of metropolitan regions.

### **Deconcentrated urban spaces and the subcultural theory of urbanism**

An evaluation and adjustment of the subcultural theory of urbanism in relation to new forms of spatial environment, i.e., metropolitan areas, is necessary before applying it to this case study. All sociological theories introduced so far have evolved from comparisons between traditional rural and urban characteristics. The space-erasing technology available today has diminished the magnitude of urban-rural differences. Technologies such as fast transportation, cheap phone service, facsimile and internet access permit the development of "*spatially liberated communities*" between people who live in cities and people who live in rural areas (Fischer 1995: 550, Wellman 1979, 1988). It needs to be investigated what kind of role face-to-face encounters, that allegedly continue to be influential for social interaction patterns in conventional urban living spaces (Fischer 1995: 551), play for interaction in deconcentrated urban spaces.

Fischer's (1975, 1995) theory on the social effects of city environments is based on the notion that urban spaces are characterized by high population density and large numbers of heterogeneous people. In contrast, suburbs are expected to represent low population density among a medium size group of essentially homogenous people. The spaces of extensive metropolitan areas, also called polynucleated urban areas, are home to populations that are large in size and heterogeneous, but low in density (Gottdiener 1985). It is yet unclear what the ratio of population concentration to spatial expansion needs to be in order to establish a critical mass of people necessary to sustain a variety of subcultures. However the applicability of the subcultural theory of urbanism can be tested for these specific areas, including an investigation of the likelihood of ethnic groups to form "subcultures" as Fischer calls them, by looking at the degree of connectivity between people and their social groups.

In sum, a place-level analysis of communities in urban spaces should consider group concentration in a locality; size and composition of personal networks; distance and accessibility of meeting places, businesses, and service institutions; subculture formation; the critical mass of

people as a whole and as members of ethnic groups; and a look at inter-group friction and self-selection of individuals for certain places as a choice of residence.

### **Network Analysis of Urban Communities**

When anthropologists moved their focus of interest from villages to urban areas they faced many problems with the application of the 'community-study method' (i.e., Gemeindestudien, see also Redfield 1956, and the above discussion in on the definition of 'community' in general). The urban context no longer presented small-scale, easily bounded geographical units of study. While the 'community study method' was designed to explore a theoretical problem in a given location, the study of 'community' and its properties should strive to understand the phenomenon as a social group unrelated to a village or any clearly defined geographical space. The development of the concept of social networks has given anthropologists a new tool to learn about communities as social groups by focusing on an individual as the center of an expanding and changing web of relationships. Several network studies of communities have been conducted in urban environments. What have they found about personal networks of urban residents? What can they say about community cohesion in urban places?

The early developments of the network analysis paradigm in British social anthropology were related to urban community studies (see Bott 1957, Mitchell 1969, Anderson 1974, Brettell 1977). Initially they evolved from kinship studies and inquiries on the role of family among urban residents. As alluded to above, they demonstrated the existence of *"the village in the city"* (Young and Willmott 1957). At the time, the spatial distribution of relationships was not a major issue of discussion. Instead, the traditional image of urban community was that *"neighborhood equals community"* (Wellman 1999: 23). According to this understanding of community, most community ties stay within the neighborhood and most neighborhood residents presumably interact with each other, forming densely knit clusters of relationships. Each tie among residents is broadly based, meaning it provides a wide range of support and companionship (Wellman 1999).

As urban forms changed and settlement patterns became suburban in nature, scholars faced a new scenario beyond the classic definition of community. The expansion of space and the newness of the subdivisions for all residents involved, now living in separate dwellings, initiated questions regarding the locality of social relationships, the density of personal networks, the nature of interaction, and the frequency of interaction within neighborhoods and beyond.

***Revisiting the myth of social alienation in urban spaces***

The study of social networks of urban and suburban residents is a crucial tool in understanding the social interaction patterns facilitated by specific settlement structures. Wellman (1979) and Wellman et al. (1988) contributed findings from studies on communities in city districts and suburbs to test the 'alienation theory' (Wirth 1938) introduced above. However, they studied existing ties between urban dwellers and not the general behavior towards strangers. Based on data regarding the number, intensity and geographic expansion of informants' social ties and their functions, the researchers determined three types of communities in urban area presented in table 2.4.

The presence of 'lost communities' basically confirms the alienation theory because these communities consist of individuals with very few, rarely overlapping ties with limited support functions. 'Saved communities' resemble villages in their degree of local neighborhood cohesion (see assumptions of Gans 1962 and others). 'Liberated communities' are a combination of local and expanded ties with less functions, yet a higher degree of heterogeneity among relationships (Wellman et al. 1988). The typology also predicts the composition of networks in terms of kin, neighborhood contacts, friends and co-worker, the mode of contact (in person or over the telephone), and the main type of assistance (Wellman 1979: 1224).

**Table 2.4 Comparison of 'lost', 'saved', and 'liberated' types of community**

Network Characteristics	Lost Community	Saved Community	Liberated Community
Size of network	very small	very large	large
Origins	friends, organizations	kin, neighborhood	friends, workplace
Duration	short	long	mostly short
Roles	Acquaintances	Kin, neighbors	friends, co-workers
Sociophysical context	public, private	communal space	private space
Residential separation	somewhat dispersed	local	highly dispersed
Frequency of contact	low	high (much in person)	high (much phone use)

Source: Wellman et al. 1988: 152

This typology of community types is helpful for an understanding of the role of proximity in a person's network. The 'saved community' type represents ethnic enclaves that exist in urban areas with high population density. The type 'liberated community', is supposedly most likely to capture the urban experience of people living in suburbs (Schiefloe 1990). This typology of community



types in urban spaces can be applied to any existing community in a selected geographic space. It is the basis for a detailed inquiry on community interaction patterns within the new forms of urban structures presented in this research.

### *Personal networks in urban spaces*

One of the first large studies on personal network structures compared the personal networks of people living in four different types of urban neighborhoods, the 'barrio' (inner city neighborhoods), 'old suburbs', 'new suburbs' and 'elite suburbs' showed the following results (Fischer 1982).<sup>35</sup> Data collection focused on different social contexts of informants, such as the neighborhood, the workplace, community organizations, and the extended family, in which significant exchanges between people take place, such as emotional support, social support, and instrumental support. In terms of geographic dispersal of ties, 27% of all relationships connected residents within 5 minutes driving distance, and approximately 43% of informants' network members lived between 5 minutes and an hours drive away. The remaining one-third of people in a network lived even further away (McAllister and Fischer 1983: 85). In the 'new suburbs' the majority of ties was locally based, but not very densely knit. The 'barrios' had networks with the least number of ties, but with highest density. The latter can be explained by the high proportion of blue collar workers (working class) whose most important network members are kin who settle in close proximity (Fischer 1982, McAllister and Fischer 1983). The study also concluded that neighborhoods in the 'new suburbs' and 'elite suburbs' are much more stratified by life-cycle than by specific occupation or ethnicity (McAllister and Fischer 1983). Since Fischer already controlled for household income, this is not surprising given the predetermined character of newly built subdivisions which cater either to older couples, mature families, or young couples with children.

The tendency of network compositions to differ in reference to education, social class and income levels, was confirmed by a Swedish study on suburban neighborhoods (Henning and Lieberg 1996). The research reported that strong ties can be maintained independent of distance. However, a large number of weak ties were locally based, including mostly interactions at the neighborhood level. White collar workers (i.e., professionals) have higher absolute numbers of

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<sup>35</sup>'Barrio' means inner city neighborhoods; 'old suburbs' refers to the type of bedroom community suburbs oriented towards the inner city business district. 'New suburbs' represent the newly built subdivisions with nearby shopping and service centers, and 'elite suburbs' a similar set-up with gates (gates community).

weak ties than blue collar workers, resulting in lower degrees of density. Blue collar workers had smaller networks with higher density formed mostly at the local level (Henning and Lieberg 1996: 22). Proximity of contacts apparently plays a role in networks of affluent residents when it comes to the establishment of weak ties. Indeed, proximity is strongly correlated with frequency of interaction (Walker, Wasserman and Wellman 1994: 60). The highest frequency of interaction takes place through weak ties that link individuals to co-workers and neighbors, but each have only a single function (Wellman and Wortley 1990). Strong ties hold over long distances, especially when friends and family members are included.

The existence of a large number of weak ties has several effects. Kadushin (1990), for example, showed in an analysis of survey data on attitudes of residents in New York City neighborhoods that neighborhood oriented and localized social networks benefit affluent residents more than poor residents. Wealthier and white New Yorkers like their neighborhoods better than residents of other demographic groups. The views of one's neighborhood as desirable places to live, has an influence on the type of support people can find and get in their areas (Kadushin 1990: 66). This is related to the issue of trust. A study by Ross and Jang (2000) found that neighborhoods with high rates of crime more often report mistrust among neighbors. However, individual connections and alliances can buffer negative effects of neighborhoods. If weak ties exist throughout a run-down neighborhoods beyond the strong ties of kin and long-term friends, then less crime will be observed (Ross and Jang 2000: 417).

These findings revealed that strong and enduring social ties among the poor should not be romanticized for benefits in achieving economic or social success. Accessibility and availability of facilities and services in a community are often dependent on the presence of larger networks of weak ties providing a wide array of possibilities for action, information, and security (Kadushin 1990: 72). It also calls to question if "saved" type of communities (see Wellman et al. 1988) is a desirable form of interaction. Some of these small clusters of community might not be well equipped to handle the challenges of changing environments and changing economic structures at the turn to the 21st century.

Kadushin's study on the desirability of neighborhoods also shows ethnic differences in coping with the unfavorable situations in one's neighborhoods. Although both native and foreign-born Hispanics, native blacks and all Asians are not satisfied with their living environment, their network orientation in space differs tremendously. *"If there is a barrio where everyone knows everyone else and which is strongly neighborhoods oriented, it appears to be among foreign-born*

*Hispanics. Blacks, foreign born or native are somewhat less likely to have locally oriented networks. Asians, many of whom are foreign born, are least likely to have locally oriented networks"* (Kadushin 1990: 67).

Other studies have looked at the network composition and distribution among different ethnic groups as well. Liebow (1989, 1991) showed that American Indians living in Greater Phoenix, AZ have spatially dispersed networks, which are however not ethnically diverse. In addition, within the ethnic group of American Indians some tribes do practice interaction and others interact exclusively within their separate groups. In that case people who are not well-off economically have only a minimum of strong ties, independent of the spatial expanse. All these examples emphasize the dark side of strongly tied networks in terms of preventing change and economic mobility.

Based on a comparison of Anglo-Saxon and Hispanic social support networks extending out of Costa Mesa in Southern California, Schweizer et al. (1998) came to the conclusion that the two ethnic groups live in ethnically segregated social worlds (Schweizer et al. 1998: 11). In both ethnic groups the role of kin and friends is crucial for emotional support as well as in times of financial crises. Neighbors are less significant, connected through weak ties, and provide mostly instrumental help. Occupational relations have a low level of influence. In terms of spatial expanse of networks, Anglos keep strong relations with kin living far away whereas ties with friends are more locally oriented. Hispanics have almost exclusively localized ties when looking at ties within the United States. Many of the ties with kin and friends are localized as a result of chain migration (1998: 18).

In comparison with the studies introduced above, it is important to keep in mind that this particular study did not distinguish between the networks of blue-collar and white collar workers. It is difficult to compare the role of kin in immigrant networks (Hispanics) with the role of kin in non-immigrant (Anglos) networks. The absence of some or all kin for immigrants within the space of their host country might have additional effects which are hardly visible for the observer. Other people in a network might take over the role of kin. It is also possible, that attitudes and practices change in terms of social and instrumental support in response to a lesser load of obligations.

In fact, other network studies of neighborhoods found that informant's motivation to engage in local networks varies in response to people's alternative sources for social relations and network involvement (Fischer 1982). After all, within the structure created by relationships and the resulting opportunities to meet other people, involvement with potential new network members is

both selective and quantitatively limited (Schieffloe 1990: 99). In other words, a person living in a densely populated area or moving on a daily basis, for example to and from work, within a large geographic space cannot interact with everybody he or she visually encounters. Support relationships developing under such environmental circumstances (i.e., spatial characteristics) are more differentiated than in relationships in traditional communities.

Wellman and Wortley (1990) investigated the varied nature of support and of the social roles that provide support. They distinguished between emotional support, social support in the form of companionship, and instrumental support in reference to small services, larger services and financial aid. They looked at six dimensions to evaluate which role type (for example, parent, child, sibling, extended kin, friend, co-worker, neighbor or organizational relation) fulfills what type of supportive function and to what extent. In a first step they identified the strength and function of each relationship and distinguished between socially close intimate ties and less intimate, but significant ties. The second dimension looked at the accessibility of a tie in terms of residential proximity and frequency of contact. Next they checked the structural position of relationships, either defined as interaction between two people or between several group members. The fourth dimension studied the number and nature of kinship relations. The last two dimensions referred to positional resources of ties in terms of personal attributes, as well as similarities and dissimilarities between a person and his or her network alters (Wellman and Wortley 1990: 564).

Their results showed that personal networks of white residents of Canadian suburbs are segmented and consist of different clusters. Some segments consist of ascribed ties, such as kinship which provide stable support. Other segments offer adaptive support based on achieved ties, such as friendship relations, neighborhood relations, etc. (1990: 580). Accessibility of ties experiences a cut-off point at a 300 miles radius (a day's drive), a distance in which people still engage in mutual services for each other based on strong intimate ties (1990: 570). Other findings confirm previous network studies of neighborhood ties.

Overall, the increased reach of ties and the absence of simple hierarchical group structures create spatially and socially ramified networks (Wellman 1999). Some personal networks overlap to a small extent at the local level and then branch out in varied shapes of relationship trees. Any person has the option to utilize the connections with others that his or her network members have. Wellman (1999) later aggregated findings of all community studies based on the analysis of personal network structures that were conducted over the course of more than 20 years. The result is a comparison of the traditional model of community and the actual picture of community at the

end of the 20th century. Whereas traditional communities were assumed to be based on tightly bounded, densely knit, and broadly based ties, the reality of communities consists of loosely bounded, sparsely knit and specialized ties (Wellman 1999: 24). Table 2.5 presents a condensation of Wellman's findings in the form of a table.

**Table 2.5 Comparison of traditional and recent notions of 'community'**

	Traditional image of community	Recent findings on community
Orientation of personal network ties	Ties have only local reach, stay within the neighborhood: <i>tightly bounded ties</i>	Regional, national and global reach of networks. Ties are not confined to the boundaries of the neighborhood: <i>loosely bounded ties</i>
Overlap of network ties among personal networks of neighborhood residents	The majority of neighborhood residents is a member of each others personal network: <i>densely knit ties</i>	Only a minority of neighborhood residents interact as members of each others personal network: <i>sparsely knit ties</i>
Function and type of ties among neighborhood residents	Within the neighborhood a wide range of emotional, social and instrumental support is offered: <i>broadly based ties</i>	Each individual tie in a personal network provides only a limited range of support, e.g., those who offer emotional support do not contribute other functions: <i>specialized ties</i>

source: Wellman 1999 (pp. 18-24)

The above table, in combination with the typology of 'lost', 'saved', and 'liberated' communities is instrumental for the evaluation of the present case study. Wellman's insights are derived from data on established white residents living in the suburbs of Toronto, where economic and political aspects of support have low importance. It needs to be tested to what extent these findings apply to the social networks of affluent immigrants from Taiwan who settle in deconcentrated urban spaces.

## **Chapter 3**

### **Theoretical Synthesis and Hypotheses**

This chapter synthesizes findings from the literature in community studies, social network studies, immigration studies and urban studies in order to develop a typology of cohesion in ethnic communities and two sets of hypotheses that guide the data analysis and presentation.

#### **Towards a Typology of Cohesion in Ethnic Communities in the United States**

##### **Criteria of the Typology**

There are a variety of ways to conceptualize a typology of immigrant groups. Rumbaut and Portes (1996), for example, distinguish between three different types of immigrants, namely workers, entrepreneurs and professionals, in a typology on the linguistic abilities of first and second generation immigrants (Portes and Rumbaut 1996: 228). Based on their analysis they develop a complex model of immigrant incorporation into the larger society. The resulting typology is a tool for general evaluation of the existence or the absence of a recognizable community of immigrants. In another study, Portes elaborates on different types of reception of immigrants, by the labor market and by the civic society, and their relation to various degrees of prejudice (Portes 1995a: 26). There he argues that different outcomes exist for different immigrant groups according to the context of their reception. The category ethnic community in this typology is differentiated as either working class in character and composition, entrepreneurial/professional, or non-existent (Portes 1995a).

In contrast, the main concern of the analysis and interpretation of this study is the existence or absence of a cohesive ethnic community. Evidence for cohesion is determined on the basis of a community's social network properties. Information on the types and strength of ties which exist between ethnic group members and between members and non-members is instrumental in uncovering the existence of immigrant communities. While the main chapters of this study present data on the detailed nature of the community structure of immigrants from Taiwan who settle in the metropolitan area of Orange County, it is of theoretical importance to compare this specific group of immigrants with other ethnic groups based on several general differences and similarities. As Schweizer emphasizes his writings on epistemology: *"Types are theoretical idealizations that can be illustrated by empirical cases and that are approximated by other cases belonging to a*

*given type. The typology is refined in light of new empirical and theoretical evidence obtained by research" (Schweizer 1998: 74).*

In this typology the unit of analysis is the immigrant group as a whole which allows for a comparison of different immigrant groups and their places of settlement. As Nancy Green points out in her historic analysis of migration, the intermediate level of analysis resulting from treating the group as a unit provides an understanding of the social construction of ethnic identities (Green 1997: 61). Through comparisons it is possible to understand what is specific and what is general in the process of immigration and immigrant incorporation (Green 1997: 59).

The most distinguishing element in the following typology of ethnic groups and their cohesiveness is the location of settlement and the pattern of distribution of co-ethnics. In addition, the ethnic groups in these different categories are treated differently depending on the length of their settlement history in the United States. The illustrating examples of ethnic communities from the literature do not claim to be representative of all ethnic groups residing in the United States or all possible forms of communities. Although the typology is based on settlement patterns and degree of community cohesion, the case studies used in the following characterization cover different time periods in the history of immigration to the United States and include community studies of second and third generation immigrants in addition to the general emphasis on first generation immigrants. Note that in some instances an ethnic group can appear in multiple categories since members of a given ethnic group can experience a variety of circumstances in different locations that ultimately influence their community formation.

### **Differentiation of ethnic communities in response to the Hart-Celler Act of 1965**

Characteristics of ethnic communities in the United States, such as size, composition, degree of cohesion, location of settlement, and economic opportunities are indeed influenced by U.S. immigration policy. Throughout the history of settlement of the United States different rules were established at various times to either stimulate or regulate the flow of newcomers (for a detailed account of the U.S. immigration policy see the appendix).

After an initial phase of encouragement for settlement of North America up to 1881, the flow of new immigrants was first regulated, until 1916, and then was severely restricted, especially for non-Europeans, during the time of the two world wars and until 1964. Immigrant numbers were high in the first decade of the 20th century and then dropped radically until the 1970's. Most of the earlier immigrants, however, had arrived from Europe, especially western Europe, with fewer

numbers of Eastern Europeans and hardly any immigrants from Asian countries. All this changed with the new 'era of liberalization' requested by the late president John F. Kennedy, and manifested in the Immigration Act of 1965 sponsored by congressmen Hart and Celler, hence the Hart-Celler Act. Other than the previous immigration acts which had a national origins quota system, this new immigration and nationality act shifted the basis for selection of immigrants from an applicant's nation of birth to his or her family relationships and skills. Immigrants from all countries were eligible, the annual country limit was 20,000 applicants.

The Immigration Act of 1965 reached congress in 1965 and started to show its first results in 1968. Although other immigration acts followed and confirmed the orientation to abolish immigrant discrimination, this Hart-Celler Act had the most influence on the composition of the population of the United States. For the first time it opened the doors for a large number of people from Asian countries and subsequently their families and kin group members.

An important element of the typology of immigrant communities in this study is the distinction between immigrants who came to the United States before the implementation of the Hart-Celler Act and those whose first members arrived only after the initiation of this watershed legislation. The assumption is that areas of ethnic concentration established by earlier immigrants before 1965 continued to provide services, opportunities, information and emotional support to newly arrived immigrants who may or may not take up residence in the vicinity of these enclaves. When such ethnic reference groups are absent, newly arriving immigrants must adapt in a different manner. In contrast, ethnic groups who entered the United States for the first time in larger numbers after the Immigration Act of 1965 did not have a specific location to go to with an already existing network of people with similar ethnic backgrounds. Included in the latter category are Koreans, Vietnamese, Taiwanese, Cambodians, non-Sikh immigrants from India, Croatians, Iranians, Nicaraguans, Salvadorians and Nigerians, to name a few.

### **Differentiation of ethnic communities according to type of spatial environment**

Immigrant groups who established themselves before and after 1968 have encountered different circumstances for settlement depending on their location of residence. Based on the distinction made by the then newly established subfield of urban anthropology in the early 1970's between studies of social groups *in* cities and social groups *of* cities (Rollwagen 1975, Sanjek 1990b, see also discussion above), this typology adopts the approach of taking the context of cities into account when looking at ethnic groups. The space of larger inner cities and their urban



neighborhoods provides a different set of challenges and opportunities than the suburban area of a large metropolis or city, called 'metropolitan area' by the U.S. Bureau of the Census. According to the definition of the Census Bureau's population reports these settlement structures consist of extensive, not intensive, clusters of towns in the vicinity of large cities.<sup>1</sup>

It is assumed that the conditions for individual and community development created by the spaces of inner cities, metropolitan areas and small independent towns in rural areas are not the same. These three types of settlement locations offer different opportunities for personal and business interactions among co-ethnics and between co-ethnics and people of other ethnic backgrounds. Interaction patterns vary according to the type of settlement structure in a region despite innovations in transportation and communication technology. Yet the possibility for diverse interaction does not necessarily imply a lack of frequency in contact or a reduced sense of connection between co-ethnics. Although the shape and style of interaction might be different, purpose and types of relationships remain the same.

### **Differentiation of ethnic communities based on settlement patterns**

An additional distinction between the basic conditions for community development within or across geographical and administrative boundaries, is the overall distribution pattern of co-ethnic residences. Fischer's assumption that the degree of residential concentration of group members has an influence on the intensity of their interaction is taken into account (Fischer 1995: 549). This typology differentiates between concentrated settlement preferences, which enables a majority of ethnic group members to live within walking distance from one another, and dispersed settlement preferences, which refers to the absence of residential clusters. In the latter case, members of an ethnic group are distributed over several neighborhoods within a larger space. They all associate with a specific geographic region but are not able meet each other without making prior arrangements. The distribution of residences within a predetermined spatial area is directly linked to the predicted outcome of this typology.

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<sup>1</sup>A detailed description and discussion of the characteristics of metropolitan areas/regions appears in the section on urban studies in chapter 2.

**Predicted outcome of the typology**

The categories of the typology distinguish between the different circumstances for interaction among co-ethnics. The predicted outcome is represented by the degree of community cohesion.<sup>2</sup> The degree is expressed as either strong cohesion (S), weak cohesion (W), or moderate cohesion (M). The criteria for each of these labels correspond with Granovetter's (1985) and Wellman and Wortley's (1990: 564) definition of strong and weak ties,<sup>3</sup> which Wellman adapted to a general description of network types. According to this notion, strong ties lead to networks which are small in number, with a high proportion of kin group members, high degrees of multiplexity and density, low degrees of heterogeneity, and high frequencies of interaction. A predominance of weak ties between individuals, produces the opposite (Wellman 1999: 53). In general, social ties which link a finite set of people in multiple functions and frequent interaction to one another reflect tightly bounded, densely connected and all-inclusive strong communities. Relationships between an open number of people who engage in single events of interaction do create a low degree of overlap and result in loosely bounded, sparsely knit communities with specialized ties (Wellman 1999, see table 2.6 above). The latter type of community represents a weak degree of cohesion.

The evaluation of the degree of cohesion for each ethnic community listed in the following typology was carried out by looking for clues in the respective literature. The major findings for each ethnic group are described in the text following table 3.1. They are ordered by settlement location, time of arrival in the United States, and extent of residential clustering. The data on community cohesion of immigrants from Taiwan collected for this study serves as a detailed example of the calculation of the different degrees of community cohesion. The results of the analysis are presented in chapter 8.

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<sup>2</sup>The operationalization of cohesion is presented in the data analysis section of chapter 4.

<sup>3</sup>See introduction to the notion of strong and weak ties in the introduction to chapter 2, and more detailed discussion in the data analysis section of chapter 4.

**Table 3.1 Typology of ethnic community cohesion in the United States**

Historic period	Settlement in the United States before 1965						Settlement in the U.S. after 1965					
	Urban center of large city		Metropolitan Area		Small, independent town		Urban center of large city		Metropolitan Area		Small, independent towns	
Distrib. of residence	Concentrated	Dispersed	Con	Disp	Con	Disp	Con.	Disp	Con.	Disp.	Con	Disp
Community Cohesion*	Strong	Weak	S	W	S	M	S	W	S	M	S	S
Case Studies	Chinatown in SF <sup>+</sup> Chinatown in LA Chinatown in NY Cubans in Miami Italians in Boston Irish in Boston Hassidic Jews in NY	Mexicans in LA Non-Hassidic Jews in NY	Jews in Chicago, IL Chinese in Flushing, NY Chinese in Mont. Park, CA Mexican in Santa Ana, CA	Hispanics in L.A. and OC, CA Chinese in Greater Wash. D.C. Chinese in San Gabriel Valley Croats in OC, CA	Chin. in Valley City, CA Chin. in rural Missis., MS Sikhs from the Punjab in the Sacramento Valley, CA	Japan. in rural California	Korean in LA Haitian in Miami, FL Nicaraguans in Miami, FL Salvad. in D.C. Colombians in NY Dominicans in NY	Female Domestic Worker from West Indies, Guatemala in TX Vietnamese in Philadelphia, PN Brazilians in NY	Vietnamese in Westminster, OC, CA Armenians in Glendale, CA Nuer in Nashville, TN	Iranians in LA County Salvadorians in greater Phoenix, AZ Indians in suburban areas of CT	Taiwanese in Ames, IO	Hmong in Wausa WI Nuer in towns in SD and MN

\* The operationalization of community cohesion is presented in chapter 4. The differentiation of the degree of community cohesion into strong (S), weak (W), and moderately (M) cohesion is further clarified in chapter 8.

+ SF = San Francisco, LA = Los Angeles, NY = New York, OC = Orange County. The other abbreviations reflect the postal codes for each respective state in the United States.

**Settlement Choices: Ethnic Communities in Urban Centers***Concentrated settlement in urban centers*

Prior to the second world war, the overall nature of settlement structures in the United States only offered a choice between large urban centers and small rural towns. Although most of the earliest immigrants to the United States took up residence in a dispersed fashion, with the onset of large waves of new immigrants beginning in the second half of the 19th century and subsequent discrimination of specific newcomer groups, many poor immigrant workers formed urban enclaves in large U.S. cities.<sup>4</sup> The predominantly Italian neighborhoods in Boston (Gans 1962) and Chicago established at the end of the 19th century are examples for such trends. The accounts of Puerto Ricans, Italians, Irish and Puerto Ricans living in New York before the 1960's (Glazer and Moynihan 1963, 1970) tell similar stories. Other examples of unique urban enclaves created by immigrants are the Chinatowns which not only emerged in New York, San Francisco and Los Angeles but also in other large cities throughout the United States (Lee 1960, Nee and deBary 1972, Wong 1988).

These enclaves were the result of the prejudice and discrimination many poor immigrants experienced upon arrival. This was particularly the case when phenotypical characteristics differed from the majority of Anglos and Germans then living in the United States. Dispersed settlement throughout a large city would have been economically problematic since most initially lacked the necessary language skills, occupational skills, and an awareness of just how things worked in the host country. It was simply not possible to find housing in other districts of a city except in those areas designated as ethnic quarters by city government.

However, the classic notion of strong, cohesive communities within clearly defined neighborhood boundaries is not only a phenomenon of the past. "*Urban villages*", as Gans (1962) calls them, can still be found among immigrant groups. Chinatowns and Italian neighborhoods continue to persist as do urban enclaves of Hassidic Jews (Abrahamson 1996). The settlement of Cuban exiles in Miami's Little Havana is another example of a cohesive, tightly bounded community. When many of the community members left Cuba in 1959, they moved to Florida, an area in the United States which was not only geographically close to their homeland with an

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<sup>4</sup>First the Irish and Italians experienced discrimination against them, later it was newcomers from Eastern Europe. However, it was especially immigrants from Asia who were forced to live in ethnic ghettos, often without the rights of having their family members still living in Asia join them in America.

almost metaphorical view of the lost country, but also was already home to earlier waves of Cuban settlers (Portes and Stepick 1993).

An example of immigrant groups who arrived in large numbers after 1965 and set up homogenous neighborhoods are among others, Korean merchant families in Los Angeles' Koreatown<sup>5</sup> (Min 1996). Similar to the Cubans in Miami there was a very high concentration of immigrant entrepreneurship. But these urban enclaves were not the only places where entrepreneurship flourished. Many immigrants also found entrepreneurial niches, such as produce markets, in other urban centers where co-ethnic community density was low or even non-existent (see Park 1997 on Korean grocery markets in New York). These ethnic merchants in low-income areas of inner cities have been thought of as "*middlemen minorities*" (Bonacich 1973).

Other present-day urban clusters of recent immigrants include Dominicans in Manhattan's Upper West Side and Colombians in Queens (Sassen-Koob 1979), although they do not represent entrepreneurial enclaves, but rather more blue-collar neighborhoods. Similar examples are the Salvadorians in Washington D.C. (Menjivar 2000), the Haitians in Miami (Stepick 1991), and the Nicaraguans in Miami (Portes and Stepick 1993: 151). The settlement of the Nicaraguans in Miami took place in response to the existing concentration of other Hispanic communities and occupational opportunities offered by the larger Hispanic ethnic economy. These immigrant communities are all examples of ethnically based, geographically and socially concentrated, and to some degree economically homogeneous communities. For the purpose of this study they have all the features of how community has traditionally been defined.

### ***Dispersed settlement throughout urban centers***

Though earlier settlements of immigrants in large urban cities primarily consisted of highly concentrated residences, later patterns of settlement evolved in inner cities that were somewhat less dense. As discussed in the previous chapter, much has been written about segregation and clustering in neighborhoods, suburbs and independent towns in comparison with indicators for dispersed settlement and spatial assimilation (Massey and Denton 1988, Fong 1999, Rose 1999 to list just a few). Originally it was assumed that only concentrated settlement that were ethnically homogenous could be considered well connected and cohesive in the sense that community members engage in relationship which are strong and primary (Schieflor 1990: 101).

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<sup>5</sup>Korean immigrants had previously entered the United States as workers in Hawaii. Prior to 1965 however, they did not settle in large numbers in the mainland of the United States.

As recent studies have shown, and as this study will elaborate on further, co-ethnics living in dispersed, diversified neighborhoods and towns can still form 'communities' that display some levels of cohesion. Interaction patterns, then, may not simply be a matter of business or workplace contacts, but may also involve ties developed outside any work setting including general socializing and leisure activities. A good example of continued and ever growing association of co-ethnics living dispersed in a large urban center comes from non-Hassidic Jews in Chicago and New York. Given the increased opportunity to meet fellow ethnics in large numbers many have a higher proportion of friends as co-ethnics after moving to larger cities despite increased opportunities to interact with members of other groups (Goldschneider 1986). While these resulting interactions may not be spatially well bounded and dense, members do share a sense of identity and feel connected through diverse and dispersed weak ties between co-ethnics. Similar findings come from studies of Mexicans living in Southern California (Chavez 1998, Sewell 1989, Rouse 1991, Miron 1998).

### **Immigrants arriving in urban centers after 1965**

Several examples of recent immigrants who dispersed in large urban cities are represented by female domestic workers from the Caribbean and Central America (Grasmuck and Pessar 1991 on domestic workers from the Dominican Republic, Ho 1991 on Afro-Trinidadian Workers, Hogan 1998 on Mayan female domestic workers from Guatemala, Hondagneu-Sotelo 1999 on Hispanic female domestic workers in general, Foner 1998 and Pessar 1999 on female domestic workers in New York). These women tend to live dispersed in various households for which they work, yet keep infrequent contact with members of their ethnic group. This results in networks which are difficult to maintain on a regular basis or in a clearly bounded fashion. Information flow is limited to fewer specific contexts due to constraints on face-to-face contact. Yet, these women's networks function as sources for social support and are mostly defined by ethnic membership.

Another example of dispersed settlement in urban neighborhoods of co-ethnics who interact mostly among co-ethnics, yet are not generally connected by way of well defined community institutions are the Vietnamese Americans in Philadelphia (Kibria 1993). Among the community of about ten thousand ethnic Vietnamese living in clusters dispersed throughout the urban neighborhoods of the city, there is a striking absence of strongly cohesive Vietnamese community associations.

The author of the study on the Vietnamese community in Philadelphia interprets this finding as linked to the specific historic experience of Vietnamese people with government, authorities, hierarchies and leadership rules in their home country. Yet she states that the Vietnamese nevertheless prefer to socialize with other Vietnamese. *"In the absence of clear geographical boundaries as well as powerful community organizations, the ethnic community life of Vietnamese Americans had a localistic quality. That is, my informants' contacts with fellow ethnic were centered around the specific clusters of Vietnamese American settlement in which they lived. However, informal social networks, based on ties of kinship and friendship, did connect them to other Vietnamese Americans living in different neighborhoods"* (Kibria 1993: 27). Obviously a weakly cohesive community of Vietnamese Americans in Philadelphia proper did exist from the point of view of individual Vietnamese, though they did not support a strongly tied and well represented community based on interconnected community institutions.

### **Settlement Choices: Ethnic Communities in Metropolitan Areas**

When the first suburbs were established after the end of the second world war in an effort to meet the increased demand for newly built homes by returning soldiers who wanted to start a family,<sup>6</sup> some ethnic groups sought the relatively new form of settlement as well. The growing demands for housing in the suburbs was also fueled by the 'push' and 'pull' factors of in-migration from the South. After the end of the second world war, a large movement of workers, both black and white, from the southern states to the northern industrial cities began to take place. Many city dwellers responded to this demand for urban housing by these migrants with moves of their own, preferably to higher status areas (Rosenthal 1960: 277). The suburbs were a perfect destination, and offered some initial homogeneity, both racially and in terms of social classes.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>Soldiers returning home from the war in Europe and the Pacific stimulated demand for home ownership. In the years immediately before the war and during the war no new houses had been built creating a very high demand for new houses once the war was over and the production of building materials was available.

<sup>7</sup>The phenomenon of replacement in the central cities of Americans Northeast and Midwest of middle-class city dwellers who moved to the suburbs by blacks who moved there from the south has been called "chocolate cities and vanilla suburbs" by the general population (quote from Farley et al. 1978 in Massey and Denton 1988) I marked a distinct segregation between black and white residents in the United States which has lasted in these specific cities until today (see U.S. Bureau of the 2000). While intuitively one would expect members of ethnic groups moving out of their urban enclaves to settle in a dispersed fashion throughout the suburbs, the creation of new settlement areas also facilitated the continuation of clustered spatial living, since the building boom gave potential buyers many choices where they wanted to live and who their next-door neighbors should be.

***Concentrated settlement in metropolitan areas*****Concentrated settlement in the suburbs by immigrant groups arriving before 1965**

Although many immigrants who left the inner city and settled in the suburbs in search of better schools and higher standards of living chose houses in neighborhoods without ethnic concentration, some members of ethnic groups did settle in waves in specific locations and created a slight concentration in some suburban neighborhoods. A very telling case is the out-migration of the middle-class Jewish population of Chicago beginning in the late 1940's. A study conducted by Herbert Gans in 1949 and 1955 in a new suburb west of downtown shows that while many Jewish families did not necessarily settle next door to one another they sought each other out for joint efforts to create a Jewish Sunday school for children, a temple, and several other community organizations (Gans 1999 (1958): 140). He mentions in a footnote that as suburban subdivisions were built and houses put on the market, certain sections of the division seemed at times to become a densely settled Jewish neighborhood, though the concentration lessened at a later point (1999 (1958): 165).

Rosenthal (1960) also studied the movement of Jewish families from urban neighborhoods to the suburbs. He observed that at first Jewish settlements were evenly spread in separate clusters over the entire city. Later that trend was reversed when the in-migration of poor Southerners took place and pushed the middle-class Jewish families with previously low rates of home ownership to specific suburbs on Chicago's North Side. In addition, certain already existing villages and towns that were eventually incorporated as suburbs enforced regulations to keep Jewish residents out. These restrictions were met by Jewish land developers who marketed newly created subdivision specifically to Jewish families. As a result, the concentration of ethnic Jews became much higher in the northern suburbs than in neighborhoods within the city of Chicago, a process he calls "*voluntary segregation and enforced segregation*" respectively (Rosenthal 1960: 281). The ethnic community was able to maintain itself and sustain strong cohesion among its participants.

Similar concentration of members of specific, well established ethnic groups in specific locations can be found elsewhere as well. Among such examples are the settlement of large numbers of immigrants from Mexico in Santa Ana located in California's Orange County (see detailed descriptions of community life in Chavez 1994, Miron et al. 1998).

The Chinese communities in Flushing, New York (Chen 1992, Smith 1995) and Monterey Park in Los Angeles County (Fong 1994, Horton 1995) experienced comparable developments.



Neighborhoods in Flushing and Elmhurst, located in the Borough of Queens, have been subject to so-called "white flight" as well a "black displacement" since the beginning of the 1970's when effects of increased immigration after the Hart-Celler Act of 1965 were felt in the housing market. Immigrants first settled in or around the existing Chinatown and then looked for other residential areas. Many of the neighborhoods in the suburbs surrounding New York City changed into polyethnic or multicultural neighborhoods. Few were predominated by one specific ethnic group, but Asian immigrants preferred white neighborhoods over mainly black or Hispanic neighborhoods (Chen 1992). The particular movement of various Asian immigrants to Flushing also contributed to economic restructuring of the area. Flushing changed from being oriented toward the larger city center becoming a retail node in and of itself, providing goods and services for local co-ethnics. A rather independent suburb developed whose ethnic population had a more local and regional orientation, while the European American population continued to treat the area as a bedroom community of New York City.

However, as Chen describes in his study of Chinese immigrants from Taiwan in the Flushing area, different ethnic groups interacted little with one another. While the concentration of ethnic Chinese in Flushing did not form a distinct 'Chinatown', the ethnic Chinese kept mostly to themselves. Specialized ethnic interest groups sprung up within the neighborhoods. The ethnic Koreans had their own set of organizations and the ethnic Chinese had their specific religious, recreational, and economic organizations (Chen 1992). Smith (1995) sees this development as follows. *"This has resulted in the emergence of what are sometimes referred to as 'second' or 'little' Chinatowns that are urban rather than suburban in character, but are physically distinct from the old central city Chinatown"* (Smith 1995: 62). Small, concentrated and cohesive ethnic communities of Koreans and Chinese did exist and in turn attracted more fellow co-ethnics to settle in the region, but they did not make themselves politically visible in the community at large (Smith 1995: 70).

In comparison, Monterey Park in California is home to a larger concentration of ethnic Chinese. Timothy Fong (1994) not only portrays Monterey Park as the first suburban Chinatown, he also records the many political activities in which ethnic Chinese have been involved. As the percentage of Asians and predominantly ethnic Chinese in Monterey Park grew so did the resentment of the town's white residents. Between 1980 and 1990 the proportion of Asian residents in Monterey Park grew 104% to 56% of the total population. Hispanics accounted for 31% and European Americans for 12% of the remaining population (Fong 1994: 33).

A closer look at the various conflicts within and between ethnic groups reveals a much more diversified picture. Ethnic Chinese were by far the majority among the new residents of Asian origin, as compared to Elmhurst and Flushing were somewhat equal proportions of ethnic Indians, ethnic Koreans and various groups of ethnic Chinese settled. But ethnic Chinese in Monterey Park were a very diverse group coming from different countries of origin, different ethnic and political affiliations and different economic backgrounds. They were *"an extremely diverse population that cuts across all levels of cultural and class identification"* (Fong 1994: 160). Many conflicts among the town's population arose over the economic direction of the city's development and especially issues of controlled or uncontrolled growth. Supporters of opposing viewpoints were by no means divided along ethnic group lines (see also Horton 1995 and 1996). Nevertheless, ethnic Chinese were the dominant group.

In California and around the globe Monterey Park is also known as *"Little Taipei"* or *"Chinese Beverly Hills"* (Fong 1994, Zhou 1998, Li 1999). It is expected that the percentage of ethnic Chinese in Monterey Park will continue to grow. Economic services as well as ethnic Chinese social institutions already display a high degree of self-sufficiency. In addition, interconnections with the Pacific Rim economy have increased and the economic restructuring in the United States from a focus on manufacturing industries to a concentration on global technologies and services has been favorable for Chinese immigrants (Fong 1994: 169). Many immigrants come with both the necessary skills and ties to investors to participate in this type of economic development.<sup>8</sup> Although not all ethnic Chinese share a unified sense of community, the concentration of co-ethnics in the space of Monterey Park creates opportunities for the nurturing of strong ties among residents. While Monterey Park developed at first in the 1960's and 70's in reference to the existing Chinatown and Little Tokyo of downtown Los Angeles, it has in the meantime become itself a magnet for residential clusters of ethnic Chinese in the larger Southern California area (Fong 1994, Horton 1995, Tseng 1995, Li 1999, see section on dispersed settlement in metropolitan areas below).

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<sup>8</sup>Fong labels the overlap between racial group distinction and economic class as "ethclass" a term coined by Milton Gordon in 1994. The economic restructuring favored specific ethnic and racial groups and brought disadvantages to other groups resulting in different economic classes along ethnic lines.

### **Concentrated settlement in the suburbs by immigrant groups arriving after 1965**

Although the majority of immigrants arriving in metropolitan areas after 1965 has settled in a dispersed fashion, a few ethnic groups have established concentrated settlements. The Vietnamese and the Armenians in Southern California are two examples.

Vietnamese refugees have moved in large numbers to the town of Westminster in Orange County, California. It is the only clearly visible concentrated settlement of Asian immigrants in the county. The ethnic business district is so geographically clustered and well known as an enclave of Vietnamese culture and business that even signs on the highway passing Westminster recognize 'Little Saigon' (Gold 1994). Refugees from Southeast Asia were assigned to various locations throughout the United States. Although some ethnic Chinese from Vietnam settled in Los Angeles Chinatown and in Monterey Park, the establishment of 'Little Saigon' is an independent phenomenon and did not develop in reference to either location (Gold 1994). The concentration of Vietnamese immigrants evolved over time due to the specific context of the region, availability of real estate, and the outmigration of upper middle-class whites to newer subdivisions in the other parts of Orange County. At the same time it filled the need for an ethnic concentration and reference point for co-ethnics (i.e., Vietnamese), who had no previous commercial center in the region.

Another example is the strong community of Armenians in Glendale who prefer two specific areas within the city of Glendale, Los Angeles County. This does not reflect the general pattern of immigrants from the Middle East. On the other hand, in comparison with ethnic groups who did immigrate from the Middle East to the United States,<sup>9</sup> Armenians, many of whom arrived from Iran as well as countries of the former Soviet Union, have the highest rate of population growth, the lowest number of college graduates and the lowest median per capita incomes, as well as the highest retention rate of their ethnic language (in connection with low proficiency of English) among the generation of immigrants who were born outside the United States but received most of their schooling in U.S. schools, also called the '1.5 generation' of immigrants (Bozorgmehr et al. 1996). Another reason for the strong cohesion both socially and spatially is their former minority

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<sup>9</sup>Other ethnic groups identified by Bozorgmehr et al. in their work on Middle Eastern immigrants are Iranians, Arabs and Israelis. The countries of origin are more diverse. For example Arabs come from Palestine, Lebanon, Syria, etc. Immigrants from the Lebanon had come in large numbers before the U.S. immigration Act of 1924 brought a halt to mass immigration. There are also immigrants from Egypt, Iraq, and countries of the former Soviet Union. Yet immigrants from specific nation-states comprise different ethnic groups. Immigrants from Iran can be differentiated into Armenian Iranians, Bahai Iranians, Jewish Iranians and Muslim Iranians. Bozorgmehr calls this "internal ethnicity" (Bozorgmehr 1997).

status in the country of Iran. In contrast Iranians, the majority in the nation-state, arrived usually with more economic and human capital and had more advantages in blending into the mainstream society of the United States (Bozorgmehr 1997).

The strength and degree of cohesion among Armenian immigrants living at the specific place of Glendale in the Greater Los Angeles metropolitan area is based on their mutual need for support not only for emotional needs but also for economic ones as well. They rely on each other to ensure their economic well-being and their psychological well-being. Similar observations have been made in studies on political and economic refugees who were settled by the government throughout the United States but often regroup at a specific locality in a large municipality (see description of Hmong and Nuer below). In that respect, less affluent Armenians show similar patterns of community building as immigrants from South and Eastern Europe did a century before.

### *Dispersed settlement throughout metropolitan areas*

#### **Dispersed settlement in the suburbs by immigrants who have a reference group that arrived prior to 1965**

When looking at members of ethnic groups settling dispersed in greater metropolitan areas without being constrained to one social and economic center, we must turn first to ethnic Chinese in the San Gabriel Valley in the greater Los Angeles area.<sup>10</sup> Most of the ethnic residents in the San Gabriel Valley are professionals or entrepreneurs who have chosen their new residence in a somewhat independent fashion. Many still prefer an ethnic enclave in the nearby urban center to guarantee availability of ethnic shopping opportunities and therefore choose to settle in suburbs within convenient driving distance (Fong 1994: 160). They move out of an area of concentrated ethnic settlement such as Monterey Park, because the clustering has become too dense or the neighborhood incompatible with their achieved socioeconomic status.

Throughout the San Gabriel Valley ethnic Chinese reside in clusters which transcend the boundaries of individual municipalities. Interspersed ethnic shopping malls can be found that are

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<sup>10</sup>The San Gabriel Valley includes the cities of San Marino, Alhambra, Monterey Park, San Gabriel, South San Gabriel, Rosemead, Temple City, Arcadia, El Monte, South El Monte, La Puente, Covina, West Covina, Walnut, City of Industry, Hacienda Heights, Rowland Heights and Diamond Bars. Ethnic Chinese from mainland China as well as Taiwan and ethnic Taiwanese live in all of these cities in various numbers. The last five cities listed here (Walnut, City of Industry, Hacienda Heights, Rowland Heights and Diamond Bars) are called 'The East District' by the Chinese people in the Los Angeles metropolitan area (Zhou Yu 1998).

designed to cater to customers of Asian descent (Li 1999). Most of the ethnic Chinese residents in the larger San Gabriel Valley are financially well-off and either work as professionals in nearby companies or run their own businesses. Unlike the earlier immigrants who accumulated petty capital and business experience based on difficult manual labor, these immigrants came equipped with various forms of capital and extensive business experience. Some were able to start large-scale businesses immediately upon arrival (Tseng 1994). Business activities of ethnic Chinese in the area do not constitute an ethnic enclave but rather a distinct ethnic economy. Client-oriented businesses such as ethnic banks and accounting firms locate in the many Chinese business centers throughout the area, most notably in Alhambra, Monterey Park and the City of Industry. Computer distributors, which are strongly represented among Chinese immigrants, occupy sites out the outskirts of the San Gabriel Valley. Though selling to the general public in the United States both state-and nation-wide they benefit from their vicinity to ethnic suppliers and services (Zhou 1998).

The specific phenomenon of an ethnic group and their economic activities spread spatially across several suburbs can not be thought of as a 'suburban Chinatown'. Since neither population settlement nor business stops at the border of any 'Chinatown' or 'Chinese business district', Wei Li labels the area an 'ethnoburb' to capture the essence of the extended San Gabriel Valley. She defines an ethnoburb as *"an ethnic community emerging from suburban main thoroughfares, criss-crossing, breaking down the borders between communities that are not fixed to a single place* (Li 1999: 2). In such a space one minority group can have a significant concentration, but may not comprise a majority. Ethnoburbs like the San Gabriel Valley emerge from the deliberate activities of ethnic minorities, in this case business actors from Taiwan, who possess both substantial financial resources and the capacity to generate large income flows. The resulting ethnic economy of a region is sustained by members of the ethnic group that live both concentrated and dispersed within reachable distance of one another.<sup>11</sup>

Since the financial situation of most immigrants in the area is rather stable and middle-class or above, those co-ethnics who are not running their own businesses do not necessarily have to interact with each other on a frequent basis. They rely on each other mostly for emotional support which does not require an ethnic enclave settlement pattern. Overall group cohesion among immigrants from Taiwan and mainland China in the San Gabriel Valley is not strong, yet social

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<sup>11</sup>This vague use of language is intentional. "Reachable distance" has a different connotation in the popular culture of California than in many other places of the world. One or two hours drives in one direction is not considered unusual. Although recently the increase in traffic has put a new twist on the actual distance in miles which can be covered within the time period of one hour.

interaction takes places almost exclusively among members of their own ethnic group. In addition, the reference points to the clusters in the Chinese business district of Monterey Park intensifies the sense of relatedness despite explicit geographical propinquity. The building of the Hsi Lai Temple (meaning literally "'Coming to the West' - Temple") in Hacienda Heights is another representation of both identity and cohesion for immigrants from Taiwan and conflict between newcomers and established white residents (Li 1999: 17). Another agent for creating a sense of connection is the ethnic media in the region. Chinese newspapers and TV stations provide information and a material reference to the large numbers of other immigrants who share the space of the larger San Gabriel Valley (Fong 1996: 70).

Comparable cases are ethnic Chinese living in the greater Washington D.C. area (Yang 1998) and Hispanics residing in the Orange County metropolitan area outside of Anaheim and Santa Ana (Schweizer et al. 1998).

### **Dispersed settlement in the suburbs by immigrant groups arriving after 1965**

Immigrant groups with a longer history in the United States have a reference point in an urban center such as an ethnic enclave, even though they may settle in suburbs immediately upon arrival. A case of immigrants who have no such historical orientation but settle dispersed and in metropolitan areas, are the Iranians in the greater Los Angeles area. They show no concentration in any specific neighborhood of any city either with respect to residence or business activities (Light et al. 1994, Bozorgmehr et. al 1996 and Bozorgmehr 1997). Relevant studies found Iranians to be of relatively high status and have high levels of economic and human capital. They were also ethnically heterogeneous, including several ethno-religious subgroups (Bozorgmehr 1997). Nevertheless an ethnic economy does exist linking members of the different subgroups loosely together. The ethnic economy is large in size, yet not an ethnic enclave economy since "*the Iranian firms are virtually unclustered in space, just as Iranian residences are unclustered*" (Light et al. 1994: 73).

Salvadorians who chose the greater Phoenix area as their new home display comparable patterns of weak interconnections among co-ethnics (Menjivar 2000). While settling dispersed in the area, religious communities both of Protestant and Catholic faith provide the opportunity for network expansion. They also offer a sense of community based on weekly meetings. Evangelical churches and Catholic churches offer immigrants frameworks to interpret and cope with the world around them based on their respective teachings. While the Catholic Church relies on collective

approaches which provide a well-developed web of assistance to immigrant newcomers as a group, the Evangelical churches foster an individual-centered approach which emphasizes transformation through individual conversion (Menjivar 2000: 6). Salvadorian immigrants who reside in different parts of the larger metropolitan area are linked to one another by joint membership in one of several ethnic churches in the region.

The case of India as a sending country is comparable to that of the Iran (Lessinger 1992). Immigrants originating from the nation state of India are of many different ethnic groups and ethno-religious subgroups. Many settle in Southern California in a similar fashion to the Iranian case described above, both in Los Angeles County and Orange County (Leonard 1997). A large number of various ethnic groups from India also settled in the geographic area surrounding New York City, in the states of New Jersey, New York and Connecticut. Data on Indian immigrant settlement patterns in Connecticut reveals that much of the settlement is occurring in small cities (Purkayastha 2000). However, the small cities of Connecticut are often home to commuters working in New York City or the New York metropolitan area (Smith 1995: 61-62).

Preliminary results from research on the transnational influences "*ethnicity in the suburbs*" has shown that Indian Americans living in Connecticut have a multitude of ethnic organizations to choose from (Purkayastha 2000). One fifth of the Asian immigrants in the suburbs of Connecticut came from India. They experience very high standards of living, earning on average more than \$ 83,000 a year. Although such immigrants tend to have little in common as a joint group due to religious, regional and language differences, the large variety of organizations allow the individual immigrant to pick and choose their organizational affiliations and attendance at various events. Participants and members of groups do not have to be deeply committed to take part in activities. The high frequency of events and meetings by associations allows ethnic actors to maintain multiple levels of identity. An immigrant can choose to emphasize his or her Bengalese association at one gathering or a Hindu religion at another (Purkayastha 2000).

The existence of ethnic organizations generates and promotes the growth of ethnic networks and creates awareness of Indo-Americanness. The overlapping networks are also opportunities to build and extend social capital.

**Settlement Choices: Ethnic Communities in Small Cities and Rural Towns****Settlement in small cities and rural towns by immigrants who have a reference group that arrived prior to 1965**

Urban were not the only place early immigrants settled. Prior to the second world war and the change of immigration law in the 1960's, non-European immigrants also settled in rural areas. Nevertheless, immigrants who turned to farming outside the large urban areas in North American have not been numerous. Since these immigrants live dispersed all over the U.S., there are not many visible ethnic communities in smaller cities. Towns and cities not in close vicinity to large metropolitan areas often do not provide opportunities for the development of separate ethnic communities in the sense of a sufficient number of ethnic organizations to serve all the needs of ethnic group members in a region, especially if there are not enough ethnic group members to support such institutions. The few examples of communities of immigrants that have formed in small cities usually emerged in response to occupational opportunities in the area. However, as historic research on migration has shown, the fabric of these ethnic communities is very much influenced by their small size (Morawska 1996).

Between 1880 and the second world war, Chinese vegetable farmers settled in clusters near San Francisco (Chan 1986, Minnick 1988) and in the Central Valley (Weiss 1974). Chinese Owners of Groceries set up business in the Yazoo-Mississippi Delta to cater to poor Blacks in the area (Loewen 1988). Such occupational communities, usually found within the urban Chinatowns, were at first characterized by the sojourner mentality of their members (see Siu 1987 on Chinese laundry workers in Chicago). Immigrants came specifically to help out relatives working in a specific trade and planned to eventually return to their homeland. The initial concentration on one business type in these occupational communities nevertheless was instrumental in building a strong cohesive community as settlers continued to stay in their selected areas and occupational niches.

Early close-knit communities of ethnic Chinese in the United States developed as a response to the wide-spread discrimination experienced by miners, rail-road workers and farm laborers. The sojourner mentality of some Chinese migrants with it's focus on the homeland and the indigenous culture contributed to the formation of voluntary segregation of Chinese people prior to the second World War (Siu 1952: 35). In addition, the Chinese experienced large gender imbalances (Willmott 1964: 35). Women were not allowed to immigrate due to the Chinese exclusion act of



1882 and Asian men were forbidden to marry white women (Hing 1993: 24, 45).<sup>12</sup> Therefore many places with initial concentration of Chinese migrants were unable to sustain any long term ethnic enclaves. Many Chinese settlement clusters, called Chinatowns by the local population independent of their actual size, were too small and too specialized to perform all functions of a community, such as population reproduction and economic independence (Lee 1949: 422-423). Over time the small groups of Chinese migrants who managed to stay in an area got attached to the larger society and their economic and social base. In many midsize towns and cities Chinese communities were nevertheless thriving for a while.

Weiss (1974) describes the Chinese community of Valley City in the Central Valley of California in the late 1960's as a community in transition from a largely cohesive traditional Chinatown to a more diversified and dispersed settled community.<sup>13</sup> He attributes this evolution as a response to social and economic opportunities among second generation immigrants and the influx of more recent immigrants (Weiss 1974: 107-117). At the time of the research, in the late sixties, the overall Chinese community was already far from being completely homogenous. Few members practiced traditional affiliations and relations in general were more spread out and included a large range of people who might only be related by a single role, e.g., parent of a child's friend. People were loosely related based on joint interests and membership in associations was open to all minorities living in the city at large. The overall structure of the Chinese community was based upon its members' individual orientations as represented by their association identities. Differential rates of assimilation into the larger society corresponded with age cohorts and reflected the generation gap within the community (Weiss 1974: 157).

The Sikh community in the Central Valley, California, is an example from the same geographic area (Gibson 1988). Although a small number of these immigrants from India came to the United States around the 1900's, they had rather low visibility when compared to the Chinese immigrants

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<sup>12</sup>Both Oregon and California had antimiscegenation laws. The California law was enacted in 1880 and revoked in 1959. It stated that a marriage between a white person and a "Negro, Mulatto, or Mongolian" was prohibited (Hing 1993: 251, note 7). In addition, beginning in 1907 U.S. women were stripped of their citizenship if they married an alien. Once married they were regarded as nationals of their husband's native land (Hing 1993: 206). Although repealed in 1922, the act continued to apply to women who married an "alien ineligible to citizenship" which essential meant Asian males. Despite the abolishment of the law in 1931, it continued to be a disincentive for American women to marry Asian men (206).

<sup>13</sup>Valley City is a pseudonym for Sacramento, located in the Sacramento Valley, which is part of the Central Valley of California - a large irrigated area producing agricultural products for the coastal regions of California. At the time of the study carried out between 1967 and 1970, Sacramento had approximately 240,000 inhabitants. In comparison, San Francisco proper had 715,000 inhabitants according to the 1970 census. The 1995 census lists 1,270,000 people living in Sacramento.

of the same period and location since the vast majority of non-Sikh Indian Americans arrived in the United States after the change of immigration laws in 1965 (Kitano and Daniels 1995: 105).

Before the emigration out of India started in earnest in 1965, one particular group had chosen to settle in smaller towns away from the large metropolitan areas.<sup>14</sup> Sikhs, a religious groups whose homeland is the Punjab region between India and Pakistan, settled mostly in small rural towns in the Sacramento Valley, part of the Central Valley of California (Gibson 1988: 5).<sup>15</sup> They had started a very small community around 1910, yet by 1950 there were still no more than 400 Punjabi Sikhs, many of which had married non-Indians from the local area.<sup>16</sup> Other than the highly educated Asian Indians, the Sikh immigrants to the Sacramento Valley came from small villages and had little contact with Western life-styles prior to their arrival.

A case study by Gibson (1988) on Sikh immigrants who settled in the Central Valley with relatives who had arrived before 1965, focuses on education and immigrant children's school performance, inference on community cohesion can be easily made. In fact, the study's title *"accommodation without assimilation"* implies that the immigrants have established a well-functioning but separate ethnic group in the area. *"Punjabis actively resist the influence of the dominant culture, fearing that such influence will erode values they perceive as fundamental to the persistence of the Punjabi identity. (...)Punjabis respond to such tensions by keeping themselves socially separate, by demanding the right to maintain their ways and protect their interests, with force if necessary, or by accommodating themselves only in public to the norms of the larger society and, in private, observing a Punjabi way of life"* (Gibson 1988: 25).The voluntary

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<sup>14</sup>A prominent India-American, Sirdar Jagjit Singh, president of the India League of America, and others had lobbied successfully to have Congress pass the 1946 act, "which gave the right of naturalization and small immigration quota to persons of race indigenous to India" (Kitano and Daniel 1995:103). This was remarkable because it was not until the Hart-Celler Act of 1965 that immigrants from all Asian countries and in large numbers were eligible for entering the United States and obtaining citizenship.

<sup>15</sup>The Central Valley of California stretches from Bakersfield near Los Angeles in the south to Yuba City north of Sacramento. Separate sections are called "Sacramento Valley" in the north and "San Joaquin Valley" in the southern part around Fresno. The author of the case study makes clear that Muslims from Punjab are from the present-day Pakistan-Punjab area (since they immigrated after 1947).

<sup>16</sup>The majority of Punjabi Sikhs (80%) who lived in northern California before 1946 had married women from Mexican American farm worker families (Leonard 1992). One reason for the Mexican-Indian marriages were the low number of Asian Indian women migrating to the United States. Women were restricted by their culture's proscriptions against leaving home. Work opportunities in the United States existed mostly for men. In addition, the United States upheld antimiscegenation laws which forbade Asian men to marry white women (Chan 1990: 66).

Other than in the Sacramento Valley, Sikh immigrants also started a sizable community in the Imperial Valley in Southern California close to the Mexican border, west of San Diego and North of Mexicali. The Imperial Valley is similar to the Sacramento Valley, characterized by extensive use of irrigation and high levels of agricultural productivity.

segregation of this rather homogenous group of people is also facilitated by the fact that no direct contact with non-Punjabis occurs at the workplace.

The community of Punjabi Sikhs is a strong immigrant enclave. Thanks to the already existing network of relatives, friends and acquaintances as well as numerous religious, social, political, and economic communal activities the need for interaction with the larger society was greatly reduced (Gibson 1988: 123). The present-day size of the group is big enough to accommodate and serve all group members. The group cohesion and solidarity in the community continues to be strong.

Another group in the small independent towns of the San Joaquin Valley are the Japanese Americans. Just as the examples of Chinese and Sikh immigrants have shown before, settlement of Japanese immigrants in the agricultural valleys of California reflects the early stages of immigration from Asia. Immigrants who had lived in agricultural areas in their home countries had skills that were more applicable to a rural context. Eventually they showed more dispersed patterns of rural settlement. Under such circumstances it was expected that dispersed settlement of immigrants in rural areas would lead to stronger attachments to the mainstream society and a faster and more complete assimilation, given the low numbers of co-ethnics that provide both ethnic contacts and opportunities for other needed ethnically based community services (Lee 1949, Breton 1964).

Indeed, case studies for both ethnic Japanese living in rural areas and ethnic Japanese living in urban areas show evidence that most Japanese Americans who reside in ethnically mixed neighborhoods or cities with a majority of white residents become structurally assimilated to mainstream American life and engage in mainstream community affairs. On the other hand, other than European immigrants whose ethnic communities become symbolic in nature by the third generation (Gans 1979), Japanese Americans still interacted with one another in a variety of social and organizational contexts (see Montero 1981 on research with sampled members of associations, and Fugita and O'Brien 1991: 113). *"Despite geographical dispersion, however, Japanese Americans have managed to retain high levels of participation in the institutional life of their ethnic community. In addition to the persistence of strong interfamily patterns of mutual aid and support, there is continued participation in a wide variety of voluntary associations such Buddhist and Christian ethnic churches, Japanese American athletic leagues, and the Japanese American Citizens League"* (Fugita and O'Brien 1991: 96).

Specifically second and third generation Japanese Americans who lived in less urban areas (e.g., Fresno, California), where the ethnic population originally settled in a less dense manner

have continued to maintain ethnic social relationships and social organizations (Befu 1965). Although rural areas have smaller proportion of fellow ethnic Japanese and naturally stimulate the need for more interactions with Caucasians, the level of ethnic voluntary membership is higher than in urban or suburban areas with higher ethnic concentration.<sup>17</sup> In contrast, in the urban and suburban areas ethnic Japanese are less pressured to interact with Caucasians. They can easily maintain ethnic contacts through strong ties and a high frequency of informal interactions that take place in the numerous ethnic stores and restaurants (Kendis 1989). Rural ethnic communities on the other hand experience fewer possibilities for intra-ethnic contact and therefore have a more formal community structure of associations facilitating interaction among co-ethnics without restricting involvement with the society at large (Fugita and O'Brien 1991: 115).

Several factors aid in accounting for this duality and continuation. First, the positive experience of co-ethnic relationships and social support during the period when ethnic Japanese were mostly petty shopkeepers helped in creating a conducive atmosphere. Second, the relativistic world-view of the Japanese culture which calls for the preservation of social relationships was also a contributing factor. Third, Japanese Americans are not exclusionist. Involvement in ethnic voluntary associations does not have a limiting effect on building bridges to the non-ethnic world and co-ethnics are not expected to make a choice between mainstream and ethnic society (Fugita and O'Brien 1991: 192). The community is not based on a large number of strong ties, but is characterized primarily by weak ties linking co-ethnics without necessarily binding them. Finally, Japanese Americans see themselves as a unique homogeneous group. In contrast, many Europeans, with the exception of Jewish immigrants, who immigrated to the United States throughout the 19th century developed few co-ethnic organizations at the national level. They used their home village connections and in the initial development of strong-tie clusters and parish-centered associations in the same manner they had experienced interaction and cooperation before emigration (Thomas and Znaniecki 1927, Gans 1962, Granovetter 1973).

The case studies of ethnic Japanese communities in rural and urban areas support the notion that cultural predispositions of an ethnic group at the time of immigration, such as an orientation towards maintenance of social relationships within the ethnic group, is key to understanding the degree of cohesiveness and internal solidarity within an immigrant community and the eventual

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<sup>17</sup>These observations hold for the comparison of ethnic Japanese who are in mixed marriages as well.

chances for assimilation. How this proposition applies to the community of first and second generation immigrants from Taiwan will be the subject of later discussions.

### **Settlement in small cities and rural towns by immigrants and refugees arriving after 1965**

Individuals who immigrated to the United States after 1965 and who lacked any co-ethnics as reference points for settlement, in some cases settled and formed ethnic communities in small independent cities. However, little social science research has examined these dispersed small scale communities. Generally speaking, there are two types of recent immigrants that moved directly to small independent cities and established such communities. They either can be characterized broadly as refugees who were relocated by the U.S. government to a specific place, or they are middle-class professionals who clustered near universities or large manufacturing sites. Refugee communities are often cohesive, closely knit groups in response to the traumatic experience of being involuntarily uprooted. Many refugees, in contrast to the immigrant groups mentioned above, come to the United States without the financial resources or suitable marketable skills. Refugee groups who arrived in the United States for the first time after the 1960's have several characteristics in common regarding their adaptation patterns and community evolution and development.

Based on the U.S. government experience with the resettlement of Cuban refugees following the Communist takeover in Cuba during which Cuban refugees settled primarily in Miami and ultimately had a major impact on the character of the city, subsequent government resettlements attempted to disperse refugee populations over a wider area thereby limiting ethnic concentrations (Koltyk 1998). However, refugees who were settled in groups ranging from just a few families to a couple of hundred families in specific locations where they had an American citizen as sponsor, developed their own adaptations to these policies. Secondary migration is often the response to arranged settlement. Refugees either regroup in specific places that most resemble the environmental conditions of their native land (e.g., Tibetans in Boulder, Colorado; Hmong in the San Fernando Valley of California), or they cluster in small towns or metropolitan areas of states with the most favorable conditions in terms of welfare and education that contribute to an overall better quality of life (Holtzman 2000: 34).

In addition, the newly emerged clusters of refugees in locations throughout the United States keep very close contact with one another. This is primarily due to the movements between the various locations to be with kin, friends or near a good job opportunity but also a function of the

desire to interact with people of similar background. This is especially significant among Nuer refugees in Minnesota and elsewhere in the Midwest (Holtzman 2000)<sup>18</sup> and the Hmong, refugees from Laos who entered the United States after the end of the Vietnam war (Haines 1989, Gold 1992, Chan 1994). They both represent examples of refugee communities with strong ethnic cohesion.

Studies of non-refugee communities in small or midsize towns have frequently been based on dissertation projects (see Beaudry 1966, Guthrie 1985, Huang 1988, Wu 1993 and others). Many of the ethnic communities observed in this body of research have not featured clustered settlements of co-ethnics characterized by high levels of intra-ethnic diversity. In the case of Chinese and Taiwanese immigrants in Milwaukee, Wisconsin the difference between early Chinese immigrants who worked primarily in the restaurant business, later arrivals who worked as professionals, and the specific group of Taiwanese professionals educated in the United States was strikingly clear and was reflected in the distribution of community associations. Members of separate organizations acknowledged each other, but did not interact on a regular basis (Huang 1988).

A similar study of the ethnic Taiwanese community in the college town of Ames, Iowa shows that a well-connected ethnic community forms in response to the discomfort arising from misunderstandings with the local population. Yet the cohesion of the community also influenced by the fact that members live in a geographically rather small space, a college town, and lack of opportunities to meet others with whom they may have something in common. Many students and professionals who relocated to this town have done so in response to job and educational opportunities offered by the university (Wu 1993).<sup>19</sup>

The overall community of ethnic Taiwanese is rather small and many members experienced loneliness due to a lack of local family ties and limited friendships and social support. Such loneliness is particularly acute for the female immigrants who stay at home where they have few contacts with co-ethnics and where the interaction with non-ethnic neighbors is severely hampered by these particular women's low language proficiencies (Wu 1993: 119). In addition, as is characteristic for the society in their home country, immigrants continue the practice of

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<sup>18</sup>In 1996, the number of Sudanese refugees (largely Nuer, though including members of other ethnic groups living in the Sudan) who had entered the United States was listed as 3,888 people. Since then more refugees have obtained permission to move to the United States.

<sup>19</sup>Informants in the study list limited ability to express themselves in English and lack of cultural knowledge as reasons for the distance between themselves and colleagues, classmates and co-workers.

categorization of co-ethnics by social group, gender, and lifecycle position. Relations are established on the basis of commonalities. Yet the mandate that 'people with children meet people with children', 'singles hang out with singles', 'wives who are studying interact with other wives who are studying' and 'housewives spend time with other housewives' reduces the pool of potential partners for social support even further.<sup>20</sup> While everyone knows everyone else of ethnic Taiwanese descent in the town of Ames, the ties linking ethnic group members are not as tightly knit and multiplex as might be expected.

### **Discussion of typology**

Table 3.1 and its subsequent illustrations of several exemplary ethnic communities in the United States with a focus on immigrants arriving from Chinese speaking countries is based on location and spatial distribution of settlement. Of course, not every case example in a cell is identical and the typology is simply an attempt at providing theoretical clarity. There are other categories which were omitted from the category, yet would have produced slightly different theoretical patterns if included. Economic stratification, for example, is a hidden distinction when talking about immigrant groups living in enclaves in urban centers, especially groups who arrived after 1965. Most of them worked in low-paying menial jobs and cannot afford to live in the suburbs. Lack of English language skills is another barrier to leaving a tightly knit co-ethnic enclave. On the other hand, immigrants who settle in rural areas also form close-knit communities due to low numbers of co-ethnics in a given area and a more visible outsider status within long-established local communities.

It is the large metropolitan areas with expansions that blur the borders between central cities and suburban districts, where ethnic communities take on somewhat different and less stable forms. Some are tightly knit despite residential dispersion, others are loosely connected despite some degree of residential clustering. The conditions, spatial and otherwise, for community development in the United States have evolved in response to the specific historical context, including believe systems, politics and attitudes towards immigrants.

In other countries the circumstances for ethnic group cohesion are different compared to the United States. In specific cases neither strongly tied nor weakly connected ethnic communities emerge. One explanation is the existence of unfavorable laws and settlement structures for

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<sup>20</sup>Wu 1993 confirms some of these patterns in her thesis. Further elaboration on these patterns presented in chapters 7 and 8 of this study.

immigrants in combination with opportunities for frequent visits to the homeland as in the case of Portuguese immigrants in Paris (Brettell 1981). Another explanation for the absence of clearly visible ethnic communities is a lack of necessity for individual immigrants to interact more with each other than with members of the host society. A good example of this is the case of Chinese who immigrated to Lima, Peru (Wong 1978: 353). Further studies of immigrants in countries outside the United States which discuss political, social and economic conditions, include the immigration of Surinamese to Amsterdam (Boissevain and Grotenberg 1986), Portuguese to Toronto (Anderson 1974), Turks to Germany (Faist 1995), Senegalese to Turin, Italy (Carter 1997), Turks and Moroccans to Amsterdam (Fennema and Tillies 2001) and Hongkongnese to Vancouver and Toronto (Olds 1996, Hiebert 1998, Ley 1999, Rose 1999, and Salaff 2002).

The study of community formations is helpful in understanding the relation between assimilation and cohesion. Countries with lower barriers of entry to participation in the mainstream society due to racial attitudes, economic class compatibility, language compatibility or phenotypic resemblance of citizens and immigrants, might pose fewer incentives to form close-knit immigrant communities. Other countries might have barriers to group concentration not known in the United States, which offers vast open spaces and low degrees of regulations for economic self-employment.

As will be evident from the findings of this research based on social network analysis, the social networks that constitute a community and maintain it, are the ultimate change agents in terms of linkages between co-ethnics and the larger society. In this respect it is important to understand the composition of networks of ethnic community members and the changes they undergo while adapting to mainstream society. The type, function and individual properties of the networks among co-ethnics and with members of other ethnic affiliations are expected to influence the mode of adaptation for immigrants. They are assumed to facilitate or hinder the potential for either acculturation, assimilation or integration.

## **Hypotheses**

"... we want to confront the models current in the social sciences with the experiences and models of our subjects, while insisting that this should be a two-way process" (Kuper 1992: 14).

The literature review of community studies, social network studies, immigration studies, and urban studies was instrumental in developing two sets of hypotheses which guided the data



analysis. They were important for the organization of the data to answer the main question of this study, that is what are the factors that influence the relationships that connect immigrants from Taiwan to each other and to members of the mainstream society? The assumption underlying the construction of hypotheses was that the analysis of the personal network structure of immigrants and the extent of community cohesion created by their social ties can provide insights to the incorporation process of immigrants from Taiwan to the larger society of Southern California

There are two competing sets of propositions. They investigate the likelihood of integration of immigrants into the mainstream society both at the individual level and at the group level. First, assumptions about the prospects for integration of individual immigrants are tested by analyzing the structure of personal networks. Then, tests involving the ethnic group as the unit of analysis are carried out in reference to the structure created by the affiliation network of community organizations. The latter indicator is also used to gain insights about the nature of the ethnic community and its degree of cohesion.

The first set of hypotheses is based on the premise that this particular group of immigrants faces low structural barriers to social interaction with other people living in Southern California due to their socioeconomic characteristics. The second set of hypotheses challenges the first assumption and posits that, due to the unique conditions of life at the end of the 20th century, immigrants have few incentives, in the sense of opportunities created by the structure of their social and spatial environment, to interact with members of other ethnic groups outside of their places of work. In this respect, it is important to emphasize that the investigation of the incorporation of immigrants from Taiwan was limited to their social interaction patterns (i.e., socializing and leisure time activities). Economic or political interaction patterns were not studied.

The social networks perspective translates the concept of 'low barriers to interactions' into 'low degrees of constraints in the structure of personal networks'. An ego-centered network has a low degree of constraints if its ties are extensive, diverse, and heterogenous. The extensiveness of a personal network is indicated by its size measured in number of other people a person knows, also called 'alters', who are linked through strong, moderately strong, and weak ties. The degree of heterogeneity in personal networks is measured by looking at the proportion of alters with different educational backgrounds and occupation-related income levels in a network. Diversity, albeit related, is here used in order to represent the notion of ethnic diversity. The proportion of network members from other ethnic groups in relation to members of a person's own ethnic group determines this dimension in a personal network. The more heterogenous and diverse the

composition of a personal network is, the lower the degrees of constraints to interaction and incorporation into the society at large.

The degree of multiplexity of ties to network members also informs about constraints in a personal network. The higher the number of multiplex ties and overlap of social roles among alters, the more constraining a personal network becomes, leaving less opportunities to meet new people or acquire information through different social channels. The idea is that a high number of multiplex ties in combination with a small network size is an indicator of a densely knit network. The higher the network density and the more all-inclusive the role of a network contact is in a person's life, fulfilling several needs at once, the higher the degree of constraints surrounding the ability to meet people from outside the established network, and the lower the likelihood of having access to the society at large. Conversely, low levels of constraint imply that immigrants do not have to experience the "*dark side of social capital*" (Gargiulo 1999, Lin 2001), which refers to the overwhelming, time-consuming and constraining amount of obligations towards co-ethnics which often are consequences of large, interdependent networks of multiplex ties.

However, the structure of personal networks is not the only source of information for an assessment of the incorporation process. Opportunities to meet others of diverse ethnic and social backgrounds are also influenced by the social and spatial environment of an individual (i.e., the social groups a person belongs to). Here, the notion of 'low incentives to interaction' can be translated into 'high degrees of constraint in the structure of an affiliation network', which in the case of this study refers to the structure of the network of community organizations.<sup>21</sup> To be sure, constraints in the affiliation networks of social groups are not as much a barrier for individuals as those in personal networks. The presence or absence of constraints mainly creates more or less opportunities for interaction with others. Within these opportunity structures individuals can exercise choice and take more or less personal initiative to meet other people. There are fewer opportunities for interaction with people outside a person's social group or community, if the network of community organizations has a low degree of ethnic diversity and a high degree of group overlap. The extent of group overlap is measured by the number of joint members community organizations have in common. The higher the degree of connectivity between social groups, the fewer the opportunities for the individual participant to get involved with other individuals and organizations in the mainstream society.

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<sup>21</sup> A more detailed definition of 'affiliation networks' and their operationalization is introduced in the section the tools of social network studies in chapter 4 on research design and methodology.

An additional indicator for a lack of structural opportunities for interaction with the larger society is the extent of ethnic media as the main source of information in an immigrants' life. The more frequently and exclusively a person relies on suppliers of ethnic information instead of general media sources accessible to all members of society, the more directed his or her information will be towards ethnic businesses and services. It is also likely that the consumer of ethnic media will receive a disproportionate number of suggestions for events and social activities taking place in the ethnic community in comparison to the region at large.

### **Predicting a High Likelihood of Integration**

The set of hypotheses which predict low degrees of constraint resulting in a higher likelihood of integration, are tested in reference to the structure of personal networks. Therefore they only apply to the study of integration at the individual level. They are constructed as follows.

*Hypothesis 1: The higher the level of human resources, the lower the degree of personal network constraints.*

Immigrants with human capital, such as high levels of education or training and good English skills, are expected to have loosely bounded, diverse networks. They are less likely to have dense networks of strong ties linking them exclusively to members of their own ethnic group. These types of networks provide them with more opportunities for interaction with people from diverse ethnic backgrounds.

*Hypothesis 2: The higher the economic resources, the lower the degree of personal network constraints.*

Immigrants with economic capital either brought to the United States or acquired after completion of graduate studies, are expected to be less dependent on material support from co-ethnics. The more material resources an immigrant has the less likely he or she is to have a dense, tightly knit, multiplex network of kin and acquaintances from their country of origin. Immigrants are more likely to engage in loosely bounded networks of acquaintances from multiple ethnic backgrounds.

*Hypothesis 3: The more dispersed the settlement patterns, the lower the degree of personal network constraints.*

In terms of settlement patterns it is expected that the infrastructure of Southern California and the absence of designated neighborhoods with any ethnic concentration makes it possible for immigrants to avoid involvement in tightly knit, dense networks with co-ethnic neighbors. The personal networks of Taiwanese immigrants are not likely to be constrained by local neighborhood boundaries, but to spread throughout a larger geographic region.

**Predicting a Low Likelihood of Integration**

Another set of hypotheses that compete with the first set of hypotheses is introduced in a parallel fashion. They anticipate higher degrees of constraint resulting in fewer opportunities for interaction with members of the larger society. Hypotheses 4 and 5 focus on the analysis of personal networks and predict higher degrees of constraint that point to a lower likelihood of integration at the individual level. Hypotheses 6 and 7 look at the network of ethnic organizations and expect higher degrees of constraint that illustrate a lower likelihood of integration at the group level.

*Hypothesis 4: The more transnational relationships, the higher the degree of personal network constraints.*

This proposition refers to the fact that advances in communication and transportation technology have made it possible for immigrants to keep in frequent contact with family members and friends back in Taiwan. It is expected that immigrants who use these technologies often and maintain many relationships with people in outside the United States have less need for establishing social relations in their new environment. They are also less likely to have affiliations with a large number of ethnic or non-ethnic organizations, as venues for further interactions. As a result, it is presumed that the size of their networks is small at the local level, when taking only ties to people living in Southern California into account. In addition, their frequent exposure to language and events of their home culture might may limits efforts to socially engage with members of other ethnic groups.

*Hypothesis 5: The more decentralized the design of an urban area, the higher the degree of personal network constraints.*

The fact that the design of the master plan communities in South Orange County promotes dispersed settlement of co-ethnics is only one of many aspects. The structure of such planned settlements is also characterized by the absence of any central social or economic spaces and lacks distinct boundaries. With the exception of specialized shopping centers, South Orange County has no specific landmarks for orientation. Any of a multitude of neighborhoods seems, at least visually, to be void of much social activity. A resident needs to have advanced knowledge of social gatherings in order to know where to go. In addition, the relative newness of subdivisions throughout the region is reason for the limited development of places of social interest, customs, events, or community organizations. It is expected that this particular use (or non-use) of urban

space provides newly arrived immigrants with few opportunities to meet members of other ethnic groups, particularly by chance. There are no town squares, specialized urban districts (e.g., restaurant districts), or downtowns for people to meet or come across one another. Therefore personal networks are more likely to be low in diversity and heterogeneity.

*Hypothesis 6: The more decentralized the design of an urban area, the higher the degree of constraints in the affiliation network of social groups.*

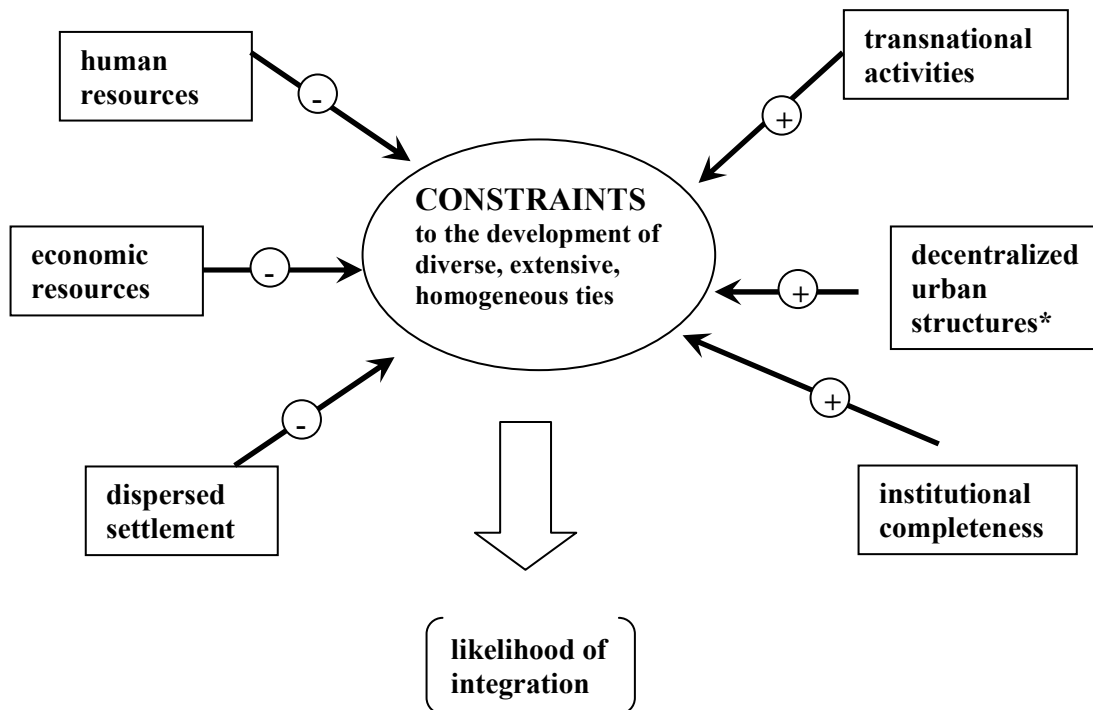
The same conditions described for hypothesis 5 are expected to have an effect on the network of ethnic organizations. It is assumed that the absence of visible public spaces makes it more likely that residents join recreational activities and social organizations either in response to information obtained from ethnic media sources or by association with a co-ethnics met at previously attended activities, events and organizations. The shortage of widely known places and general community institutions is likely to increase the number of affiliations with ethnic organizations, thereby enhancing the degree of connectivity between social groups and further constraining the number of opportunities to join other non-ethnic organizations. In addition, the newer a home owner's neighborhood, the less likely that he or she will join organizations within the geographical vicinity of their home.

*Hypothesis 7: The higher the degree of institutional completeness among ethnic community organizations, the higher the degree of constraint in the affiliation network of social groups.*

This proposition refers to the findings put forth by Breton (1964, see discussion in the section on immigration studies) that the larger the number of ethnic organizations available to an immigrant and the more comprehensive their services, the less likely it is that individuals will participate in organizations associated with the mainstream society. As a result, the ethnic community will have a higher degree of connectivity. The degree of 'ethnic self-sufficiency' is also related to the absolute number of immigrants in a geographic region who share similar ethnic affiliations. It is expected that the number of immigrants from Taiwan living in South Orange County is large enough to support a large variety of ethnic institutions. This availability is assumed to leave few needs for social or instrumental support unanswered, making contact with non-ethnic organizations unnecessary. A higher degree of constraints in the network structure of ethnic community organizations, due to the absence of ethnic diversity and a high degree of group overlap, will provide more opportunities for interaction between social groups within the ethnic community at large, but fewer opportunities for engagement with social groups outside this ethnic community.

Figure 3.1 summarizes the two sets of competing hypotheses in a model that applies for both integration at the individual level and integration at the group level. They are evaluated by looking at the structure of personal networks and the affiliation network of ethnic organizations respectively.

**Figure 3.1 Model of competing hypotheses regarding the degree of network constraints that predict integration at the individual and group level**



\* applies to hypotheses 5 and 6

(+)

increased effect on constraints leading to a lower likelihood of integration

(-)

reduced effect on constraints leading to a higher likelihood of integration

Ethnographic background information presented in chapter 6 illustrates the extent of human and economic capital, the settlement preferences, and the locations of family members and friends of the specific group of immigrants from Taiwan. Part three of this study introduces findings from data analysis that are used to test the hypotheses. Chapter 7 presents material to review the constraints in personal networks (hypotheses 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5) and chapter 8 discusses findings that assist in the evaluation of the hypotheses regarding constraints in the network of affiliations, the network structure of ethnic community organizations (hypotheses 6 and 7).

## **Chapter 4**

### **Research Design and Methodology**

"Ethnographic fieldwork involves a series of choices. These choices and the theoretical reasons for them need to be presented explicitly to establish ethnographic validity" (Sanjek 1990a: 395).

Ethnography as the written account of fieldwork is often thought of as a very subjective approach to understanding another culture (Marcus 1986: 171, Hammersley 1992). As a method of data collection, ethnography has also been criticized for the way in which informants have been selected (Johnson 1990). Ethnographic samples are often considered too small and non-random, thereby limiting the ability to generalize and lacking statistical power. In order to increase the validity of the present research, the following chapter provides an explicit discussion of research methods, including informant selection, and the main approach to data analysis: the tools of social network analysis. The circumstances and especially the problems of fieldwork are also discussed. The purpose of the provision of this background information is to show possible limitations to the research findings.

#### **Site Selection**

The initial interest in this study grew out of several casual, yet related observations. One concerned a reaction to the emergence of such words as "transnationalism" and "globalization" in anthropology beginning in the early 1990's (Hannerz 1989, 1992, Appadurai 1990, 1991, 1996, Sassen 1991, Robertson 1992, Glick-Schiller et al. 1992, Ong 1993, Featherstone 1995). How are these terms meaningful to people in a given place? What does it mean to live "transnational" or "global" lives? More importantly, how does contact between people living in more than one cultural and geographic setting influence the composition of personal networks, especially for those who are not involved in international business activities? The attention, then, turned to people who move between places, including leisure and business travelers, but more so to refugees and immigrants who settle long-term in a new environment.

Since "transnationalism" allegedly is a new phenomenon fueled by modern communication and transportation technology (Glick-Schiller et al. 1992), a focus on the more traditional arena of migration studies in which a single ethnic group settles in an otherwise culturally homogenous place seemed inappropriate. Instead the location of study should involve more than one ethnic

group including both recent immigrants and established residents. The state of California had a great deal of potential as a research site for two reasons. In recent years California has become the state with the highest number of non-White residents, exceeding the proportion of this traditional majority in the United States (U.S. Bureau of the Census 1998, 2000). In addition, large parts of California are characterized by a seemingly endless expansion of single family dwellings. More than any other state in the United States, California, and Southern California in particular, is known for its recent urban sprawl. Although large in terms of land area and population, which makes it almost comparable to a small country, the metropolitan area that is Southern California has a lower population density than most large and well established world cities such as New York, London, and Beijing. Such densely populated cities have already been recognized for the emergence of residential clusters of ethnic groups in response to immigration flow (e.g., Chinatowns). Fascinated by the extensive metropolitan settlement structure of Southern California, I became interested to understand how these areas of urban sprawl, especially affluent areas with lower population density, might create a different social environment for immigrants.

Of specific interest is the ways in which immigrants both create and manage personal networks in the vast space of dispersed settlements in Southern California, an area which has also economic and cultural ties extending to many places around the globe. Given this rather unique 20th century social and cultural milieu it is intriguing to know how immigrants choose to use ethnicity in the course of constructing their personal networks.

Since I have had previous experience with ethnographic research on Chinese culture the choice to focus on immigrants that spoke Chinese was a natural one. For reasons clarified in this and following chapters, immigrants arriving from Taiwan and not mainland China were selected. They belong to three different ethnic groups, the Hoklo, Hakka, and mainland Chinese, summarized as ethnic Taiwanese and ethnic Chinese (see chapter 6). However, most population statistics published in the United States summarize all of them under the label 'Chinese', which then includes immigrants of Chinese descent from all countries of East Asia.

### **Why South Orange County?**

The association of California with both a large number of people of various ethnic origins and global economic outreach facilitated by technology industries applies most prominently to two



regions, the Greater San Francisco and Greater Los Angeles areas.<sup>1</sup> Both regions attract a large number of immigrants from Taiwan. The main differences between the two concern topography, which results in less potential space for expansion of settlement in Greater San Francisco due to more extensive hills, and weather patterns. Southern California is the most preferred area for immigrants from Taiwan who are not bound to other places by reason of employment or family obligations. Those who are have the freedom to settle where they choose tend to pick the Greater Los Angeles area over the San Francisco area, because the climate in Southern California is consistently warmer and drier throughout the year. Chapter 6 discusses settlement preferences in more detail.

Within the Greater Los Angeles area the selection for Orange County, specifically the southern part, seemed to best fit the objectives of this study. The main criteria was lack of extensive ethnic residential clustering in neighborhoods and master plan communities. Ethnic enclaves, such as Chinatowns, were intentionally excluded from the selection. So too, were areas in which several neighborhoods in a row (i.e., several connected housing tracts), which had 25% or the population or more as ethnic Chinese. A study area of this nature would allow for an investigation of whether immigrants with social ties to people living in other places in the world, were more likely to interact with people from a variety of ethnic backgrounds if they do not live geographically proxemic to members of their own ethnic group. In addition, the focus on that particular area, which consists mainly of newly built subdivisions with a higher land to household ratio, presented the added advantage of narrowing the pool of potential informants in an urban setting to a socioeconomically rather homogenous group of affluent immigrants.

Immigrants who had chosen to settle in the less densely populated area of South Orange County were able to afford houses which cost \$ 200,000 or more at the time of fieldwork. This differs sharply from areas which have a much higher population density of ethnic Chinese and Taiwanese immigrants, specifically the municipalities along the San Gabriel Valley in northeast Los Angeles County. These cities offer a much larger variety of housing options, especially in the lower price ranges. They were also more likely to be the home of immigrants from Taiwan who were involved in the manufacturing sector of the ethnic economy, a group not included in this research. The only

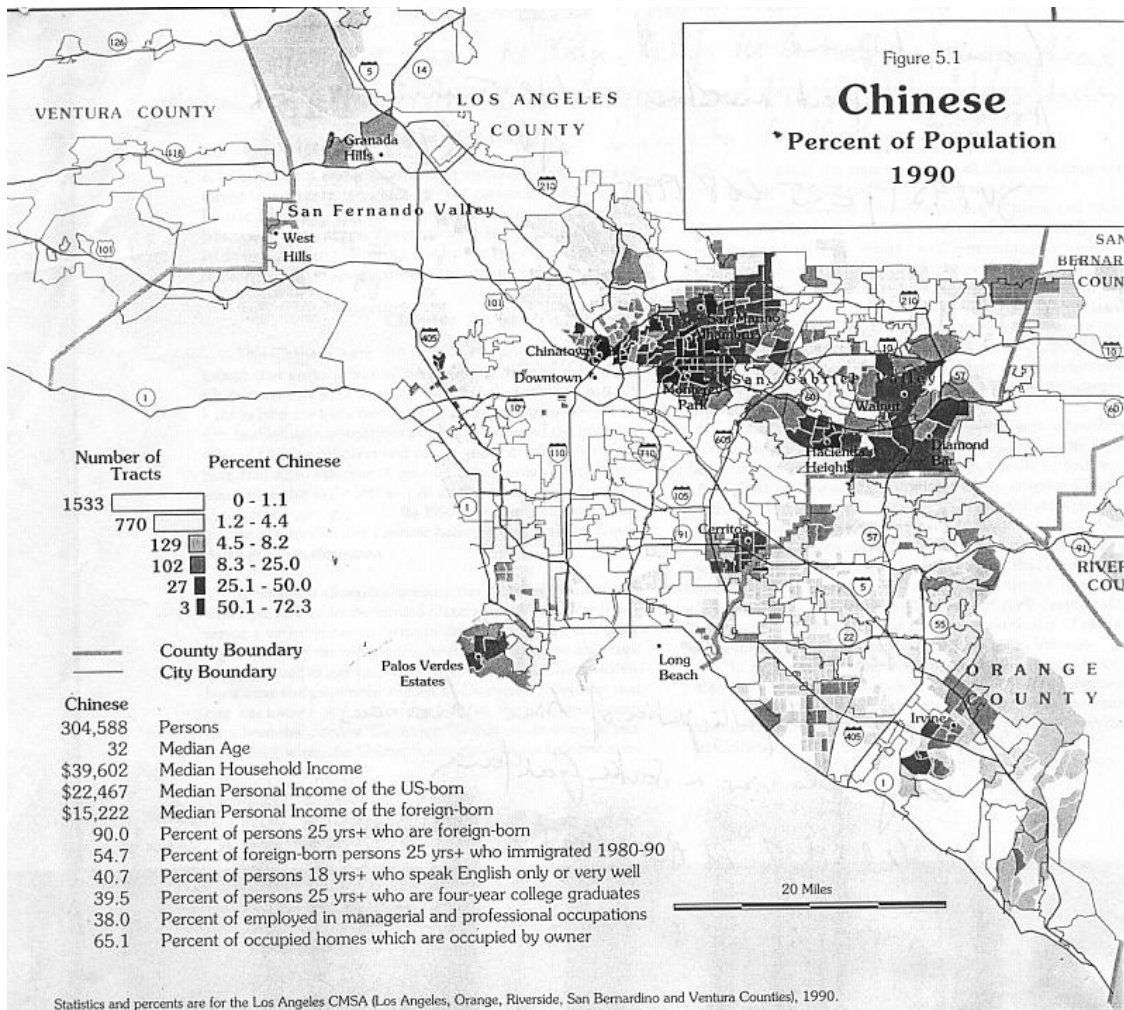
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<sup>1</sup> Greater San Francisco includes the following counties: San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Alameda, Contra Costa and Marin. Greater Los Angeles refers to these counties: Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, and Ventura (see also introduction to further characteristics in chapter 5).

other county in California with a demographic and structural profile similar to Orange County is Santa Clara County, home of the so-called "Silicon Valley" in the Greater San Francisco area.

The following map shows the distribution of Chinese in Southern California (Allen and Turner 1997:122). Irvine and adjacent cities in South Orange County fit the criteria of this study. The University of California Irvine, which is located southwest of Highway 405 was excluded as a source of informants. The university has a high number of Chinese students and faculty members, originating from both mainland China and Taiwan, living in the surrounding houses and apartments provided by the university's administration.

**Map 4.1** Distribution of ethnic Chinese<sup>2</sup> throughout the Greater Los Angeles area in 1990



Source: Allen and Turner 1997: 122

<sup>2</sup> As stated above and discussed further in chapter 6, the category 'ethnic Chinese' includes immigrants from mainland China, Taiwan, Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, Thailand and other places in East Asia. It does not differentiate between ethnic Taiwanese, ethnic Hakka, and ethnic Chinese.

The selection criteria of less geographic concentration of immigrants from the same place of origin is confirmed for Orange County in general, when comparing the few available statistics which list Taiwan as a separate sending country. Though the following numbers only reflect the number of new legal immigrants admitted to the United States in both 1995 and 1996 and therefore do not represent the overall number of immigrants from Taiwan living in those areas, they are nevertheless an indication of the distribution. Immigrants often settle near friends and family or near places of employment. The proportions therefore hold some informative value on the residential locations of immigrants from a specific place of origin.

Both in 1995 and 1996 the highest proportion of immigrants from Taiwan settled in Los Angeles County. In 1995 50.5% of all newcomers from Taiwan to California listed a city in Los Angeles County as their intended place of residence, and in 1996 the proportion was 46.5% (State of California, Department of Finance: Legal immigration reports for 1995 (1997) and 1996 (1999)). In contrast, Orange County received 12.3% of the requests for resettlement in 1995 and 11.6% in 1996. These figures put it in third place behind Santa Clara County and in front of San Diego County in terms of numbers of legal immigrants. Other immigrants from Taiwan chose to live elsewhere within the 58 counties of California (Gage 1998:1).

Though Orange County is the focus of this study, a short review of the geographic locations ethnic Chinese and ethnic Taiwanese prefer to move to in the Greater Los Angeles metropolitan area, highlights the specific characteristics of South Orange County which contributed to its selection as a research site. The largest concentration of immigrants from Taiwan can be found in the cluster of cities which are also known as the San Gabriel Valley of Los Angeles County.<sup>3</sup> Other than Monterey Park whose population in 1990 was 36% Chinese, there was also a high density of ethnic Chinese and Taiwanese settlements in the neighboring city of Alhambra (26% Chinese) and the very affluent city of San Marino (25% Chinese). The eastern part of the San Gabriel Valley with the cities of San Gabriel, Rowland Heights, Hacienda Heights, City of Industry, Walnut and Diamond Bar located along Highway 60, had also grown into a center of ethnic Chinese and Taiwanese residence in Southern California (Fong 1994).

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<sup>3</sup>The origin of the push into the San Gabriel Valley can be traced to a single Chinese immigrant, Frederick Hsieh who arrived as a student in 1963. Hsieh decided in the 1970's to develop American's first suburban Chinatown, and for this he chose Monterey Park, a suburban city a few miles east of Los Angeles, located in the large valley east of the original Los Angeles Chinatown. He advertised Monterey Park in Hong Kong and Taiwan newspapers and attracted buyers for land, homes and businesses. Many of the newcomers were wealthy people (Fong 1994).

In comparison with Orange County, the accumulation of such a large number of adjacent cities in Los Angeles County, in which ethnic Chinese constitute over 25% of the total population, creates a much larger presence of ethnic Chinese and Taiwanese immigrants in that specific region. This has an effect on the number of ethnic shopping centers and services throughout the San Gabriel Valley and the overall visibility of the ethnic Chinese and Taiwanese population. In contrast, in South Orange County immigrants from Taiwan are not surrounded by a such an extensive ethnic economy. In addition, the design of the sprawling subdivisions, with its emphasis on privacy, made individual immigrant families much less noticeable.

Photograph 4.1 Birds eye view of the urban sprawl of subdivisions built according to a master plan in South Orange County



Source: Kling, Olin, and Poster 1995 based on Air Photo Services, Santa Ana, California

## **Study Design and Data Collection**

The data presented in this study was collected in a systematic fashion following the tradition of scientific rather than interpretative approaches in anthropology. Within the general strategy of doing ethnography, several methods of data collection were used, including both quantitative and qualitative techniques (Miles and Huberman 1994). The design of the overall research process was mainly exploratory in nature, aiming to describe the social world of immigrants from Taiwan in the urban sprawl of Southern California. The initial stage of data collection, participant observation in the public spaces where ethnic Chinese and Taiwanese met, was exploratory and led to the composition of questions for more informal interviews and the construction of semi-structured interview guidelines as in a grounded theory approach (Glaser and Strauss 1967). Preliminary analysis of these exploratory datasets then initiated the development of competing hypotheses. The elimination of these competing hypotheses, which is essentially an explanatory research approach, was carried out by analyzing the datasets in greater detail using statistical and descriptive inferences (Johnson 1998: 144-145).

### **Timeline of Fieldwork**

Actual fieldwork was conducted between May 1997 and April 1998. Prior to the start of data collection I had spent the fall of 1996 at the University of California Irvine to take courses in Social Network Analysis. During this period I familiarized myself with the general geographic layout of South Orange County and its landmarks, or better its lack thereof. Due to the size of the urban area under study, and the scarcity of visible public gathering places of immigrants from Taiwan, in the first phase of fieldwork (May to early November 1997), I was occupied with participant observation, informal interviews, and background interviews. The second phase of fieldwork, lasting until April 1998, was spent conducting systematic interviews with selected informants, while continuing to be involved in participant observation (see discussion of datasets below).

During the first six months, the goal was to get an overview about the settlement areas and shopping centers which were preferred by ethnic Chinese and Taiwanese immigrants, and most importantly what types of ethnic community organizations existed. Since I anticipated problems with the systematic selection of informants, I decided early on to focus mainly on immigrants who participated in at least one ethnic group, or in other words did join others in public spaces. The goal was to compile a preliminary list of ethnic Chinese organizations in South Orange County, to

be able to contact all of them and pick a few members from each group as informants for structured interviews. Getting insights on the community involved informal talks with ethnic shop owners and shoppers in the two areas in South Orange County with a few stores catering specifically to ethnic Chinese clients (see chapter 5 for details). In addition, I got hired as a part-time salesperson in a Chinese owned and operated Optometry store in one of these strip malls for the month of September to December 1997. Working Wednesdays and Saturdays selling frames and registering patients provided me with a greater familiarity of speech patterns and manners of the ethnic population in and around Irvine.<sup>4</sup> Through the fall trimester of 1997 I also worked as a teaching assistant for one anthropology course at UCI. Contact with students guided me later in my attempts to find informants of the 1.5 generation of immigrants from Taiwan.<sup>5</sup>

In the first phase of fieldwork I obtained information about the area from interviews with Chinese and Taiwanese real estate agents, administrators at the School Districts, board members of the Chinese Schools in the area, doctors, bank employees, and religious leaders, specifically pastors of Chinese and Taiwanese Christian churches. These were unstructured interviews with the purpose of eliciting information on the presence of immigrant in South Orange County and their social involvement with members of their own group and that of other ethnic groups. They got labeled 'background interviews' in the list of data sets below.

At the same time I began to join ethnic community organizations to gain better access to and rapport with potential informants. I became a member of the Irvine Chinese Choir, the Tap dance group, Ballroom Dance classes, and several church services and fellowship meetings, as well as the Yiguan Dao temple meetings.<sup>6</sup> Participation was ongoing until leaving the field in April of 1998. The weekends were usually booked with activities. In some instances scheduling conflicts occurred, especially on Sunday mornings, when church services were held, the choir practiced and the beginners lessons for Ballroom dancing were held. For a while I attended meetings every other week and left earlier or came later. Some church meetings were scheduled on Sunday afternoons and fellowship meetings usually took place in the early evenings. Yiguan Dao temple meetings were held on Saturday nights. In addition, I visited meetings of the Chinese-American Chamber of Commerce, the Tzu-Chi Charity Organization, and the board of the South Coast Chinese Cultural

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<sup>4</sup> 75% of the clients were ethnic Chinese, Taiwanese or Vietnamese.

<sup>5</sup> Strictly speaking this violated my previously set rule to not include UCI personnel and students in the research project. The term '1.5 generation' refers to immigrants who were born in a foreign country but arrived in the United States as children or pre-teenagers and received most of their school education in their new country of settlement (Rumbaut 1994, see also further details presented in chapter 6).

<sup>6</sup> For a more detailed introduction to the various ethnic groups in South Orange County, see chapter 8.

Association. As an active member participating in performances with the Chinese Choir, the Theater group of the Choir, and the Tap Dance group, I was able to take part in alumni meetings, both in the San Gabriel Valley and Orange County, annual meetings of political associations, and charity events for local hospitals and retirement homes.

Prior to the discussion of the different types of interviews and the datasets they produced, the following section presents a few comments on informant selection.

### **Informant Selection**

The urban context, the dispersed settlement patterns of immigrants and the unavailability of reliable statistics on immigrants from Taiwan, made the development of a sampling frame extremely difficult. Just a few notes on the circumstances for drawing a random sample illustrate the difficulties.<sup>7</sup> All municipalities in South Orange County, the designated site of this study, combined had a total population of 782,736 people according to the 1990 U.S. census.<sup>8</sup> The statistics for these municipalities do not list populations by ethnic group (see further discussion in chapter 5), they only use the category Asian and Pacific Islander, which include a number of different countries of origin, most predominately from Taiwan, Korea, and Iran.<sup>9</sup> When using the average percentage rate in the municipalities adjusted by city size, 6%, the absolute number of Asian and Pacific Islanders in South Orange County might have been about 46,964 in 1990. Yet that still does not provide any more information on the number of immigrants from Taiwan, their socioeconomic background, or household size, let alone their physical addresses.

As for non-probability sampling, for the same reasons stated above quota sampling was similarly problematic. However, purposive and snowball sampling seemed applicable (Bernard 1994: 94-97). Preliminary insights based on literature and the first visit to South Orange County had enabled me to determine the units of analysis of this study to be the immigrants and their social network contacts that provide emotional, social and instrumental support; the locations of network members' residences in space; and the social organizations in which immigrants were

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<sup>7</sup> For further problems with drawing a random sample in the urban sprawl of Orange County see Schweizer et al. 1998: 4-5. Due to high rates of informant refusal, mobility, or undetectable addresses a randomly selected set of addresses in the City of Costa Mesa only succeeded in producing an interview in one out of four cases.

<sup>8</sup> The cities that were included in this study are: Fountain Valley, Costa Mesa, Newport Beach/Newport Coast, Irvine, Tustin/Tustin Foothills, Laguna Beach, Laguna Niguel, Laguna Hills, Aliso Viejo, Mission Viejo, Lake Forest (formerly El Toro), Dana Point, San Juan Capistrano, San Clemente, Rancho San Margarita/Coto de Caza. See chapter 5 for further details.

<sup>9</sup> Other Asian countries of origin included in the category 'Asian and Pacific Islanders' for the municipalities of South Orange County are among others: Iran, Pakistan, India, Thailand, Vietnam, Cambodia, Korea, Japan, Indonesia, and the Philippines (statistics of the Irvine Unified School District 1997).

involved. I then used a two-step approach for informant selection in order to increase the level of representativeness of informants within the limits of a non-probability sample. The goal was be able to *"select informants from groups that were maximally homogenous and comparably heterogeneous across informants or informant clusters"* (Johnson 1990: 23). The first step of the selection process was to make theoretically driven choices that would determine a pool of informants from a universe of possible characteristics. In a second step I sampled from within this collection of potential informants, initially using the snowball sampling procedure (see below).

Several demographic criteria were picked at the beginning of the first phase of fieldwork to serve as the dimensions for bounding the pool of informants. My initial visit to Orange County in 1996 had given me enough insight on the ethnic population of the region to exclusively focus on immigrants from Taiwan. The number of immigrants arriving directly from mainland China was too small at the time of fieldwork to be considered an appropriate comparison group. The University of California at Irvine had many graduate students who arrived from mainland China and their families living in their student housing areas, but there were not many mainland Chinese immigrants who settled in South Orange County after graduation. A substantial influx of graduate students from China had only begun in the mid 1980's. In comparison, former graduate students from Taiwan who had started their training in the mid 1960's were by far the more numerous residents of the newly built subdivisions in Orange County. As the membership lists of ethnic organizations later revealed, very few mainland Chinese immigrants attended any of the ethnic organizations founded by immigrants from Taiwan. A few Christian churches were exceptions to that pattern, but still had predominantly Taiwanese members. As the population of mainland Chinese immigrants in the area increases, some shifts in membership compositions might occur, especially in the Chinese language schools.

A further criteria of selection was that informants were not partners in ethnically mixed marriages with either a partner who had arrived from mainland China or another ethnic group, such as Korean, Vietnamese or White. The ethnic organizations had few members who were involved in such marriages, but for the sake of comparing the network structures of immigrants who had previously not been exposed to a variety of other ethnic groups (except Japanese), these subsets of potential interview partners were not included. Informants also had to have immigrated as adults to qualify them as 'first generation immigrants' in the study. An added bonus of this criteria was that informants were over 35 years of age, and almost all were married, although they were not necessarily living with their spouse .



As stated earlier, the focus on settlement in the recently built subdivisions and master plan communities in South Orange County, who were at the most 25 years old, further limited the number of possible characteristics of informants. Housing prices in the area demanded a certain level of income. This warranted the label 'affluent immigrants' as a description of the socio-economic profile of informants.

The last explicit criteria was for informants not to have a more pronounced orientation towards social circles in the cities of the San Gabriel Valley or North Orange County than to South Orange County in terms of their occupation, recreational interests, or religious orientation.<sup>10</sup> This criteria did not require any exclusion, since most attendees of ethnic organizations in South Orange County self-selected their focus away from areas with higher densities of ethnic Taiwanese and Chinese immigrants, such as Monterey Park and Hacienda Heights. It confirmed, however, the necessity of including informants living in Fountain Valley and Costa Mesa, cities which are technically speaking part of Central Orange County, since they participated exclusively in South Orange County ethnic organizations making their personal networks predominantly composed of people living in South and Central Orange County. Since the industrial parks of South Orange County were dominated by businesses which dealt in information technology and health care products, no informants were included that owned apparel, food, or electronic manufacturing businesses which were more often associated with the ethnic economy in Los Angeles County. This further reduced the number of potential informants who were involved in these typical transnational business sectors, fulfilling the research premise to not focus exclusively on immigrants who needed to maintain and foster transnational ties in order to make a living.

In sum, the selection of potential informants for sampling was determined by place of origin (including generation of immigration), socioeconomic status, location of residence, and location of social involvement. Individual informants, then, varied by length of time spent in the United States, location of spouse, age of children, occupation, educational credentials, size and composition of personal networks, and number and type of social organizations attended.

In the second step of the process I selected informants within the sampling framework for informal interviews and unstructured background interviews purposefully (Johnson 1990: 40, Bernard 1994: 74), looking specifically for people who had some expertise or authority on activities and social gathering spaces of first generation immigrants from Taiwan. Once the

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<sup>10</sup> However, this criteria did not exclude people who had the majority of social network ties in South Orange County but visited the Xilai Buddhist temple in Hacienda Heights for worship on a monthly basis.

compilation of a list of community organizations was completed, I approached several different groups and randomly selected a single member from each for structured interviews on the composition of their personal networks and their leisure time activities. The initial plan was to employ snowball sampling, which calls for a request to the informant to name several of his or her network members. The names on the list are then contacted and interviewed using the same structured guideline of questions (Bernard 1994: 97). This approach mainly increases the likelihood to reach informants in an urban setting who fit the predetermined profile of informants. Data, however, cannot be generalized beyond the sample at hand (Erickson 1979).

Ideally, to obtain information on the degree of connectedness among a random set of residents in a large urban space, the researcher needs to improve on the snowball sampling technique and conduct "*random walks*". The use of this method involves an extensive list of an individual's network contacts and their addresses followed by the random selection of a person from this list of network members. Once the next person is interviewed in the same fashion the next informant is selected from his or her list of contacts. This procedure of at least two random walks should be carried out with a set of randomly selected "*seed persons*" (Klovdahl 1989: 192). The goal is to find individuals who serve as cross-links between the groups of names listed by unrelated informants. The number and attributes of these cross-linking individuals inform about the degree of connectedness in a large, seemingly disjointed network of an urban population (Frank and Snijders 1994).

However, conducting a snowball sample among first generation immigrants from Taiwan already caused major difficulties. Informants only reluctantly provided the names and addresses of selected people in their networks. Initially I attempted to get only first names and phone numbers but did not ask for a personal introduction by the informants. Yet, the circumstances of phone calls proved to be too inhibiting to schedule an appointment with a potential informant based on a "cold" call alone. Almost all households in the United States receive phone calls from solicitors on a daily basis, fostering recipients to screen calls using answering machines or hang up once they find out they do not recognize the caller. In addition, ethnic Chinese and Taiwanese residents of the area were fearful of investigations by journalists in relation to a recent campaign financing scandal involving donations by supporters of the Xilai temple to the then Vice-president Al Gore. Though most immigrants from Taiwan were not directly involved with either the temple or the campaign, some may have anticipated scrutiny by virtue of being Taiwanese. Since the structured

interviews were designed to be up to two hours in length, it was not feasible to approach people unannounced at home.

When resorting to asking informants to introduce me to one of their network members by phone or in person, I encountered problems as well. Just as some people were reluctant about giving the full names of network relations, they also hesitated to "sponsor" me to friends and acquaintances. After some probing, informal talks with community group members, and consultations with key informants, the reason for refusals became evident. Reluctant informants were avoiding the accumulation of debt with a network member that would occur by putting them through the hassle and inconvenience of having to meet a "data collector" and answer questions. They would have to expose themselves to the wrath of a network member who, according to the cultural rules of 'guanxi' relations would not be able to turn down the request to meet me.<sup>11</sup> Furthermore, they would have to reciprocate the favors some time in the future. As time progressed it became clear that informants who enjoyed the interview experience, were willing to "spent some social capital" and convince an acquaintance to meet with me.<sup>12</sup> Informants who had felt uncomfortable during the interview, politely denied my request for a personal introduction. The fact that informants considered questions regarding their relational contacts as threats to their privacy has been reported by other network researchers as well (e.g., Erickson 1979: 281).

Since the selection of informants had become reliant on a respondent's sympathy for my quest and curiosity in my person (see more details below), I decided to change approaches and abandoned the snowball sampling method after completing only 10 interviews. My hope of eventually conducting random walks was dashed altogether. However, the focus on the main idea of the random walk method remained, namely to find cross-links between sets of related people. In order to learn about connectedness among ethnic Chinese and Taiwanese in the larger region, I chose to concentrate on the network of ethnic organizations as a substitute for the network of individuals, treating organizations as potential meeting spaces for informants (see operationalization of network cohesion below and chapter 8 for further details on this notion).

The sampling approach was altered and was based on the selection of a single informant from each ethnic organization, and in the case of groups with more than 20 members the selection of two informants. An attempt was made to randomly select informants from the membership list

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<sup>11</sup> For an introduction of 'guanxi' relations, see section on networks in Taiwan in chapter 2.

<sup>12</sup> Nevertheless, that was not a guarantee for an interview. In several instances such a contact was unavailable at the time of the scheduled appointment and avoided my subsequent phone calls.

obtained from the organization's leader. The next step was to slowly get acquainted with the selected informant over the course of my participation in the organization. It was then less likely for potential informants to turn down my request for an interview since we shared a joint membership in an organization. Since I openly stated at the time of joining that I was a student conducting research on social networks of immigrants, most group members were aware of my intentions, which enabled people to politely decline any involvement in the study if they so desired. Not all of those informants I successfully recruited had a lot of time to offer. In order to adapt to the different time constraints of informants, further adjustment of the data collection plan was required. Therefore, I conducted the complete set of questions as structured interviews with people who had more time and administered an abbreviated version as a 'semi-structured' interview for people with less time (see description of datasets below). Longer interviews generally took place in informants' homes while shorter interviews usually occurred right after a jointly attended group meeting.

Overall it was difficult to avoid a bias towards informants who were more than willing to meet and chat with me. Some people went out of their way to invite me into their houses and treat me to lunch or dinner and others needed repeated assurance of privacy and confidential treatment of their answers before sitting down with me for a few questions.

### **Data sets**

Findings of this research are based on data collected in six different settings. The first type of data is fieldnotes compiled during informal interviews with shop owners, customers, and visitors of community events based on a convenience sample. Fieldnotes were also accumulated in response to my ongoing participant observation during ethnic group meetings.

The next set of data, in terms of chronological order after the initial informal interviews, stems from a total of nineteen background interviews. Informants include three real estate agents, six Christian ministers, a Chinese administrator of the Irvine Unified School District, one board member in each Chinese Schools in Fountain Valley and Irvine, the leaders of three other religious organizations, two bank employees and two medical doctors. The real estate agents were selected at random from the list of ethnic agents advertised in the Orange County Chinese Yellow pages. The Pastors of the churches represent all of the churches listed in the Chinese Yellow Pages at the time of fieldwork. The other informants in this group were chosen based on their availability and willingness to be interviewed. The bank employees and doctors were actually each representatives

of professional associations. These interviews were unstructured in nature (Bernard 1994: 213). Informants were aware in advance of my interest in learning about the life and social activities of immigrants from Taiwan in Orange County. Some respondents had prepared background information on the history of their organization prior to our meeting and others gave me their personal perceptions on problems in the community.<sup>13</sup> Real estate agents were asked to identify preferred areas of settlement for immigrants, rationales for choosing particular places, and the nature of financial transactions.

Over the course of fieldwork, and my participation in various organizations and attendance of meetings, I got to know four people very well. Their contribution to the research project as consultants in my quest to understand more about life in South Orange County and the activities of immigrants, prompts me to label them "key informants". According to Bernard, key informants are *"people to whom you can talk easily, who understand the information you need, and who are glad to give it to you."* (Bernard 1994: 166). As the relationships developed over time, mainly on the initiative of the informants, I spent most of my interview and meeting-free time with one of them. They called me and made sure I was included in important meetings, coached me on my Chinese to give accent-free performances in one of the upcoming theatre events, or asked me about topics of personal interest to themselves.<sup>14</sup> Certainly, this approach to select key informants is potentially problematic, since their willingness to interact might have been guided by their role as outsiders in the community (Bernard 1994: 168). However, the fact that they had occasionally held prominent positions in the respective ethnic organization was an indication of their degree of inclusion in the ethnic community. Within some of these organizations, I encountered problems in finding interviewees for the structured interviews, since some members possibly thought I obviously had gotten sufficient information from this key informant. On the other hand, lack of cooperation may have also stemmed from the perception that interaction would be an intrusion on the established relation with my "sponsor".

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<sup>13</sup> Several pastors also invited me to join them on trips to congregation meetings in the San Gabriel Valley, which I gratefully accepted.

<sup>14</sup> One person was a choir member in her late 30's who became a friend, another person was the daughter of a temple leader who was interested in teaching me her religion. Another person a 1.5 generation immigrants and was a student in a class I taught at UCI. The only man among the key informants was an older gentleman I had met during a fellowship meeting of a church and who took an interest in anthropology. Through conversations over dinner, in phone calls and letters we had an ongoing discussion about the different ideas on the origin of life on earth as well as questions more relevant to my research.

As introduced in the section on informant selection, two sets of data were collected during the second phase of fieldwork. Structured interviews used a fixed set of questions which provided the opportunity for all informants to respond to the same items (Bernard 1994: 210). These interviews gathered biographical data, reasons for immigration and choices of particular location of settlement, the composition of their network in terms of emotional, social, and instrumental support, their social activities and membership in various groups, and their general opinions about life in the United States. Structured interviews were conducted with 60 informants.

For the abbreviated version of the interviews in the form of semi-structured interviews a list of questions developed for the structured interviews was used as an interview guideline, concentrating only on questions regarding social activities and group memberships. Depending on the responses I probed further into reasons for certain choices and attitudes based on pre-established instructions. Data from these semi-structured interviews, 30 in total, is less comprehensive in information, has fewer items of life history data, and is less comparable across informants, with the exception of data on membership affiliations.

My interest in the experience of the children of informants influenced me to initiate a series of interviews with members of the 1.5 generation, who spent at least the first 5 years of their life in Taiwan but got exposed to the American school system, and the second generation of immigrants from Taiwan. During the last quarter of the fieldwork I felt the data on the younger immigrants would serve as a good comparison group. Unfortunately, there was not sufficient field time, without further help, to complete an equal number of interviews to enhance comparability. In the case of 1.5 and second generation immigrants the snowball sampling technique worked well and I was able to complete 14 interviews based on a slight adaptation of the same set of questions used in the first generation structured interviews. Data from these interviews is discussed in relation to the findings in subsequent chapters by being treated qualitatively as fieldnotes rather than comparable quantitative data.

Table 4.1 provides a breakdown of the different data sets collected in the course of this study by gender and ethnicity. The total number of interviews with first generation immigrants includes 112 informants, since one of the key informants is actually a member of the 1.5 generation. Altogether 15 informants were either 1.5 or second generation immigrants. The main findings discussed in the following chapters is based on interviews with informants from the various samples.

**Table 4.1** Number of informants in each interview category by gender and ethnic affiliation\*

Type of informant	male	female	ethnic Taiwanese	ethnic Chinese	sum
background informants (unstructured interviews)	12	7	9	10	19
key informants (informal interviews)	1	3	2	2**	4
informants of 'structured interviews'	19	41	32	28	60
informants of 'semi-structured interviews'	13	17	18	12	30
second and 1.5 generation informants of 'structured interviews'	6	8	10	4	14
total number of informants	51	76	71	56	127

\* each informant is mentioned only once in the subcategory gender and once in the subcategory ethnicity per type of interview. N=127 is the total number of different informants in this study.

\*\* one of the key informants is a member of the 1.5 generation and not a first generation immigrant.

In addition to data from interviews and participant observation, several other sources of information for gaining an understanding of the social world of immigrants from Taiwan. The membership rosters of organizations provided additional information on joint affiliations.<sup>15</sup> The yearbooks of organizations, various brochures introducing the services of religious organizations and senior citizen groups, flyers for workshops, ethnic Yellow Pages, advertising billboards, as well as Chinese newspapers and TV programs, presented further data for obtaining insights into community activities and upcoming events. Other sources of statistical data came from city records of each municipality in South Orange County, the various School Districts, the University of California enrollment office, the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS), the State of California, and the U.S. Bureau of the Census. Finally, visits to model homes in new subdivisions throughout South Orange County, as well as 'open houses' advertised by various real estate agents, provided still further information on the lifestyles of people in the region, their preferences, real estate price ranges, and the design philosophies of master plan communities.

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<sup>15</sup> There were, however, a few obstacles to this approach. Many membership rosters list various names for the same person, either because the mode of name transcription varies (Wade Giles or Pinyin or a combination of both) and the Chinese name is not printed, or a person is listed under a different last name. The latter occurs when women are listed under their husband's last name, as practiced by the INS immigration officers, but continues to use her Chinese name, which is her unchanged maiden name, with friends and family. The use of regular area phone books as a source of reference creates the same problems.

## Data Analysis

Several methods of data analysis were used to discover patterns in the data and test the hypotheses presented in chapter 3. This section presents a brief overview of the general analysis techniques of this study followed by a more extended discussion of the analytic tools of social network studies.

### Overview of Data Analysis Techniques

Qualitative data obtained from all types of interviews in the form of biographical accounts as well as attitudes and verbal reports on choices, relationships, and life in America was analyzed for similar content, using simple methods of text analysis (Ryan and Wiesner 1998, Bernard 1994: 363-365, 394). Individual statements in the transcribed interviews were given codes that identified a specific topic (Miles and Huberman 1994: 63-65). A word frequency count of the terms which represented selected topics was administered to monitor their distribution among all informants. Statements with similar codes were then aggregated into separate text files for comparison of content and significance. Individual quotes of the most representative statements are interspersed throughout this study to provide triangulations with other forms of analysis, i.e., to document that the internal consistency of various sources of information has been tested (Fetterman 1998: 102). Since the connotation of some cultural concepts are lost in the translation to English, key sentences and expressions by informants are displayed in the original Chinese in the footnotes.<sup>16</sup>

Qualitative data was quantified where possible, for example as frequency distributions of certain phenomena. As a result, descriptive statistics are provided in the text when appropriate. Similarities and differences between various groups of informants in the dataset from the 60 structured interviews were investigated for their individual ability to predict network sizes, network roles and network reach across space, using both bivariate (t-test) and multivariate (ANOVA) analysis techniques (Iversen and Norpoth 1976).

In terms of the analysis of personal networks of immigrants, measurements of degree centrality and betweenness centrality were not carried out since no data was collected on the complete set of relations within each structure. These approaches are more feasible when studying whole networks

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<sup>16</sup> The characters are displayed in their simplified version (jianti zi), which is commonly used in mainland China and not in their traditional version (fanti zi). The traditional version is used on Taiwan and would be more appropriate here. Alas, the computer program used was formatted to use the simplified version, since I am more familiar with these type of characters. A switch to the traditional version caused too many editing errors and was therefore abandoned. Transcription is based on Pinyin Latinization, which has become the standard of Chinese transcription in academic literature (Wade -Giles used to be commonly used in Taiwan though).



which are small in size. However, the multiplexity of network roles was computed in regards to the type of support they provide. Correspondence analysis was used to aggregate and compare the distribution of social roles in respect to either social and emotional support or instrumental support. This technique was also used to depict the distribution of the geographic location of informants and their network contacts (Greenacre 1984, Weller and Romney 1990).

The network of organizations was analyzed as an affiliation network of social groups, resulting from the transformation of a two-mode network of informants and their participation in groups into a one-mode network of organizations that reflects their joint members (Freeman and White 1993, Borgatti and Everett 1997, Faust 1997). The degree of coherence among the individual components of this network, which exemplifies the ethnic community as a whole, was measured using cluster analysis at various levels of overlap and density and centrality measurements (Breiger 1974). A visual depiction of the network of organizations clarifies its degree of connectedness further and serves as an actual tool of analysis providing additional insights.

### **Analytic Tools of Social Network Studies**

Social network analysis has several basic tools for identifying and describing the properties of personal networks, whole networks, and large open networks.

#### ***Studying personal networks***

The size of a personal network is defined as the number of outgoing ties from an informant to others. The researcher decides what part of the network is of interest to answer a particular question. Any network, small or large, has several sectors defined by various principles of role categorization, for example, friends, kin, co-workers, greeting relationships, acquaintance based on nodding, etc.<sup>17</sup>

One approach to detect the different properties of personal networks is to distinguish between different types of support other people offer to an informant (ego) (Fischer 1982). Emotional support networks capture only the most intimate relations, for example the role of kin or friends as members of an informant's network in giving advice and encouragement in times of crisis. Social

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<sup>17</sup>Nadel developed a typology of role relations. He calls the role people obtain in relation with others "achievement roles" and distinguishes between independently and dependently defined roles. Independently defined are proprietary roles based on the possession of skills, expressive roles of people with creative or otherwise communicative talents, and service roles which refer to a specific occupation. Dependent role definitions include all relational roles, the symmetrical ones, such as friendship and membership, and the asymmetrical ones which are based on power differences, such as leadership roles or any role of superiority (Nadel 1957: 53).

support networks refer to any recreational activity or socializing in general, including dinner invitations and cinema visits, etc. Instrumental support networks include relations with other people (alters) who provide information and help with tasks, such as repairs of house and car, as well as goods, such as household items, tools, and food (McAllister and Fischer 1983). There is also the notion of a 'global network' (i.e., comprehensive network) from an individual point of view. The global network is easier to define than emotional, social or instrumental support networks. It includes all people known to an individual, provided that "known" is clearly defined as either "known by name", "greeting relationship" or any other suitable way (Bernard et al. 1990: 180).

Further measurable descriptors of personal and whole networks in addition to network size, are the direction and function of any tie. A person can report a relation with another person who does not respond or does not give the relationship the same role assignment. This would be a directed tie or graph as opposed to an undirected one (Harary 1969). Each undirected tie connecting two people is a dyad. In addition, ties can be multiplex in nature. Two people, then, are related to one another through multiple functions representing, for example, the emotional role, the instrumental role, the recreational role, etc. of the connection. A tie is uniplex if has only one function. For example, a person meets another person only in a certain role, such as a fellow parent in a parent-teacher organization, but does not have any other interaction of a different nature with that person (Wellman 1979, 1988).

The density of a network is defined as the number of ties present in comparison with the number of possible ties for the case that every network member is connected to everyone else (Borgatti and Everett 1997: 253). Density can only be measured in a whole network when all ties within a group are elicited or if informants are asked to identify who in their list of personal network members knows each other and to what extent (McAllister and Fischer 1983: 81). The same holds true for the measurement of centrality. Any whole network has several positions of centrality depending on the perspective (Freeman 1979). Network analysts distinguish between the central position of an actor in relation to the absolute number of links leading to the person (degree centrality), the central position in terms of an ability to link the highest number of people other unrelated (betweenness centrality), and the most central position in reference to the lowest minimum distances that links an actor to the largest number of others (closeness centrality) (Freeman 1979: 221-224).

Betweenness centrality informs about the reachability of people or, as in the case of this study, of organizations in a larger network of affiliations. In case every person has a direct tie to everyone else, a high degree of redundancy is present. However, non-redundant contacts create structural holes (Burt 1992), since a person can be connected to two or more others who do not interact and/or have no knowledge of each other. The bridge function of the most connected actor provides him/her with benefits which are additive rather than overlapping (Burt 1992). This is especially important for the investigation of differential access to resources, competitive advantages of actors, and power structures within networks. The existence and number of structural holes among the members in a personal network provides information about the amount of social capital of a person (Burt 1992, Lin 1999). The more structural holes a network has in combination with a large number of overall ties, the more varied is the access of the person to different kind of other circles which might be useful but do not overlap.

Descriptive measurements of network properties also inform about internal structures such as the clustering of several actors in a network as subgroups or cliques. The smallest possible group is a dyad. Three or more people which are completely or partly connected with each other build a cluster. Clusters can be isolated within a larger group or linked to other clusters by way of single ties functioning as bridges (Davis 1967). However, clusters can also overlap by more than one tie, depending on the category of inquiry which enabled the identification of clusters in the first place. Clusters are complex because they may be produced by a variety of possible tie combinations. The structure of a whole network varies with respect to the number of subgroups, their size, the nature of the interaction between them, and the number of isolates.

These basic properties of networks, both personal, egocentric, networks and whole, sociocentric, networks, inform us about the structure of interaction and the flow of various resources. *"In a social networks framework the relational ties among actors and the positions created by the distribution of ties in the emergent network are more important than the attributes of the individuals studied"* (Schweizer 1997: 751).

However, the emphasis of relational properties does not dismiss information on characteristics of individual actors. Attributional information is used for illustration and in-depth interpretation after the structure of networked activities is produced. Certainly, attributes start already to play a role in the design stage of a network study when the content of roles in personal networks or the type and location of groups to be included in the inquiry are selected. The attributes of network members are also of interest in the analysis stage, for example, the similarity (i.e., homophily)

between two people linked by a tie. The degree of homophily may be expressed as shared ethnicity, same sex, same age, same profession, family status, etc. (McAllister and Fischer 1983: 82). This type of data is important because it informs about opportunities for networking among people and the preferences and obligations of a person. In general, any attributional data on network members and the nature of ties puts the structure of a network into a larger context of behavior patterns among human beings. It helps to specify when, how and why interaction takes place.

### **Strong and weak ties**

Ties have attributional characteristics as well. Social network studies distinguish between strong and weak ties (Granovetter 1973, 1985). They both have different implications for the interpretation of network structure and access to resources. In general, strong ties refer to relations between a person (i.e., ego) and close friends and kin related to each other in a densely tied network. All network members know each other, interact on a routine basis, and are privy to the same shared information regarding their social environment. People linked by strong ties often have similar identities, are relatively equal in status, or share common bonds, such as kinship. Strong ties are usually multiplex in character (Wellman and Wortley 1990: 564).

In contrast, weak ties describe relations between ego and acquaintances, people loosely involved with a person. Network members (i.e., alters) who are linked through weak ties to an ego often have no separate relationship amongst themselves. The frequency of interaction is lower for weak ties, and they are more instrumental in character and less intimate. They are most common among people with heterogeneous social identities based on selected, singular interests. Weak ties are uniplex in character (Granovetter 1985, Wellman and Wortley 1990).

Several diverging interpretations of the interplay and function of weak and strong ties have been developed. Granovetter demonstrated the "*strength of weak ties*" as bridges to information when searching for a job (1973). Krackhardt showed the "*strength of strong ties*" with a study on organizational change promoted by personal bonds of high level decision makers in formal organizations (1992). Lately, social network scholars have discovered the "*dark side of strong ties*", especially when it comes to obligations towards others due to a high number of non-transferable relations and for the sake of maintaining social capital (Gargiulo 1999, Lin 1999, 2001). In general, strong ties are often interpreted as indicators of social cohesion and weak ties as providers of access to resources.

The verbal definition of strong and weak ties varies among researchers. Some distinguish strong and weak ties according to the frequency of interaction, others in terms of emotional and social support provided or not provided (Wellman 1999, Granovetter 1985, Schiefloe 1990). Weak ties alone can be anything from chatting contacts to nodding-acknowledgments depending on how many possible ties a researcher wants to include (Henning and Lieberg 1996). The chosen definition has consequences for the design of any network study and is related to the initial challenge for the data collector to decide a priori which relations out of the 'global network' of a person's ties to elicit from an informant.

It is nevertheless possible to define strong and weak ties mathematically. Freeman (1992) demonstrates that in whole networks with no overlaps between subsets of directly connected ties, the measurement of social proximity informs about the existence of strong and weak ties. Ties are strong among two or more people if the social proximity is such that all people in the subset are directly related to one another (value of proximity  $s = 1$ ). The assumption is that if a person has direct contact with two other people, the relation between the two other people will be transitive, meaning they will establish relations as well. However, independent components or subgroups of people can contain weak ties if the social proximity is such, that all people in the subset are at least indirectly connected to everyone else (value of the proximity  $0 < s < 1$ ). People can reach everyone else in the subset through a direct link with an intermediary person. These paths affiliate one person with another through a joint associate (Freeman 1992).

The notion of individual tie strength can also be used to detect the strength of whole networks. A network in which everybody knows everybody else, is a strongly connected network. Weakly connected networks do not link all members to one another, their structure has holes. Different frequencies of interaction are another indicator for weakness in a whole network. People who interact in the same fashion and spend equal amounts of time with one another, can be grouped in a cluster. Those who are interacting with them but not at equal frequency levels, are connected to the cluster; however, these linkages have reduced strength. Hierarchies of related clusters of exchange frequencies determine the overall level of strength in a whole network.

### ***Studying the structure of large open networks***

Beyond the description of social behavior based on personal network data and information on whole networks of small groups, the analytic tools of social network studies can also generate knowledge about the properties of large, loosely tied networks consisting of a large number of

components. To capture the extent to which a multitude of personal networks is connected with each other in larger regions, the small world method is useful (Erickson 1979, Kochen 1989). This method is able to show how many steps it takes on average to link two people unknown to each other, based on the ties that the members of their personal networks are engaged in. It concentrates on the overlap between different networks of people that is created by the existence of a common member in both groups, who then functions as a bridge between them.

A modified version of this method is the 'random walk' (Klov Dahl 1989, Watts 1999), introduced in the section on informant selection above. It produces information on pathways within a network, meaning the long chains of contact which wind through large social systems. The length of these paths and the single or multiple crossing points of particular paths give a limited overview of the structure and properties of geographically and demographically extensive networks. This approach has been useful in the study of urban social networks as open systems (Milgram 1970, Pool and Kochen 1989, Bernard et al. 1990).

Another approach to understanding the social structures in a larger region is to look at randomly selected events, meeting places, and community organizations and the people who meet each other at these various occasions.<sup>18</sup> The result is a sociomatrix of events/groups and actors, also called 'affiliation networks'. The overlap of names on membership rosters or attendance lists informs about the closeness (i.e., the affiliation) of events or groups to each other (Borgatti and Everett 1997, Wasserman and Faust 1994: 313-319). Here, the interconnections within a large network and the overlaps between a large number of personal networks in a society are emphasized. The basic assumption is that individuals are linked to one another within a society in a dual way: they are linked to collectivities, such as groups, associations, clubs, neighborhoods, through a membership role and to other individuals through personal and relational roles.

Breiger developed techniques to analyze the patterns which occur when groups of people intersect, or in his words, the "*interpenetration of networks of persons and networks of the groups they comprise*" (Breiger 1974:181-183). Two or more people are connected to one another by virtue of a shared membership. Two or more groups are mutually related if they share at least one member. It is important to note that two members of a group do not necessarily need to be linked

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<sup>18</sup>The earliest study in social anthropology on the intersection of individuals and events attended was done by Davis, Gardener and Gardener in 1941 on the social events in a Southern town which were attended by 18 women in various combination. The data set as been used extensively by social network analysts for the test of hypotheses and mathematical models. The goal was to find the clique structure among the society ladies. It was not aimed to elicit the social structure of the population of large region.

by a direct tie. It is sufficient that they are mutually "reachable" along a path that connects two members through intermediate persons (Breiger 1974: 1985). The measure of betweenness centrality and the mathematical definition of weak ties (Freeman 1979) are also related to this notion. It follows, that each individual is a member of the personal network of all the people with whom he or she is linked (Wellman 1979: 1226). The inclusion in these personal networks due to indirect ties is the basis of connectivity between social groups.

A related, but different take on investigating and describing the *"sparseness and complexity of urban social relations"* was developed by Foster and Seidman (1982). Their main emphasis goes beyond the dual nature of a person's linkage with a society, for example, the population of a city. They are interested in the overall urban structure created by overlapping subsets, such as community associations, sports clubs, ethnic groups, etc. They propose to move away from a dyadic approach of understanding large open networks, which focuses on the aggregation of ties between two people linked through various circumstances (Foster and Seidman 1982: 181). Not only do memberships in associations cross-cut each other, associations are themselves interconnected. The key to their approach is to take a subset of associations that are related (through participation by a single person) as an entity and analyze the collection of subsets. Even though within such a cluster every person is then linked to every other person, these people might never attend the same event or group meeting at the same time. Their indirect linkages do not automatically create one joint group they all belong to. Therefore, Foster and Seidman recommend determining the structure of overlaps among separate groups by generating what they call a 'hypergraph' (Foster and Seidman 1982:187). Although they only introduce an image and not a calculation of a hypergraph, their main contribution is the suggestion to search for patterns of affiliation beyond the potential high degree of reachability among urban citizens.

Potential contact between people can manifest itself in even less defined social forums. Not all social groups in a society have memberships rosters and clearly visible boundaries. People can belong to social circles based on common interests or propinquity in a either social class and/or geographic sense (see Kadushin 1966 on a typology of social circles). Belonging to a certain social circle increases the opportunity for interaction. However, the densities of ties within any social circle may vary tremendously (Kadushin 1966: 791). Relational analysis makes an important contribution to understanding the social world of urban areas. Without relational analysis information on membership in associations and structural positions of individuals is merely

anecdotal in nature (see for example the Yankee City studies by Warner et al. 1941, 1945, 1963 which talk about interaction patterns, but fail to develop a systematic model of relations).

### ***Studying social cohesion***

The structure resulting from interrelations of people and the groups they form is an indicator for the degree of relational cohesion in any particular location or social world, for example an ethnic community. One of the goals of this study is to determine the presence and extent of cohesion among immigrants from Taiwan in a polynucleated metropolitan area. The focus is on the social structure that is created by overlapping membership in community groups. Joint membership in a social group brings people into contact who are otherwise not strongly connected. Here it is not of interest to establish which individual within a group is more influential than others. The extent to which individuals experience a sense of belonging to one or more groups is also less important for this research. Instead, the focus is primarily on relational data.

Social cohesion is usually studied at the group level looking for patterns of interaction between individuals. Several different approaches of analysis are known from a social network perspectives. One common procedure is to look for cliques (n-cliques, k-plexes) within a network and calculate the degree of clustering within groups, as well as the distances between clusters. Density measures of cliques are considered important indicators of cohesion. White, Boorman and Breiger (1976) detect the degree of cohesion through the use of blockmodels of group members' roles and positions. Burt (1983) and more recently Johnson et al (in press) use the 'structural equivalence' of group members as a basis for cohesion. Members with structural equivalence in terms of their roles and other attributes are likely to be more densely connected to one another and have a more coherent group structure.

The most applicable definition for the present study comes from White and Harary. Cohesion is visible in the multiple social relations between individuals that build clusters (White and Harary 2000: 2). Generally speaking, a group is cohesive if its members stay connected with one another and keep the group from falling apart. The degree of cohesion is determined by measuring the degree of network connectivity. It equals the minimum number of actors who if removed from a group would disconnect the group (White and Harary 2000: 5). A group is cohesive because it cannot easily be separated. Of importance is the existence of paths that link every actor with every other actor, directly or through intermediaries. They are the "*relational glue*" holding entities together (Moody and White 2000: 38). However, the number of ties and the density of a network



are not a guarantee of cohesion. The degree of cohesion depends on the levels of redundancy of multiple independent paths that connect actors or points. If the linkage between several entities consists of a single path in the form of chain, it has a low level of redundancy and can be easily cut apart and disconnected. Therefore, multiple bonding between different entities or in different combinations of ties increase the level of cohesion (on redundancy see also betweenness centrality in whole networks introduced above).

This conceptualization of cohesion is also instrumental for an operationalization of network embeddedness. Large social networks are composed of hierarchically nested groups in which highly cohesive groups are embedded within less cohesive groups (Moody and White 2000: 39). The existence of links and their graph theoretic properties of connectivity in terms of redundancy illustrates the overall connectivity of an extensive network. The local patterns of network ties built by cohesive blocks are embedded in similar structures at the regional and global level. A network of networks connects people, their clusters, their social groups, and the larger society in complex ways (Wellman 1979). For this research, the measurement of cohesion *within* groups is applied to the study of relations *between* groups stemming from overlapping memberships of individuals.

The presence and extent of cohesion among immigrants from Taiwan can be determined by a measurement of the degree of connectivity among the various social organizations and community events they attend. In case of high levels of redundancy of relations between community groups, the degree of community cohesion is considered to be high. That would entail that when taking away one connecting tie, only very few groups would be cut off from the overall structure.

Social network analysis is instrumental in assessing the degree of cohesion among individuals. The absence of ties, the amount of strong and weak ties, betweenness centrality, and the existence of structural holes in combination with low tie redundancy, all inform about the potential interaction patterns between the people under study.

### **Personal Circumstances of Fieldwork**

"Personal characteristics do make a difference in fieldwork. Being old or young lets you into certain things and shuts you out of others. Being wealthy lets you talk to certain people about certain subjects and makes others avoid you. Being gregarious makes some people open up to you and makes others shy away. There is no way to eliminate the personal equation." (Bernard 1994: 155-156).

In order to achieve greater objectivity in the process of data collection and analysis it is vital to become aware of one's own biases prior to fieldwork and how such biases might affect an

understanding of the setting and the participants within the study. It is also important to know that how the ethnographer's own personal attributes such as gender, age, marital status, education, and ethnicity may influence informants' perception and willingness to be interviewed. Moreover, making the conditions of fieldwork transparent may enable readers of an ethnography to evaluate findings more objectively and see the point of seemingly missing pieces (Kleinman 1991: 194).

A few general circumstances and problems which occurred during fieldwork have already been mentioned above. Other personal attributes of potential impact include my previous experience with Chinese culture while studying Chinese language in Taipei and Beijing and conducting fieldwork in several rural areas of mainland China. However, most of my education in Chinese culture, especially in later years, took place in the poor and rural areas of China. Little of what I experienced in these field settings prepared me for working with the more affluent immigrants from Taiwan who lived in an urban setting in a highly developed country like the United States. Finding informants in rural China was not only easier in terms of, for example, drawing random samples, farmers were also much less suspicious or reluctant to answer questions. Though I had spent six months in Taiwan seven years prior to the present research, my understanding of Chinese culture at the time limited my ability to make many useful inferences about Taiwan.

Nevertheless, despite the differences in culture and social conduct between Taiwan and mainland China, I was able to adapt to the new field setting relatively quickly. Many of my approaches in finding informants were guided by intuition acquired during the many years I spent in mainland China. Certainly these intuitions and memories guided the development of a valid research plan. Borrowing from Ottenberg, I consider these influences to analysis and interpretation to be 'headnotes' rather than 'fieldnotes'. *"These are the notes in my mind, the memories of my field research. I call them my headnotes. As I collected my written notes, there were many more impressions, scenes, experiences than I wrote down or could possibly have recorded. Indeed, I did not keep a diary. But the notes are also in my head. I remember many things, and some I include when I write even though I cannot find them in my fieldnotes, for I am certain that they are correct and not fantasy."* (Ottenberg 1990: 144).

My ability to speak fluent Mandarin Chinese or *guoyu*, as people in Taiwan call standard Chinese, most likely helped in the process of data collection.<sup>19</sup> At the very least it enabled me to

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<sup>19</sup> The term "Mandarin Chinese" is a western label of identification. In mainland China, standard Chinese, as opposed to regional versions of the language, are called 普通话 (putong hua), which means "common, ordinary speech". In Taiwan the name for standard Chinese is 国语 (guo yu), which means "the nation's (national) language".

be an active participant in recreational groups, such as ballroom dancing or choir meetings. Interestingly, despite the fact that some groups had a predominantly ethnic Taiwanese following, the official language in the group was standard Chinese, not Taiwanese (Min language). Though during breaks and in private meetings people sometimes used Taiwanese. Churches with services held in Taiwanese always provided a simultaneous Chinese translation for parishioners. However, not all of the interviews were conducted in Chinese. Female informants were usually happy to speak Chinese in answering questions, including women who worked in a professional occupation. Male informants, on the other hand, seemed to be uncomfortable to speak Chinese, especially men who admitted to experiencing problems at work due to their English accent. In response I made it a habit to start asking questions in English in interviews with all informants, throwing in a few Chinese expressions here and there. When informants picked up on the Chinese, which women generally did, the remainder of the interview more often than not continued in Chinese.

As a woman it certainly was easier to establish rapport with women than with men. However, the main reason for the larger number of female as opposed to male informants was due to the larger number of ethnic social groups, especially recreational groups, which were dominated by women. Overall, there was a higher number of female immigrants from Taiwan living in the region, many of them housewives (see chapter 6, 7 and 8 for further details).

A few more comments on language skills and related matters is pertinent. When making the first contact over the phone, some people got irritated by the fact that my Chinese pronunciation sounded very much like that of a Beijing resident, as opposed to a person from Taiwan, since they thought I might be a someone from mainland China. However, upon learning that I am from Germany, many people showed increased curiosity.<sup>20</sup> This generally worked in my favor. Most wanted to meet me once they had gotten to this point in the conversation at which I was able to request an interview. The combination of a German person with a Beijing accent was just too weird for some to pass up. People I had personal contact with usually requested detailed explanations about my personal background, especially since they associated me phenotypically with other white American woman they saw in their neighborhood.<sup>21</sup> When they finally

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<sup>20</sup> People in Beijing speak 北京话 (beijing hua), is a regional version of Chinese almost identical to the standard Chinese "putong hua". After all, the standard version of Chinese is traditionally the language of the capital city. It only differs in a few local expression and the addition of guttural sounds at word endings. Though mutually intelligible, the standard Chinese spoken in other areas of China or Taiwan lacks these sounds.

<sup>21</sup> The presentation of a name card that listed the affiliation with a Cologne University in Chinese was always helpful and appreciated.

understood that I was not very familiar with American cultural ways, especially administrative procedures, this further struck them as odd. A standard reaction to my questions about immigration formalities, school enrollment and the paperwork involved in buying a house, prompted many to suggest I interview "the experts", which in their opinion were white Americans, and not them, the self-declared ignorant newcomers.

Overall, however, I believe that my identity as a German citizen helped me get more all-inclusive access to activities of community groups and more profound insights into informants' lives. As stated above, the 1996/97 campaign financing scandal involving the democratic party and Taiwanese supporters of the Xi-lai temple in Hacienda Heights made many affluent immigrants reluctant to talk. The fact that I was not American and prepared to take information to a Germany university instead of reporting it to a university in the United States, might have helped to ease some tensions.<sup>22</sup> Being a young person enrolled in graduate school turned out to be less threatening than a person of a more official status. At the same time, my low status did not serve me well when trying to get an interview with time-pressed presidents of organizations and companies.

Informants also feared a loss of reputation as a harmonious, almost invisible ethnic group in South Orange County, if they revealed too many "dark sides" of life and relationships in their new environment. They reported that they sense resentment from other, mostly white people, living in the sprawling subdivisions. Rumor had it that other residents despised immigrants from Taiwan because they allegedly arrived with suitcases full of money to buy houses and cars in cash, subsequently driving up the prices for all upper middle class people. Given that only very few immigrants, mainly the most recent arrivals, had that much money upset other Taiwanese who did not want to be associated with the such an image. Knowing that coming from Germany I had no previous familiarity or experience with inter-ethnic tensions in California relieved many informants who may have had worries about pre-judgments on my part.

In that respect, it was both instrumental for informants as well as for me, that I actually shared some of the immigrant experience. Like immigrants from Taiwan, I had needed to gain permission to enter the United States, was treated differently than a citizen by school and city administrations, and lacked a profound knowledge of how things worked in the California. Although I was an

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<sup>22</sup> Explaining the network paradigm as my research interest to people did, however, raise suspicions. Contrary to the average non-Chinese person, most informants were highly aware of the potentials of the method as a powerful tool of understanding status, influence and access to information. Many ethnic Chinese and Taiwanese have, so to speak, a networked view of the world. In later interviews I often refrained from introducing the aim of the research project.

outsider by appearance and place of origin in relation to the other members of the ethnic organizations in which I participated, in the eyes of the informants I became more of an insider due to shared experiences with immigration authorities and the task of adjustment to new surroundings. As fieldwork progressed, I actually came to see myself like informants did, as a resident alien. Though I had no intention to immigrate, I was not a visitor to the United States either. Just as the group of Taiwanese people I studied, I had to justify my role and place in the new environment to the area's established citizens.

Most of the recent studies on immigration have been produced or proposed by children of immigrants inquiring about the experiences of their own ethnic group. Herbert Gans advocated the idea of a 'sociology of immigration research' in order to introduce more transparency of the personal convictions among researchers of immigration. After investigating the new cohort of young researchers who applied for dissertation grants with the Social Science Research Council's (SSRC) International Migration Program, which is ultimately funded by the Mellon and Russell Sage Foundations, he reports the following: "*... among the 65 applicants whose racial or ethnic background suggested that they or their parents were newcomers, 80 percent were studying their own groups, and 20 percent were writing on general topics. No one was studying groups other than their own.*" (Gans 1999a: 238, see similar ideas in 1999b).

This might put some of my unexpected difficulties with the systematic selection of informants in a different perspective. The main obstacle, however, was the urban terrain and the fact that people from Taiwan were very reluctant to impose on one another. Indeed, the avoidance of the accumulation and reciprocation of favors among immigrants from Taiwan became one of the major findings of this study. Many people stated that they wanted to engage in relationships differently than they had back in Taiwan. At least in the years of their upbringing, it had been very common, and often necessary, to rely on 'guanxi' ties and go-betweens to accomplish tasks and gain access to resources.

Leaving the field was difficult since I had become involved in several projects of the various ethnic groups. In some cases I debated whether my approach to fieldwork had been appropriate from an ethical point of view. For example, my immersion in the Yiguan Dao religious movement and subsequent initiation caused many fellow group members to be concerned about my future well-being, given that I would miss out on further meditative instruction workshops. I kept contact with the group for a while, which faded once it became clear that it was difficult to conduct the proper religious practices in the new place of residence with no Yiguan dao temple in driving

distance. I also wondered about my role as a confidant to several women whose spouse lived in Taiwan. They used the opportunity of interviews to grieve about their husband's infidelity. While this topic is discussed in general among members of the ethnic community, women did not usually express anger about the situation, especially with respect to their own sexual dissatisfaction given their own limitations on finding a new partner, since women were expected to stay faithful. My role as an outsider in this case, gave these informants an outlet to voice their feelings and look for answers beyond acceptance and tolerant silence.<sup>23</sup>

Another reason why some members of ethnic organizations actually embraced my request to join the activities of the group, was their interest and curiosity in people from another culture. Many wanted to find friends outside their ethnic group but either lacked the opportunities to meet other people or felt they did not have the necessary communication skills, including language skills, manners, and conversational content (see chapter 7 for detailed accounts). All in all informants and fellow members of social organizations did understand that I had to leave. They knew I had gotten married and wanted to live with my husband in North Carolina after reporting on the first results of fieldwork at my university in Germany. Many had taken great interest in the wedding, which made my life more accessible to them. The fact that my husband lived in a separate location for several months after the wedding was not considered surprising, since many informants were used to such arrangements themselves and considered it one more dimension of similarity between my situation and theirs.

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<sup>23</sup> In some instances women raged over the phone for half an hour about their anger and frustration, yet I was unable to obtain their consent for an actual in-person interview. These brief and rather disjointed encounters did not make me feel obligated to help and did not present me with ethical dilemmas.

## **PART II**

# **ETHNOGRAPHIC BACKGROUND**

## Chapter 5

### Description of the Setting

The next two chapters introduce observations from fieldwork in South Orange County, California. This chapter provides a review of secondary data sources on the geographic, demographic, economic, and political conditions of livelihood in this particular area of the United States. Chapter 6 uses ethnographic data collected during fieldwork to give a detailed account of the demographics and life histories of immigrants from Taiwan in Orange County, focusing on reasons for leaving Taiwan and choosing specific residential neighborhoods. In addition, it presents a few insights from the literature on self-identification and enculturation of people from Taiwan. Together both chapters illustrate the circumstances in which social ties between immigrants and the larger society are developed.

### Introduction to Orange County

The southern part of Orange County, the geographic region in which the informants from this study reside, work and socialize, is part of the Greater Los Angeles metropolitan area. When talking about the economic, political and social aspects of Los Angeles, people usually refer to a five-county region with Los Angeles County at its core, surrounded by Orange, San Bernardino, Riverside and Ventura counties. This area consists of approximately 14 million inhabitants (Soja 2000). In terms of the potential for spatial expansion, Orange County has 2.067 km<sup>2</sup> of space, by far the smallest county in the area. Ventura is twice this size and Los Angeles County is five times the size of Orange County.<sup>1</sup> Boundaries between the counties are not physically visible. Residential areas now cover former farmlands, wetlands and desert almost without interruption. The locals often call this region the Southland. For a large part of its history the quintessential Southlander was assumed to be a white, native-born person. In 1920, only 17% of the region's population was foreign-born (Waldinger and Bozorgmehr 1996: 8).

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<sup>1</sup>San Bernardino and Riverside County are very large inland counties which are largely comprised of desert and mountain ranges. Only the areas close to Los Angeles and Orange County are heavily urbanized.



**Map 5.1 Map of administrative counties in Southern California**

source: U.S. government ([www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov))

## General Demographics of Orange County

### Population of Orange County

During 1997 and 1998, the years when fieldwork for this study was conducted, the overall population of Orange County had reached 2,763,868 people. Table 5.1 is compiled from data found in the 'Race/Ethnic Population Estimates Report of the State of California for Orange County 1990-1998' (State of California, Department of Finance 2000) and features the population growth both in absolute numbers and in rates of change according to the categories regarding racial and ethnic origin established by the U.S. Bureau of the Census. The net change of the population is defined as migration rate and birth rate minus the death rate. The data presented is limited to 1990, the year when the last complete census was taken prior to fieldwork for this study, as well as the years 1996, 1997 and 1998, which represent the time period of the ethnography.

In 1998, Asian and Pacific Islanders, which the Census Bureau defines as people whose country of origin by ancestor or by birth is either an island in the Pacific, or is located in the East Asia, Southeast Asia, or Southwest Asia (i.e., the countries of the so-called Middle East) accounted for 12% of the population (342,799 people).<sup>2</sup> The rate of Hispanics in Orange County, which include "people of Hispanic origin of any race", was 28% of the total population. African Americans

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<sup>2</sup> Less than 1% of all immigrants to the United States and California report that they are 'Pacific Islander' and hail from either Hawaii, Tonga, Fiji, Samoa, or other islands of Micronesia.

constituted 2% of the population in the county and the number of American Indians was too small to register as a percentage rate. The majority of the Orange County population, 58%, were European Americans, labeled either as 'White' or 'non-Hispanic White' by the U.S. Bureau of the Census.

**Table 5.1 Population change in Orange County 1990-1998 by racial and ethnic categories according to the U.S. Bureau of the Census**

	year	total population	net change (compared to previous	net migration (compared to previous	% of total population
Asian and Pacific Islanders	1990	240,767			10
	1996	314,647	11,289	6,450	12
	1997	328,360	13,713	9,055	12
	1998	342,799	14,439	9,728	12
White	1990	1,557,301			65
	1996	1,560,863	-1,110	-6,866	59
	1997	1,571,711	10,848	6,116	58
	1998	1,585,710	13,999	9,669	57
Hispanic	1990	564,854			23
	1996	720,692	23,877	2,222	27
	1998	781,758	31,482	10,502	28
Black	1990	39,161			2
	1998	45,418	-1,459	-1,974	2
Native American	1990	8,584			0
	1998	8,183	95	4	0
Total Population	1990	2,410,668			100
	1996	2,649,822	34,991	2,032	100
	1997	2,705,312	55,490	23,980	100
	1998	2,763,868	48,556	27,929	100

Source: 'Race/Ethnic Population Estimates'. Report of the State of California, Department of Finance for Orange County, 2000.

### **Population of the Southern Cities of Orange County**

The cities in which this study was conducted are part of the central and southern regions of Orange County. They include Fountain Valley (55,900), the southern part of Huntington Beach

(193,300),<sup>3</sup> Costa Mesa (104,700), Tustin with Tustin Foothills, (66,700) in the middle section of Orange County. In the southern area it includes Irvine (133,700), the Newport Coast Drive area (for which no population figures are available at the present due to its recent founding in 1996), Lake Forest (58,900), Mission Viejo (95,100), Laguna Niguel (58,100), Laguna Hills (30,500), Rancho San Margarita (11,390) and San Clemente (48,450) (State of California, Department of Finance 1998).

Irvine is the largest of the new master plan communities and has the biggest growth potential. The annual report of the City of Irvine from 1997 predicts that it will grow due to annexation and expansion into the surrounding undeveloped land areas from a population of 160,000 in 2010 to 180,000 people by the year 2020. Irvine experienced the biggest increase in population growth between 1970 and 1990. It started out with 8,157 people in 1970 before becoming an incorporated city. By 1980 the city had reached 62,134 and by 1990 it had 110,330 residents. It comes as no surprise that Irvine ranked 18th among the fastest growing cities in California in 1998. Irvine was also named one of the fastest growing small cities in the United States (Scott and Soja 1996). The yearly growth rate was listed as 5.39% of the city population. It is important to note that Irvine has plenty of empty land for expansion due largely to strictly controlled planning on the part of the Irvine Company. The magnitude of its rapid growth is evident in the fact that Irvine is now the 27th largest city in all of California and the fifth largest city in Orange County. Only the much older cities of Santa Ana, Anaheim, Huntington Beach and Garden Grove are larger than Irvine.

The City of Irvine lists its Asian population at 18% for 1990 and 22.1% in 1996.<sup>4</sup> This is an increase of 8% from the 1980 census.<sup>5</sup> The proportion of Hispanic and Black populations stayed fairly constant at 6% in 1980, and 6.8% in 1990 and 1996, and 1% in 1980 and 1.8% in 1990 and 1996. This shows a clear shift towards a stronger representation of Asian Americans in Irvine over this period. Other important demographic characteristics of Irvine include the fact that 58% of the households in Irvine had yearly incomes over \$50,000 per year and 20% of all households earned over \$100,000 per year. Though Irvine has a few large employers such as the University of

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<sup>3</sup> Only the southern part of Huntington Beach fits the selection criteria of this study. A few informants live in the newly built planned communities there, adjacent to Fountain Valley and Costa Mesa. Since the population of Huntington Beach is very diverse, both in terms of income and ethnicity, the three informants who live within the administrative borders of Huntington Beach are included in the discussion of the Fountain Valley/Costa Mesa region in general. The inclusion is justified, because the informants have similar socioeconomic profiles and social network structures as the informants living in Fountain Valley.

<sup>4</sup> Unfortunately, the city of Irvine does not list the Asian population by separate ethnic groups.

<sup>5</sup> The Census Data from 2000 listed the total population as 143,072 and the proportion of Asian and Pacific Islanders as 29.8% (Hispanics 7.4% , Blacks 1.4% and all other races implying mixed entries at 4.4%).

California and Fluor Daniel Inc., 64% of all businesses had only 1-5 employees, and an additional 14% has between 5 and 9 employees (City of Irvine 1996, 1997).

Other cities in central and south Orange have slightly different profiles, with Asian/Pacific Islanders constituting 10% of the population. Fountain Valley is the only other city in this group with a higher rate. of Asian and Pacific Islanders. However, the absolute number of people was less than half that of Irvine's, having 55,296 people in 1997, 21% of which were identified as Asian and Pacific Islanders (Fountain Valley City Report 1997). Irvine is the city with the largest numbers of Asian Americans in absolute terms with 29,414 (and reaching 42,686 in 2000) followed by Fountain Valley with 11,739.

Several cities in North Orange County had higher percentages of Asian and Pacific Islanders than the cities included in this study. For example La Palma had 35% in 1997 and Buena Park 18%. Yet, they do not meet the selection criteria of this study introduced in chapter 4, that is, cities that host a larger number of affluent immigrants from Taiwan who are not oriented towards the San Gabriel Valley in their work, recreation and religious activities. Many of these northern cities also distinguish themselves by having a very high percentage of Hispanics and less than 50% European Americans (i.e., non-Hispanic whites).

For the cities that are the focus of this study, table 5.2 shows the distribution of Asians, Hispanics and Whites in the population for the years 1980, 1990, 1997. The data provides only a crude overview of the demographic profile in these cities, since the U.S. Bureau of Census does not collect data on the detailed composition of Asian and Pacific Islanders by ethnic affiliation and the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS), which distinguishes people by country of origin, publishes no separate statistics for these particular cities, since their proportion of immigrants is not exceptionally large.

**Table 5.2 Changing distribution of the Asian population in the cities of South Orange County from 1980 to 1997**

Municipalities	Asian pop. in 1980 (%)	Asian pop. in 1990 (%)	Asian pop. in 1997 (%)	Hispanic pop. in 1997 (%)	White pop. in 1997 (%)
Fountain Valley	7	17	21	12	66
Costa Mesa	5	6	9	25	65
Tustin*	4	10	13	26	55
Irvine	8	18	22	7	69
Newport Beach*	1	3	3	6	90
Lake Forest	n.d. <sup>+</sup>	9	11	12	75
Mission Viejo	3	6	9	9	81
Laguna Niguel	2	8	7	8	83
Laguna Hills	n.d.	6	8	8	83
Rancho San Margarita*	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.
San Clemente*	1	3	3	15	78

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, published in the Orange County Register.

<sup>+</sup> n.d. = no data available.

\* a) Tustin includes the unincorporated area 'Tustin Foothills'. b) Data for Newport Coast, a set of several master plan communities, was not available for the time of fieldwork. The incorporation status was not declared. As of 2002 there were motions to incorporate it to the City of Newport Beach. However, for the 2000 Census it was listed under 'unincorporated areas'. c) For Coto de Caza, adjacent to Rancho San Margarita, no separate data points of ethnic group membership were listed either. d) proportions for San Clemente apply for San Juan Capistrano and Dana Point as well.

### **Immigration to Orange County in Relation to Regional and National Immigration**

The nature and character of immigration to the United States has varied dramatically over the course of the last century. While the rate of immigrants in comparison to the total population was high in 1900 and 1910 at 13.6% and 14.7% respectively, it steadily declined to reach its lowest point in 1970 at 4.8%. Yet, ever since the early 1970's, after the implementation of the Hart-Celler Act, the number of immigrants has been continuously on the rise by almost a two digit percentage increase.<sup>6</sup> In 1996, almost 1 of every 10 residents in the United States was foreign born, totaling 24.6 million people. More than one fourth, 27%, were born in Mexico; another 27% were born in Asia; 17% were born in Europe; and 12% were born in Central or South America. The very recent

<sup>6</sup>See appendix on the history of U.S. immigration policy and the implications of the Hart-Celler Act.

nature of immigration increase is also exemplified by the fact that more than one fourth of the present foreign-born population of the United States arrived after 1990.

The proportion of citizenship holders among immigrants increases with the length of residence. In 1996, 32.2% of the foreign-born population in the United States were naturalized citizens. Foreign born Asians and Pacific Islanders, had higher citizenship rates than foreign-born Hispanics. Even though two thirds of each population qualified for citizenship, 38.4% of Asian and Pacific Islanders obtained citizenship and 18.3% of foreign-born Hispanics took this step. The Census Bureau attributes the smaller proportion of Hispanics among naturalized citizens to lower levels of education and geographic proximity of the country of origin. The most notable general feature of recent immigration to the United States is the high level of educational attainment among immigrants, especially newcomers from Asia. Of all the immigrants entering in the 1990's 28.9% arrived with a college degree and 11.6% had a graduate or professional degree in hand (U.S. Bureau of the Census, Population Profile of the United States 1997: 52).

Though the overall growth rate of the U.S. population is expected to slow down due to a lower birthrate, the distribution of places of origin reported by the population living in the United States is projected to become more diverse. With respect to increased diversity, Hispanic and Asian populations are, however, estimated to grow more rapidly than any other population group. The group of Asian and Pacific Islanders is expected to grow from 4.1% of the population in 2000, to 6.6% in 2025 and 8.7% in 2050. The proportion of non-Hispanic whites will decline from 71.8% in 2000 to 62.4 and 52.8% in 2050. The black population will experience a slight growth of an additional 2.5%. However, the biggest increase will occur among the Hispanic population. It is expected to more than double from 11.4% in 2000 to 24.5% in 2050 (U.S. Bureau of the Census, Report on the Population Profile 1998).

The proportion of Asian and Pacific Islanders in the population, though much smaller in absolute numbers than immigrants of Hispanic origin, who account for more than 40% of the foreign born population, has been continuously increasing by about 2% each year. In 1996 Asian and Pacific Islanders were 9.7 million strong and were projected to reach 12.1 million in 2000. The majority of Asian and Pacific Islanders were listed as foreign born, with only 1.6 million born in the United States. Members of this group live predominately in the three states of California, New York and Hawaii (U.S. Department of Commerce News. Economic and Statistics Administration, 1998).

In fact, among recent immigrants from East Asia, Southeast Asia and the Middle East, California is the most favored location. The most convincing explanation for California's continued lure for legal immigrants is of a structural nature. California is home to a vast array of immigrant communities and has the highest proportion of foreign-born residents in the United States.<sup>7</sup> As long as U.S. immigration policy favors family reunification, with earlier immigrants sponsoring future immigrants, the large foreign-born population already within California will continue to account for in a large proportion of the nation's legal immigration. California's unique combination of economic, geographic, and demographic factors make it nearly impossible for the state, at least for the next two decades, to avoid receiving a disproportionate share of the legal immigrants coming to the United States.<sup>8</sup>

Within California, European Americans accounted for 57% of the population in 1990, but only 52% of the population in 1998. The Hispanic population has increased from 26% in 1990 to 30% of the population in 1998. The Asian population has increased from 9% to 11% over the same period. The Asian/Pacific Islander population has been growing at an average of slightly more than 120,000 persons per year between 1990 and 1997. The shares of the Black and Native American populations have remained constant over the course of the decade, at seven and one percent, respectively (State of California, Department of Finance 1996, 1997, 2000).

Listed by country of origin, Mexico is the biggest sending country of immigrants to California,<sup>9</sup> outpacing the next largest sender, the Philippines, by more than two and a half times. Vietnam and China are the third and fourth largest countries on the list of admissions. Taiwan as a sending country has held rank 7 in 1996 and rank 8 in 1995 among countries of origin (199,483 and 163,000 in absolute numbers).

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<sup>7</sup> In 1996 California was home to 8 million foreign born people, which account for one-quarter of California's total population.

<sup>8</sup> Despite California's obvious attraction for legal immigrants, the state itself has no direct influence on either the size or the composition of the flow of immigrants. The size of the official flow into the United States is determined by the immigration visa quotas which are set by Congress in Washington, DC. Congress controls the composition of the flow of legal immigrants into the country by setting ceilings on the various types of immigrant visas, as well as determining which groups of immigrants are exempt from such ceilings. From the port of entry onwards immigrants are free to determine their own destinations, with the exception of student-visa holders, aspiring immigrants are free to reside in any state independent of their type of visa.

<sup>9</sup> Although people arriving from Mexico have been established settlers of Californian longer than any other newcomer group, half of Mexican-born population of California arrived between 1980 and 1990.

In terms of settlement locations within California, the most desired places are metropolitan areas,<sup>10</sup> especially around Los Angeles, including Los Angeles County, Orange County, Riverside County, San Bernardino and Ventura County, and the Greater San Francisco area. The latter consists of San Francisco County, Alameda County, home of the city of Oakland, and Santa Clara County, also known as the Silicon Valley. The majority of immigrants has settled in a handful of California counties, close to family and friends.<sup>11</sup> The top ten counties remained much the same in 1996 as in 1995 and 1994, with only slight changes. The proportion of immigrants placed in the top ten counties was 80% in 1996 and 1995, the same as that of fiscal year 1994.

**Table 5.3 Proportion of immigrants within the total population of the four major receiving counties in California in 1994, 1995 and 1996\***

County	1996 (in %)	1995 (in %)	1994 (in %)
Los Angeles	32.1	33	36.8
Santa Clara	9.1	7.7	7.8
Orange	8.9	10.9	7.4
San Diego	6.9	7.1	6.8

Source: State of California, Department of Finance, *Legal Immigration to California in Federal Fiscal Year 1996 and 1995*. Sacramento, California, June 1999 and January 1997.

\* The other counties ranking among the top ten immigrant receivers are Alameda, San Francisco, San Mateo (Bay area), Sacramento, San Bernardino, and Riverside, which replaced Fresno at rank 10 in 1996.

In fact, the clustering of immigrants is even more specific. Within the above mentioned counties, certain locations are favored by distinct ethnic groups. In some instances immigrants from a particular country and region of origin concentrate in only one or two areas of a municipality, such as special sections of Monterey Park in Los Angeles County. It follows that individual counties in California not only differ in their number of legal immigrants or legal immigration rates, but in the composition of immigrant flows as well. However, data on these concentrations by ZIP code (i.e., postal code area), is not available for all ethnic groups and all municipalities. INS reports do not present a comprehensive list of ethnic composition for all ZIP codes. They only provide data on outstanding clusters of immigrants. None of the cities in Orange

<sup>10</sup> As of 1996, 94% of all Asian and Pacific Islanders in the United States had settled in metropolitan areas, half of them lived in the suburbs and half of them in the central cities of metropolitan areas.

<sup>11</sup> Among the 15 countries that sent the largest numbers of legal immigrants to the United States, only immigrants from Poland, the Dominican Republic, and Jamaica came to California in much less than expected numbers. California received less than 3% of the immigrants from these countries. The majority of Polish immigrants preferred the Chicago area; Dominicans and Jamaicans settled mostly in and around New York City.



County are home to such noteworthy concentrations of immigrants from Taiwan that they would find their way into published statistics.

Instead, table 5.4 shows the major immigrant groups in several different counties relevant to immigration from Taiwan.<sup>12</sup> The numbers give the percentage of immigrants from that group in comparison to all immigrants in that county. As before, for reasons of overall comparability, only the figures for the year 1996 are listed.

**Table 5.4 Distribution of immigrants in selected counties of residence by country of origin for the year 1996**

Country of origin	Los Angeles County (in %)	Santa Clara County (in %)	Orange County (in %)	San Diego County (in %)
Mexico	25.5	12.4	26.3	42.4
Vietnam	3.8	17.4	26.7	6.5
Philippines	10.6	14.9	6.2	18.5
El Salvador	6.8	n.d.*	n.d.	n.d.
China	5.3	6.4	2.2	2.9
Taiwan	4.4	7.0	4.0	n.d.
Hong Kong	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.
Korea	3.7	1.9	3.8	n.d.
India	n.d.	10.2	3.1	n.d.
Iran	n.d.	3.3	3.7	1.8
Iraq	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	2.9
other	36.0	26.5	24.0	22.8
sum	100	100	100	100

Source: INS Public use tape, Federal fiscal year 1996, State of California, Department of Finance Report 1999.

\*n.d. = no data available.

In sum, California has been attractive for many immigrants from Asia as well as the Middle-East. California's foreign-born population is proportionately larger than elsewhere in the United States. Many of these immigrant groups are recent arrivals; 59% of the region's Asians and 53% of Middle Easterners have moved to the United States since the 1980's. The ethnic Asian population

<sup>12</sup>Counties such as San Francisco County or Alameda County are not listed, because they are home to many immigrants from China, but not from Taiwan. Riverside and San Bernardino County have small numbers of Taiwanese entries and therefore are not statistically important either.

was initially small in 1970, with most immigrants entering on employment-based and student visas. They created the basis for the subsequent migration of less-well-educated relatives. Thus, many previously underrepresented countries of origin were able to establish a foothold in the United States. The Asian population has since exploded as immigrants from the Philippines, Korea, China, Vietnam, India, and Taiwan have poured into the region. Many of these recent immigrants have made California their preferred location of residence and transformed Los Angeles into the "*capital of contemporary Asian America*" (Waldinger and Bozorgmehr 1996: 10). It has become even bigger than other centers of Asian American populations such as New York, San Francisco-Oakland and Honolulu.

Compared to the general developments of immigration to California, Orange County features above average proportions of immigrants from countries in Asia. Although the cities of southern Orange County are not the most concentrated locations of settlement for immigrants from Taiwan in the Greater Los Angeles region, they are home to a substantially large number of Asian and Pacific Islanders in general (see table 5.2).

### **The Emergence of Orange County as a Unique Metropolitan Area**

The extraordinary influx of people from Asia to Orange County, the high rates of overall population growth for the cities in the county, and the newly emerging cities in the southern part of the county warrant a closer look at the processes which created these ethnically mixed residential areas. During the last 30 years, Southern California has been transformed into a Mecca for both high-skilled and low-skilled newcomers alike. Orange County, formerly considered a residential area for commuters with jobs in greater Los Angeles, has come into its own. Though the county evolved at first from a rural area into an industrial region and bedroom community adjunct to Los Angeles, by the 1980's it had become a complex metropolitan region with its own economy and cultural life.<sup>13</sup> The present population size (2.7 million) has evolved from just 200,000 inhabitants in the 1950s and two million people by the mid 1980's.

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<sup>13</sup>In the beginning in 1889, when the 100 km long and 60 km wide area was created as its own administrative unit out of the southern portion of Los Angeles County, it only hosted several cattle ranches and the then small cities of Anaheim, Santa Ana and Orange (Hallan-Gibson 1986). When the economy of Los Angeles accelerated in World War II and became home to aircraft manufacturers such as Douglas Aircraft and Lockheed as well as a major military center helping to protect the West Coast, Orange County began to benefit from its big neighbor. In the postwar era many soldiers as well as other companies were attracted by the temperate winters and seductive sandy beaches of Southern California. Open space in Los Angeles became scarce and expensive leading residents and major aircraft firms to seek cheaper real estate in Orange County (Kling, Olin and Poster 1995: 2).

Employment opportunities are plentiful in the cities of Orange County and residents travel all over the county on a daily basis for their jobs, recreational activities, shopping opportunities and socializing. This has changed the role of Orange County as just a suburban area to a distinct metropolitan area in its own right. While in the early 1970's 21% of all income generated by county residents was earned outside of Orange County, in the mid 1980's this figure had dropped to less than 10%; and 80% of the county's work force commuted to jobs within its borders instead of leaving the county for work (Kling, Spencer and Poster 1995: 2).

**Map 5.2** Cities and major unincorporated communities in Orange County



source: OrangeCounty.net, Guide to Orange County Cities 2001-2002

Yet Orange County itself is far from being homogenous. The northern and the southern parts of the county are quite distinct, and in the last twenty years a distinct middle section has developed. Residents label these three areas North County, South County and Central Orange County. The northern part with the cities La Habra, Brea, Fullerton, Buena Park, La Palma, Cypress, Los

Alamitos, Seal Beach, Huntington Beach, Westminster, Garden Grove, Stanton, Anaheim, Placentia, Yorba Linda, Villa Park, Orange, Santa Ana, Tustin, Fountain Valley and Costa Mesa has a longer history of settlement than the southern part. Communities were established before 1970 and in the earlier stages of their history, some of the areas closer to Los Angeles County did indeed serve as suburbs to Los Angeles. The cities of Anaheim, Santa Ana, Fullerton, Orange and Huntington Beach were founded before or at the turn of the last century. Yet others got established in the early 1950's and a few, Yorba Linda and Villa Park and Tustin Foothills are very recent tract housing developments.

The southern part of Orange County on the other hand, is dominated by newly developed master plan communities. Only the traditional beach towns of Newport Beach, Corona del Mar, Laguna Beach and San Clemente were formed in the early part of the last century. Dana Point evolved in the early 1960's and got incorporated in the late 1980's. Yet, most of the inland cities did not exist prior to 1970. Prior to the development of these cities, Orange groves had covered the land. In addition the El Toro Marine Corps Airbase (now closed) occupies a large part of the area and only in the 1990's did the county discuss a conversion into a major international airport. The emerging inland cities are Irvine, Lake Forest (previously known as the city of El Toro), Mission Viejo, Aliso Viejo, Laguna Niguel, Laguna Hills and San Juan Capistrano (an old settlement which grew into a newly developed area). Most recently created were Rancho San Margarita, Coto de Caza, Las Flores and Trabuco Canyon. Another very upscale new residential area is Newport Coast, not yet incorporated to either Newport Beach or Irvine.

An argument can be made for the existence of a unique central region of Orange County, a center part, which shares a comparatively longer history together with the northern part of the county, yet whose inhabitants are more oriented towards activities in the southern part of the county. This central part was created by the commercial and administrative clusters around the big mall and office complexes of Newport Center/Fashion Island and South Coast Plaza linked by the Orange County Airport and is also considered to be the core of Orange County. Residential areas which surround these centers include the southern most parts of Huntington Beach, the cities of Fountain Valley and Costa Mesa, and the neighborhoods of Tustin Foothills and other master plan communities added in Tustin bordering the city of Irvine. The division of Orange County in three parts is also influenced by the region's topography. The northern part is rather flat, bordered in the west by the ocean and the east by the foothill mountain range. The southern part is covered with hills in parts reaching all the way to the ocean leaving just a small stretch of flat land for the

traditional coastal towns. The land around the inland cities is hilly and covered with brushes, some neighborhoods in and around Mission Viejo are clustered together, others are separated by open space of rugged terrain. In the middle is the Irvine Ranch, a mix of flat lands in the eastern part reaching up to the base of the mountains and a few hilly slopes in the western part facing the sea. The property of the Irvine Company, owner of the Irvine Ranch, covered roughly one fifth of the area of all Orange County before the beginning of housing constructions (Kling, Olin and Poster 1995: 167).

Immigrants from Taiwan selected for this study reside both in the middle and southern part of Orange County. For reasons of simplification the central and southern portions of Orange County are referred to as South Orange County for the remainder of the study. This label complies with the terminology of most Real Estate Agencies who distinguish only between two areas in Orange County, 'North County and Inland' and 'South County and Coastal' (New Homes Magazine 1998).<sup>14</sup>

### **Urban Sprawl in South Orange County**

Many of the new cities in the hinterland of the southern part of Orange County are considered to be a result of urban sprawl (see the section urban studies on the notion of urban sprawl and related urban settlement forms). Orange County is one of the most outstanding areas in the United States which represent the new category of spatial arrangement which is neither rural nor urban. To fully assess the characteristics of Orange County California as an area with new forms of settlement structure, it needs to be placed in context with comparable counties in the United States. Gottdiener and Kephart identified 20 other counties that fulfill three criteria: they are multinucleated, highly urbanized and prosper adjacent to a traditional urban center (Gottdiener and Kephart 1995: 37).<sup>15</sup> The other counties with similar settlement situations include the urban centers of New York, Boston, Washington, Baltimore, Philadelphia, Atlanta, Detroit, Chicago, Miami, San Francisco and Los Angeles.<sup>16</sup> They differ somewhat in size, growth rate of population and economy, and proportion of employment sectors such as high-tech industries, defense

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<sup>14</sup>The UCI Orange County Annual Survey uses the same distinction of South and North Orange County. The report is compiled each year by Mark Baldassare and Cheryl Katz.

<sup>15</sup>the authors selected only large counties with a certain size of land area and population. Texas has some counties which are highly urbanized yet small in overall size.

<sup>16</sup>Los Angeles is not only the one adjacent to Orange County, but also to Ventura County to the Northwest. Other counties include Norfolk, Mass; Fairfield, Conn. ; Suffolk, NY; Middlesex, NJ; Monmouth, NJ; Montgomery, Pa; Du Page, Ill.; Macomb, Mich.; Oakland, Mich.; Baltimore, Md; Montgomery; Md., Prince Georges, Md.; Fairfax, Va.; Gwinnett/De Kalb, Ga.; Broward, Fla.; Hillsborough, Fla.; Contra Costa, Calif., San Mateo, Calif., Santa Clara, Calif.

industries, transportation and communication, retail/wholesale, finance, service and real estate development.

Yet these 21 counties are all independent entities, fully urbanized with a multitude of centers within its space, forming a new type of settlement structure (Gottdiener and Kephart 1995: 51). Orange County is one of the few counties with no central city with more than 350,000 residents and yet was one of the largest three counties in terms of population in the 1980's (Scott and Soja 1996: 11). The comparison of these specific "urbanized counties" demonstrates that they cannot be described as suburbs forming concentric circles around a single city center anymore. They rank alongside traditional urban centers in terms of consumption and buying power per household per city compared across the entire United States. Orange County is the nation's 10th largest county economy after Philadelphia, Detroit and Houston respectively (Venkatesh 1995: 146).

Therefore, to explain the emergence of specific spatial and demographic attributes of counties like Orange County there is no single factor that can explain their growth. It is not just a matter of high technology, military related production and spending, postindustrial service or the power of manufacturing which could singularly describe the evolving patterns of multicentered urbanization from a once rural space. Rather an additional combination of social forces such as a robust real estate market, racism, the flight of the white industrial working class from urban centers, the expansion of service-related industries (which do not need a central location for operating their business) and new arrangements in corporate business structures have all contributed to the new form of spatial settlement. Changes in contemporary social organization involving production, circulation, the independence from central distributors, and reproductive relations as in, for example, the role of women as breadwinners will continue and act to shape the face of urbanizing counties (Gottdiener and Kephart 1995: 52).

These new settlement structures have been uniquely described as the first occurrence of such a formation in five thousand years of urban history (Soja 1996). City boundaries in the region serve merely administrative purposes but do not operate as community boundaries, let alone visible boundaries. Orange County as the largest and fastest growing county in this group has provoked the use of flowery adjectives to describe and capture the departure from traditional forms of human settlements. With its endless stretches of new houses, interrupted only by occasional clusters of commercial areas, it has been likened to "tomorrowland", "exopolis", "thirdspace", "frontierland", "giant theme park" and "the most California-looking of all Californias" (Davis 1990, Sorkin 1992a, 1992b, Soja 1992, Soja 1996, Scott 1996).

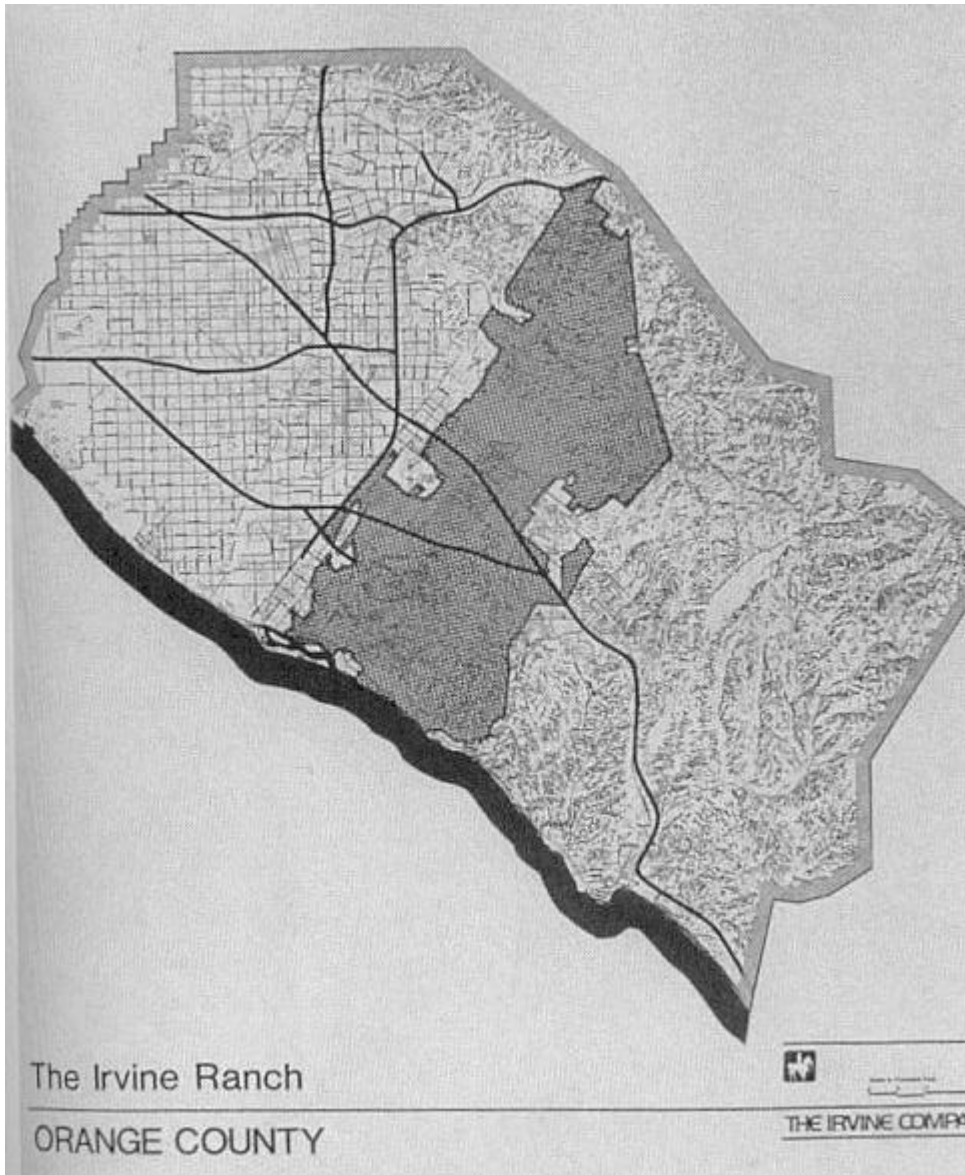
Nevertheless, the county tries to uphold a sense of history, maintaining its role as host for 18th century missionary stations (San Juan Capistrano) and a home for Anglo and Mexican ranchers as well as artists in the beginning of the 20th century. Yet these aspects are difficult to detect today, especially in southern areas since mostly new structures are all that is available to the eye (Soja 1996: 237-238). Buildings are primarily recent constructions and their maintenance and upkeep requires institutions and individuals to uphold this specific "look." In fact, the absence of history is the second most striking feature of South Orange County alongside the array of master plan communities. As Soja confirms based on his interviews: *"first there's the history problem. Irvine doesn't have one. This 'history problem' exists everywhere in Orange County, where, we have been told, even the land and the ocean look new. As the mayor said: 'One thing I've learned is that you cannot telescope the evolution of an urban community into a matter of years. These things take time. You talk about Venice or Los Angeles, it's 100 years of history (at least!). Here, history in a municipal sense is 20 years old'."* (Soja 1996:259).

The lack of history can lead to a feeling of emptiness among residents. More importantly, it provides little in the way of a reference point for community activities and public gatherings. Any effort in community building has to make do without a sense of history or previously established traditional practices. Individuals and small groups might have to create and reinvent their own practices independent of one another.

### **The Face of South Orange County: Planned Communities, Shopping Malls and Health Care Technology**

#### **The Master Plan Communities of the Irvine Company**

Although there is more to South Orange County than the city of Irvine, the creator of the city of Irvine, the Irvine Company, has influenced the area beyond the city limits through its design vision and the establishment of several industrial parks which have shaped not only the visual appearance of South Orange County but also its economic backbone. The Irvine Company was founded in the late 19th century by James Irvine II who owned a large area of land, the Irvine Ranch, which stretches from today's Newport Beach and to the borders of Laguna Beach and inland to the foothill mountains (Schiesl 1995: 56, see map 5.3 below). The land was used for farming purposes, first as a ranch and then as a vegetable and citrus plant operation, before the pressure to develop the area for urban use mounted in the postwar building boom.

**Map 5.3 Land expansion of the Irvine Company in Orange County**

source: Kling, Olin and Poster 1995 based on press releases of the Irvine Company

However, the Irvine Company wanted to avoid the mistakes of urban sprawl, such as fast and undirected change, created by 'merchant builders' who had encroached vast areas of North Orange County with endless rows of low and middle income houses without any regard for community spaces or the preservation of the environment. After the donation of a small portion of the Irvine Ranch to the University of California as a site for a new campus, the company enlisted the service of the then architect of the university community, William Pereira, to draft a master plan of development for the whole Irvine Ranch (Schiesl 1995: 59-60). The original vision called for several residential enclaves scattered over the area. Each village was supposed to have a diversity



of building types, its own school, churches, shopping centers, golf courses, swimming centers and open spaces (Schiesl 1995: 63). The difference between the Irvine Company and other builders is that merchant builders market their homes first and the community second. Instead the Irvine Company marketed their living spaces as amenity-packed communities as all-in-one deals with high quality design. Indeed, they only used contractors who built expensive houses with high-end features. The goal of the company at all times was to make money, not to revolutionize the urban space. However, to this day one of the marketing slogans reads "*The sprawl ends where the Irvine Ranch begins*" (booklet of the Irvine Homefinding Center).

The controlled design of the Irvine Company with its pre-set architectural and landscape style and an emphasis on leisure activities was well received and found many buyers. However, only upper-middle class and upper class clients were able to afford the houses (Bloom 2001: 55). In fact, the design was aimed to be a place for a homogenous, high-income clientele. The idealism of Pereira's high density communities modeled after European university towns was not what the market demanded. In the years following the incorporation of the villages of the Irvine Ranch into the City of Irvine in 1971 the public had several heated discussions with the Irvine Company over issues such as the lack of public transport, lack of environmental protection and the unbalanced population living in elitist spaces. The city of Irvine had initially no housing available for low and middle income families, often associated with the minority populations of Blacks, Chicanos and Asians (Schiesl 1995: 67). Many homeowners were opposed to the idea of racial or income diversification in fear of having their own property values lowered when living in close proximity to such housing unit (Bloom 2001: 207). The trend was supported by the Irvine Company's negligence of non-white families as an important segment of their market. It is almost ironic that by the year 2000 Asian and Pacific Islanders accounted for 29% of the population in the city.

Since the Irvine Company was also interested in generating revenues through the large industrial parks it created for business and technology, there was need for some less expensive housing options for workers employed in these industrial developments (Schiesl 1995: 77). Some of the demand was covered by the Mission Viejo Company who built master plan communities in the hills south of the Irvine Ranch, such as Laguna Niguel, Aliso Viejo, and Mission Viejo. Nevertheless, there was an ongoing struggle over the need for expansion versus the preservation of the status quo between city council members and the Irvine Company. At times slow growth policy was dominant in order to avoid commercial sprawl and destruction of precious landscapes. During other periods development was favored in order to solve problems such as traffic

congestion, and lack of population balance (Schiesl 1995: 84). Though the Irvine Company had built at much lower density than originally planned,<sup>17</sup> the idea of decentralized settlement had been upheld, together with a mix of office buildings, shopping areas and industrial parks. The high-end character of the subdivisions had persisted as well. While some villages had become more affordable due to their age, many new subdivisions, some of them highly exclusive, were built and planned in the late 1990's such as the developments along the Newport Coast Drive.

What is most striking about the availability of different sizes and prices of housing in distinct areas was the emerging class structure between its inhabitants. Revealing one's residence address also revealed a homeowner's financial status given that housing prices in various areas were readily available and transparent for all people living in South Orange County. A person with a house in the Pelican Hill subdivision of Newport Coast, for example, was obviously a millionaire as opposed to a family living in Irvine's Northwood village.<sup>18</sup> There are subtle yet noticeable difference in prices and ages of buildings in between these two extremes. The more inland a subdivision is located the more affordable a residence becomes. Wealth is generally measured by proximity to the ocean.

To be sure this has been the case before the onset of large scale master plan community construction. The cities of Huntington Beach, Newport Beach and Laguna Beach have always been home to upper middle class residents. Yet, these cities also provided space for people living in trailers and run-down apartment complexes just two or three streets from the beach. Since the establishment of planned communities, including gated and non-gated compounds, economic disparities are no longer limited to the beach cities but are spread out across the southern part of Orange County. Upper class residents cluster around Newport Beach and Newport Coast, including areas of Corona del Mar and Laguna Beach. Upper middle-class families occupy the high-end areas of Irvine. Middle income families reside on the northeast side of Irvine or in the less expensive master plan communities within the hillside cities of Mission Viejo, Laguna Hills, and Laguna Niguel modeled after Irvine. Those who are on a even tighter budget move into new communities near the Foothill mountains, such as Lake Forest or Rancho Santa Margarita.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>17</sup>The first master plan drafted in the late 1960's predicted the population to reach 430,000 by 2000. However, the "reality" is that the 2000 census listed roughly 147,000 people living in the city of Irvine.

<sup>18</sup>For detailed pricing information see section on settlement choices of immigrants in chapter 6.

<sup>19</sup>There are exceptions to this spatial arrangement though. The community of Coto de Caza for example, located in the foothills not far from Rancho San Margarita is a very upscale community with larger lots and a golf course. Though it is inland it does nevertheless provide its inhabitants with a prestigious address. Living in Coto de Caza is unmistakably associated with being able to afford a house for more than \$ 500,000.

Though the Irvine Company argues it offers diversity of housing within the city of Irvine, this diversity is limited to houses ranging between \$ 150,000 and 800,000. People who can afford to move to a housing area which offers houses over \$ 1 million will do so. In fact many families move several times over the course of an adult lifespan to improve the location and size of their houses, but most of all the prestige of their address. There are no areas of low-income housing available between the barrios of Santa Ana and East San Diego, a distance of 170 km (Davis 1990: 209).

### **The Silicon Valley of Health Care**

South Orange County offers many opportunities to earn high incomes for educated employees and business owners alike. The Southland has also become known as Southern California's Technology Coast, with many separate centers having traditionally supported electronics and aerospace and, more recently, new information technologies (Soja and Scott 1996: 13). These technology hubs have facilitated the change from a suburban character of settlement structures to decentralized regional urbanization by providing jobs independent of central cities. They have become increasingly international in clientele and employee base as well as in scope of operation involving primarily countries and economies of the Pacific Rim (12).

The Irvine Spectrum, another brain child of the Irvine Company, is the largest and most prominent industrial park and international center for research, technology and business in the region (Bloom 2001: 64). Starting in the 1990's four technology industry clusters have emerged in the region: software industries, computer peripherals industries, biotechnology industries and companies researching and producing medical devices. Many individual companies within these industries cooperate. Entrepreneurs operating small-scale medical supply businesses in the industrial parks of Irvine proudly call this area the "Silicon Valley of Health Care" (informant #17). In addition, the nearby University of California of Irvine is a respected and highly prestigious research institution which forms many collaborative relationships with local businesses.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>20</sup>UCI has produced two Noble Prize winners, in physics and chemistry - a fact which informants of this study often point out.

### **Shopping Centers and Ethnic Diversity in South Orange County**

The increase in population size together with the investment in industrial parks by the Irvine Company, other large corporations, and city governments across the area has made Orange County an economically independent entity distinct from Los Angeles. Orange County no longer lacks high-end shopping centers or cultural attractions. South Coast Plaza in Costa Mesa and Fashion Island in Newport Beach are world-renown temples of consumerism. South Cost Plaza shopping center has recently generated the largest amount of yearly revenues in the whole United States (Venkatsh 1995).

While South Orange County is definitely a rather homogeneous area in terms of income levels compared to North Orange County, ethnic diversity has begun to increase in the southern part. Up to the early 1990's ethnic food and supply stores for the various Asian and Middle Eastern immigrant communities were hard to find in South Orange County. Since then ethnic food stores and supermarket chains present in the Korean dominated (Garden Grove), and dominated by ethnic Vietnamese (in Westminster, also called 'Little Saigon') areas of North Orange County have migrated further south to meet the needs of the growing ethnic populations there as well.<sup>21</sup>

The city of Irvine now features both Middle Eastern, Korean and Chinese Supermarkets. Most notably was the establishment of an outpost of the Ranch 99 supermarket chain in Irvine in the mid 1990's. Ranch 99, a large Chinese-owned supermarket chain, started out in the old Los Angeles Chinatown and operated stores first in San Gabriel and Arcadia, later in Rowland Heights and Gardena, Anaheim, Westminster, Van Nuys in the San Fernando Valley, and finally opening stores in Irvine and San Diego as their southern most outpost. Functioning literally as a magnet, Ranch 99, at the intersection of Culver and Irvine Center Drive, revived a then struggling strip mall, Culver Plaza. Located on one of the main thoroughfares of the city, the shopping center had experienced a long succession of unsuccessful businesses. Once Ranch 99 opened their doors, several other ethnic Asian stores followed, an optometrist, a beauty parlor, and a famous Chinese restaurant. In addition, Ranch 99 subleased several stores within it's supermarket space. It hosted a travel agent, a video store, a Chinese pharmacy, two bookstores and a hairdresser. A message board in a side section of the store offered the opportunity to exchange notes, advertise cars, houses and other items to sell as well as rooms to rent, courses to take and other service options.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>21</sup>North Orange County has also a very large Hispanic population, especially in Santa Ana and Anaheim. Hispanic stores are not as dominating in South Orange County as Asian stores though.

<sup>22</sup>95% of the notes are posted in Chinese.

The most striking feature of the Culver Plaza, however, are the ethnic Chinese banking institutions in mall. The history of ethnic banks in the United States is rather young. The first bank, Cathay Bank was established in 1962 and had no competitor until 1972. It was founded as a response to problems experienced by Chinese immigrants in securing small business loans from the dominant main stream banks in the area (Li et al. 2000). Other ethnic banks established themselves over the years, many first in San Francisco or the San Gabriel Valley.<sup>23</sup> In South Orange County five such banks are clustered in the same location in Irvine.



Photograph 5.1 Cathay Bank, one of the five banks located in the Culver Plaza strip mall

Culver Plaza is not the only shopping area with ethnic stores in South Orange County. A two minute drive away are two adjacent shopping centers, The Arbor and Orange Tree Square, harboring several ethnic stores. The Arbor strip mall includes a Chinese owned coaching school for highschool students, that prepares students for standardized tests and assists with homework tasks, a few Chinese doctors and dentists, a Japanese restaurant, several Chinese eateries, specialty stores, a Chinese beauty parlor, a Chinese-Irish bar, two pharmacies and a Taiwan-style cafe, which is a beloved hang out for highschool and college students from Taiwan.

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<sup>23</sup>With a few exception these banks are founded in the United States. They are not branches of Taiwan banks. Their existence is a prominent sign of economic assimilation to American practices. In Taiwan individuals and small business have always relied on rotating credit associations and family relationships; prior accumulation of substantial assets, they rarely have access to the archaic banking system (Gates 1992: 183).



Photograph 5.2 Chinese beauty parlor and Taiwan-style coffee shop in The Arbor strip mall

Heritage Plaza, just down the road from Culver Plaza is another shopping mall which features a more eclectic mix of stores. Middle Eastern specialty food stores and restaurants are adjacent to a Korean store. Arabic last names on Doctors plates are listed next to Korean and Chinese last names. Culver Plaza has the largest concentration of ethnic stores within any of the shopping malls between Fountain Valley and San Clemente. However, the clientele is not exclusively ethnic Taiwanese and Chinese. Many Euro-Americans also shop in the Ranch 99 supermarket and frequent the many Chinese restaurants. They favor the fresh produce offered, but also the diversity in available merchandise. Especially young professionals, who themselves have been uprooted from other areas in the United States and recently moved into the master plan communities of the South Orange County, look for a variety of goods presented to them (Venkatesh 1995, informal interviews of this study).

The ethnic stores enhance the overall newness of the region with selected diversity, although at a high-end consumer level. For more exotic locales in terms of architecture, people and products one would have to travel to neighborhoods with a higher ethnic residential as well as commercial concentration, for example to areas like Little Saigon. After all, the shopping malls in and around Irvine resemble the proto-typical non-ethnic shopping malls in their degree of streamlining, cleanliness and middle class patrons. Since the ethnic stores are well kept in appearance and organization they comply with the rules of the Irvine Company and the Irvine city council, which

has little tolerance for chaotic looking streets and uncontrolled commercial sprawl (Schiesl 1995, background interviews of this study).

However, the shopping malls with ethnic Chinese and Taiwanese features in South Orange County do not qualify as ethnoburbs, as defined by Li (1999), which consist of scattered ethnic clusters connected to a historic place of ethnic settlement. While ethnic settlements alongside the San Gabriel Valley have evolved in reference to Monterey Park which developed in turn as a response to the overpopulation in Chinatown, Orange County is characterized by the absence of a long-term history. The new urban spaces of South Orange County have previously not been home to any ethnic group. The lack of immediate positive or negative reference points for community building, as we shall see, creates a distinct physical and social environment for the affluent immigrants of this study.

## Chapter 6

### Immigrants from Taiwan in South Orange County

#### Self-Identification and Identification by Others

The following section illustrates difficulties regarding the boundaries of both self-identification and identification by others for immigrants from Taiwan. It also introduces a few political and economic aspects of life in Taiwan that influenced immigrants' experiences prior to emigration.

#### Statistical Overview of the Immigration Flow from Taiwan to the United States

Since the focus of this study is affluent immigrants from Taiwan with generally high educational attainment, it is deemed reasonable to rely on U.S. government statistics on legal immigrants. Though in earlier periods of immigration it has not been entirely uncommon for people from Taiwan to arrive in the United States illegally, the informants of this study and the ethnic group members they are related to, are without exception legal immigrants.

Although it should be fairly easy to determine the number of immigrants from Taiwan who arrived in the United States over the years, there are several obstacles due to problems of proper identification both by the INS and immigrants themselves. Until 1982 the Statistical Yearbooks of the Immigration and Naturalization Service recorded newcomers from Taiwan in the same category for country of origin, China, as immigrants from mainland China and Hong Kong, as well as ethnic Chinese from other places in Southeast Asia (U.S. INS 1998).<sup>1</sup> This makes a more detailed understanding of the nature of ethnic Chinese and ethnic Taiwanese populations in the United States and California challenging.

Throughout the time period in which China was the only category of origin used for the compilation of statistics, the majority of immigrants recorded as Chinese actually arrived from Taiwan and not from mainland China since the communist party had banned emigration from China until the late 1970's. Thus, immigrants from Taiwan actually benefited from the change of immigration regulations in 1965 that created a "China quota". It allowed a larger number of people to receive greencards. Immigrants from Hong Kong, on the other hand, have generally been

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<sup>1</sup>Other Chinese immigrants came from Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam (see Skeldon 1996). Depending on their testimony in respect to their country of origin, which many immigrants considered to be their ethnic affiliation, they were often also listed as coming from China.



recorded in a separate category due to their status as refugees since 1952. Until the mid 1960s the majority of Chinese immigrants who lived in the United States had arrived from Hong Kong.

Classification problems are further exacerbated by the reporting habits of immigrants themselves. Many immigrants from Taiwan described themselves as being from China originally. The rationales for this behavior and their relation to the ethnicity of immigrants is discussed in the following section. A substantially large group of immigrants who arrived in the 1960's and 70's was actually born in China and only spent a few years in Taiwan on route to the United States. China was indeed their country of origin although not their country of last residence. What is clear though, is that by 1982 when the INS included Taiwan as a category for origin, 82% of all immigrants admitted from the island were born in Taiwan and by 1993 they accounted for 91% of all immigrants.

These data problems create a challenge for analysis. They make many of the available statistics, even those employing separate categories for Taiwan and China, potentially problematic, particularly in terms of issues of reliability and validity. In addition, the admissions categories and counting procedures of the INS can differ from one year to the next year. Nevertheless, despite these problems, the table 6.1 reflects the overall increase in immigration from China, Taiwan and Hong Kong between 1950 and 1997, the first year of fieldwork for this study.

**Table 6.1 INS statistics of migration to the United States from Taiwan, China, and Hong Kong 1951-1996**

	Taiwan	China	Hong Kong <sup>++</sup>
1951-1960	n.d.*	9,657**	15,541
1961-1970	n.d.	34,764	75,007
1971-1980	n.d.	124,326	113,467
1982-1986	81,230	79,385	54,325
1987-1991	76,397	116,057	69,216
1992-1993	15,736	57,761	14,010
1994	11,157	47,964	11,949
1995	9,377	35,463	7,249
1996	13,401	41,728	7,834

Source: U.S. Department of Justice. Statistical Yearbook of the Immigration and Naturalization Service (various years).

\*n.d. = no data available. \*\* Inclusion of Taiwan as a sending country within the category of 'China' started in 1957.

++ Separate records for Hong Kong were established in 1952.

Each year since the early 1970's, when the effects of the Hart-Celler Act became fully visible, a large number of people from Taiwan have been admitted as legal permanent residence to the United States. It is instructive to consider the overall population size in the sending countries. For 1996, Taiwan's population was 21.8 million as compared to almost 1 billion people living both in mainland China. During that year an absolute number of 10,863 people immigrated from China (or 0.001% of its total population), and 6,061 people immigrated from Taiwan (that equals 0.03% of its total population). Though the numbers are rough estimates, they provide a glimpse of the role migration plays on the small island of Taiwan. There is hardly a family in Taiwan who does not have a friend or distant relative who is an American greencard holder (Greenhalgh 1984: 546).<sup>2</sup>

### **Ethnicity of Immigrants from Taiwan**

Immigrants from Taiwan do not share a single ethnic affiliation. In fact, many immigrants claim several different associations with places of origin and cultural groups which at times overlap, but also separate them (Ng 1998). Not all immigrants who arrived from Taiwan automatically think of themselves as Taiwanese or are seen as Taiwanese by others, for example by the INS or U.S. Bureau of the Census, as demonstrated above.<sup>3</sup>

Although the name 'Taiwanese' is a product of western languages, people in Taiwan and even more so immigrants from Taiwan have to interpret it for themselves.<sup>4</sup> As a result, the name has been given several meanings that differ in their emphasis on linguistic, cultural, and political commonalities (Huang, 1997; Tu, 1998). The different connotations have political implications since it is not officially resolved, whether Taiwan is a part of, or independent from mainland China (Copper 1999).

To understand the difficulties with the associations implied by the word Taiwanese, a brief overview of the history of Taiwan is necessary. Taiwan is an island of immigrants, that has been settled by four distinct groups of people which differ in time of arrival, size, and use of language. These groups are: the aborigines (yuanzhumin), who came from various islands of the South

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<sup>2</sup> The 1998 yearbook of the Taiwanese Chamber of Commerce in Orange County claims that 50% of all people living in Taiwan say they are related to someone abroad (page 14).

<sup>3</sup> The U.S. Bureau of the Census has actually established a separate category for ethnic association, Taiwanese, in the 2000 Census. However, not all immigrants from Taiwan have made use of this identification for reasons stated in this section.

<sup>4</sup> Alternatively, some earlier immigrants from Taiwan use the term 'Formosan' in reference to the name 'Formosa' given to the island by the Portuguese, meaning 'beautiful island', as a means to distinguish themselves from immigrants from China.

Pacific; the Hoklo (fulao)<sup>5</sup> who started in the 16th century to migrate in large numbers from the coastal areas of southern Fujian province in mainland China (Ahern & Gates, 1981), together with the Hakka (kejia) from northeastern Guangdong province and the hilly areas of southern Fujian province (Constable, 1996; Leung 1999); and finally a small group of political refugees from various places in mainland China, who arrived together in 1949 after the collapse of the Nationalist regime and are called the "Mainlanders" (daluren).<sup>6</sup>

The aborigines, also called mountain people by the other occupants of Taiwan, are actually a very diverse group of different tribes of various Malayo-Polynesian origins. They have lived on Taiwan for 12,000 to 15,000 years and engaged in slash and burn agriculture as well as hunting. Today, this group accounts for under 2% of the total population of Taiwan. The Hoklo and Hakka were originally sent by the Ming Dynasty who wanted more control over the Pirates who roamed the area. Larger numbers of immigrants from Fujian and Guangdong provinces followed when the Qing dynasty (the Manchus, Man-Chinese) took over Taiwan as part of China in 1682 after overthrowing the last stronghold of the Ming dynasty on the island, established by Zheng Cheng-Gong (spelled 'Koxinga' in the Min language) (Thornton and Lin 1994: 58). Immigration continued during the 17th, 18th and early 19th century. The majority of immigrants were from Fujian province (i.e., were Hoklo people). Their descendants continue to communicate in southern Min, the dialect of Fujian. The Hakka, who's name literally means 'guest people', referring to the fact that they had migrated to Guangdong and Fujian from northern provinces in China during previous centuries, came in smaller numbers.<sup>7</sup> They speak a separate dialect, Hakka.

At first, ethnic differences between the migrants were strengthened by their varying ecological adaptations to Taiwan. The Hoklo cultivated the lowlands and the Hakka continued to settle in the foothills and slightly mountainous regions, specifically around Gaoxiong, Xinchu and Miaoli, which resembled their previous environment in the mountains of the border region of Guangdong, Fujian and Jiangxi province on the mainland (Leong 1999: 75). Over time, modernization on Taiwan, including industrialization, literacy, mass communication, entertainment, social

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<sup>5</sup>The Hoklo are also known as "Hokkien." Hoklo refers to the people (see next footnote) while Hokkien refers to the region of origin. It is actually the word in Min language (Hokkien language) for the province of Fujian.

<sup>6</sup>The mandarin Chinese, Hokkien and Hakka language terms for the three groups of migrants from China are: 福老 ('fulao' or 'hoklo') = Hokkien people, 客家 ('kejia' or 'hakka') = Guest people, Hakka; and 大陆人 (daluren) = people from the mainland. The first word in brackets refers to the mandarin Chinese version, the second word is the transcription of the Min language word for each group. The Min language, 闽 (min), is also known as 'Southern Min' and as 福建话 (fujian hua) = language of Fujian.

<sup>7</sup>On the history of Hakka, who are migrants from northern China to the southern province, i.e., guest people see Constable 1996 and Leong 1999.

interaction, and especially inter-marriage, but also the advent of the Mainlanders in 1949, has eroded many distinctions between the Hoklo and Hakka (Martin 1996: 177).<sup>8</sup> Together they account for 84% of the present population of Taiwan, or 18 million in 1997 (U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Asian and Pacific Affairs 1999).

The Mainlanders, which number 3 million inhabitants and constitute 14% of the total population of Taiwan, are themselves far from being a culturally or linguistically homogenous group. Although the Nationalist party members among this group established the government of Taiwan after their separation from Communist China and declared standard Chinese (guoyu), which resembles the standard Chinese in present day mainland China (putong hua) as the official language, that is, the 'national dialect',<sup>9</sup> many Mainlanders actually associate themselves with different places of origin. They claim distinct identities such as Shandongnese, Cantonese, Hunanese, etc.<sup>10</sup> Interestingly, many older mainlanders speak the national language (guoyu) with a rather heavy accent and mostly communicate in their regional language (e. g. Cantonese).

In addition to language barriers between the four different groups, there is the tradition of self-organization into a segmentary structure based on sets of binary distinctions of opposition and competition in Taiwan.<sup>11</sup> Although none of the resulting groups ever sought to become an independent entity, they served as flexible modes of identification (DeGlopper 1995: 105). First there is the main distinction between migrants from China and aborigines. Then, the migrants were divided into Hoklo and Hakka, who speak mutually unintelligible southern Chinese languages. The Hoklo majority in turn, was divided into common origin groups of people who had come from either one of two counties of Chuan (chuan zhou) and Zhang (zhang zhou) in Fujian province (DeGlopper 1995: 92). When the last group of migrants, the Mainlanders, arrived, another binary distinction was crafted, which continues to be significant until today. The population of Taiwan

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<sup>8</sup> This is supported by the fact that the boundaries between Hakka and Hoklo are fuzzy to members and outsiders alike. The percentage rate for Hakka people living in Taiwan varies significantly depending on the definition of Hakka. Most consistently it is listed as 13-15% of the total population (with estimates for the Hoklo at around 60%). The number is much higher when including all who are Hakka by paternal origin and much lower when considering only Hakka speaking people (Chu 1998).

<sup>9</sup> The different Chinese languages are often referred to as "dialects." However, they do not fulfill the criteria of dialects which calls for dialects to be mutually intelligible versions of a language. In fact, the differences between Min Chinese and Standard Chinese are more prominent than the differences between Spanish and Italian.

<sup>10</sup> It is customary in mainland China and Taiwan alike to ask people for the location of their 老家 (laojia) = "old home", their original place of descent, where their ancestors lived. People answer by naming the province and regional area within which informs others about their affiliation and identity. In Taiwan newborns are registered as people coming from the ancestral province of their father. In addition, there is also a separate ethnic group of "Hui Chinese" who get their distinction through their Muslim faith.

<sup>11</sup> See discussion of the segmentary structure of traditional Chinese society in chapter 2.

distinguishes between 'people from this land' (bendiren) and the others who are 'from outside of the province of Taiwan' (waishengren) (i.e., the Mainlanders).<sup>12</sup>

Although there might be reason to assume that over time the distinction between local Taiwanese and outsiders might disappear as the number of people born in mainland China declined, at first this was not the case, since the differences between the ruling minority and the subordinate majority were profound in terms of language, customs and lifestyles. Until the 1980's the population was not allowed to publically speak about the existence of ethnic conflict on Taiwan, which in turn further deepened ethnic divisions. Change was initiated by the international shift of diplomatic recognition of mainland China as opposed to Taiwan as the sole representative of "China" beginning in 1974. Mainlanders in Taiwan had to reevaluate the meaning of being "Chinese" in Taiwan (Wu 1997: 113).

In addition, the increasing strength of the Taiwanese economy had brought affluence to many non-Mainlanders who became influential in the government, asking for more participation in political decision making and autonomy for Taiwan as a nation. Visible political shifts appeared with the introduction of the DPP, the Democratic Progressive Party (minjindang), as an alternative to the KMT, the ruling nationalist party, in elections in the late 1980's. This has continued through 1996 with the election of the first local president, Lee Teng-Hui albeit a candidate of the KMT, and in 2000 with the election of a local candidate of the DPP, Cheng Shui-Bian. In the meantime, the majority has stressed Taiwanese traditions and identity, and even the use of the Min language.<sup>13</sup> The overall orientation towards Chinese culture has been replaced by an invitation of everything western, modern and international (Wu 1997: 114). Pop culture, fast-food, movies and music from western countries, most notably the United States, have found a wide audience and inspired many imitations.

Nevertheless, while the population of Taiwan has developed a distinct identity as Taiwanese people by the end of the last century, the matter continues to be complicated for immigrants from Taiwan who have arrived in the United States at different points in time over the course of the

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<sup>12</sup> 本地人 (ben di ren) = people from the local soil, and 外地人 (wai sheng ren) = people from outside of the province.

<sup>13</sup> Generally speaking, older Mainlanders lack the ability to speak Min, while Hakka are usually fluent in both Hakka (kehua) and Min (minnanhua). However, exceptions to this assumption become more and more frequent among younger Mainlanders under age 45 years of age. A few of them have picked up the Min language while going to school with Taiwanese classmates. As the political landscape changes in Taiwan, more and more ethnic Chinese are learning to speak Min to have a competitive advantage in business and running for public office (Shambaugh 1998) However, speaking Min is not a general skill of most ethnic Chinese born in Taiwan who immigrated to the United States.

respective identity developments in Taiwan. The definition of what it means to be Taiwanese differs even among those immigrants from Taiwan to the United States who were considered local Taiwanese in Taiwan. Some recognize only speakers of the Min language (i.e., southern Min or Hokkien) as Taiwanese people. Others refer to the descendants of both early Hoklo and Hakka settlers as those who are culturally Taiwanese. Yet others consider themselves to be culturally Chinese since their distant ancestors had originated from China. They are content with the identification as members of Chinese culture in general (huaren), but not as immigrants hailing from mainland China (zhongguo ren) (Tu 1998: 89).<sup>14</sup> In addition, some descendants of Mainlanders in Taiwan have begun to refer to themselves as Taiwanese due to the fact that they were born on Taiwan or are the children of a mixed marriage.

The literature presents different opinions about the relationship between mainland Chinese, Hoklo and Hakka and the differences between the groups of immigrants from Taiwan and China. Scholars of Chinese culture often consider Chinese people to form one large ethnic group, the Han-Chinese, with several ethnic subgroups, including the Hakka, Hoklo, Shanghainese, Cantonese, etc.<sup>15</sup> The term "subethnicity" is used to represent this notion (see among others Lamley 1981, Honig 1992, DeGlopper 1995, Luk 2001). In this respect, subgroups such as the Hoklo and Hakka are also known as 'regional speech groups' within the Chinese people differentiated by way of language (Honig 1992).<sup>16</sup> However, these 'speech groups' overlap to some extent with the western notion of ethnicity (Crissman 1967: 188). Therefore, other scholars support the self-representation of the people and their popular opinion. They define ethnic groups

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<sup>14</sup> 华人 huaren, is used by people of Chinese descent all over the world as self-description, meaning "ethnic Chinese" The word 华 (hua) is the ancient indigenous name for China. However, since that includes Chinese people from Singapore, Malaysia and other places in East Asia as well. In contrast, people use the term 中国人 (zhongguo ren) to refer to people from China, specifically mainland China. For political reasons in relation to threats of a Communist takeover of Taiwan, some immigrants from Taiwan would rather not be associated as "mainland Chinese".

<sup>15</sup> Western scholars give Chinese people the prefix 汉 (Han), as Han-Chinese as an indicator of their nationality (ethnicity) based on the period of the Han Dynasty starting in 212 BC which followed the first widespread unification of the groups living in the present-day territory of China. This corresponds with the traditional Chinese notion of 民族 (minzu), meaning nationality, that is also the official use for differentiation by the government of the People's Republic of China. According to this distinction, other ethnic groups/nationalities are, for example, Tibetans, Manchus, Miao, Uigurs... etc. The Hakka and Hoklo are merely speech groups, but not a separate ethnic group.

<sup>16</sup> The older literature on immigration from China and overseas Chinese communities distinguishes five speech groups among immigrants from the regions of southeast Asia alone. They are the Hoklo people, the Hakkas, the Teochiu people from northeast Guangdong, the Cantonese from central Guangdong province, and the Hainanese from Hainan Island (see Skinner 1958, Willmott 1970). Before the turn of the century these speech groups were based on common native place of origin and identical with secret societies in overseas Chinese communities which served their members but refrained from integrating Chinese of different descent.

according to their separate identities based on native place of origin and language (Crissman 1967, Skinner 1957, Constable 1996).

Obviously, the identity of immigrants from Taiwan in the United States, who may or may not call themselves 'Taiwanese Americans', is complex, has fluid boundaries, and is continuously evolving. Self-ascriptions are subject to change. This study distinguishes ethnicity according to its most widespread use among informants. Descendants of Hoklo and Hakka groups living in the United States frequently used the terms 'bendiren' (people from this land) and 'waishengren' (people from outside of the province) to describe differences. Descendants of Mainlanders used the English terms 'Chinese people' for themselves and 'Taiwanese people' when referring to others of Hoklo and Hakka origin in their statements. Immigrants are aware of differences, but generally group Hoklo and Hakka together. Informants felt very strongly about the difference in culture between the Taiwanese and the Chinese which warrants treatment as separate ethnic groups in accordance with the definition of self-ascription as put forth by Barth (Barth 1969: 13). Therefore the remainder of this study frequently employs the terms 'ethnic Chinese' and 'ethnic Taiwanese' to portray immigrants from Taiwan.

### **Political and Economic Influences Prior to Emigration**

Since ethnic identity in Taiwan used to be associated with assumptions about occupations and social class, a few notes on other influences immigrants have received while living in Taiwan are in order. Prior to widespread modernization and urbanization, the stereotypical assumption was that Taiwanese had greater wealth due to entrepreneurial activities, while Mainlanders had more access to political positions in response to their employment in government, military, and education (Gates 1987: 57, Greenhalgh 1984).

Within a short period of time Taiwan has changed from a rural, agricultural society into a highly urbanized industrial society, accompanied by drastic demographic changes. (Thornton and Lin 1994, Wu 1997). The first major change came with the Japanese occupation, from 1895 to 1945, when Taiwan benefited from learning better agricultural techniques. Taiwan had a close, self-sufficient economy during its pre-colonial period and the Japanese helped modernize and commercialize agriculture, simplified the land tenure system and stabilized taxes. However, the resulting population increase put extreme pressure on land use and the average person continued to live at the subsistence level (Thornton and Lin 1994: 61). Then, after the second world war, the

Mainlanders helped to overcome the reliance on agriculture. As a result, growth and expansion in industrial production was the major agent of social change.

For the first two decades after the Japanese withdrawal, the economy in Taiwan was worse than under Japanese occupation. Nevertheless, certain developments during this time set the stage for later economic expansion. After a brief economic orientation towards the mainland, Taiwan relied on the production of basic market products and American aid. In 1949 the Nationalist government implemented an agricultural land reform which ordered the landlords to give up some of their land in return for government bonds and shares in government-owned industries. The rural power structure was transferred from landlords and lineage organizations to individual farmers (Thornton and Lin: 65). It also created a new upper class of industrialists among the Taiwanese (Gates 1981: 270). Parallel to the investment in rural and urban industries, petty commodity production continued such as in ownership of stores, snack shops, restaurants, and home production of light industry goods (Gates 1992: 180).

Another result of the land reform in combination with the continuously high fertility rate was that many young people left the fields in search of opportunities outside of agriculture. Many households began to rely on additional non-agricultural income. Increased earnings were then able to buy the new domestic products and improved the standard of living. (DeGlopper 1995: 121). This was the beginning of a labor-intensive period in Taiwan which lasted until the world-wide economic recession of the early 1970's. Taiwan's large labor force attracted foreign investment. Reluctantly the Nationalist government succumbed to the pressures of the United States to open the economy to the outside world. Traditionally, economic growth independent of government control was viewed suspiciously by the Chinese ruling political hierarchy. However, out of fear of being cut off from foreign aid, Taiwan's rulers allowed capitalism in (Gates 1981: 272). The establishment of large, labor-intensive private enterprises and the influx of foreign capital helped create the rapid rise in exports and growth of industrial production (Thornton and Lin 1994: 74). Taiwan became an export economy and disposable income rose. New educational programs followed suite. More colleges and vocational schools with technical emphasis were founded. Women attended school in large numbers and a birth control program was implemented.

By the late 1980's the overall quality of life had increased, many people had achieved substantial wealth visible in the amount of consumer goods and the support of children in the form of longer and better education. The increase in incomes had created a large middle class and the overall income equality of the population improved. The changed proportions of household



expenditures reflects the improvement. Spending proportions declined continuously for food and increased steadily for housing, household items, transportation, communication, and especially recreational activities (Wu 1997, Thornton and Lin 1994: 84).

Two effects of this rapid change into a highly industrialized, economically stable society deserve closer attention, specifically the impact of the rural-urban migration on family structures and the impact of the new class structure on ethnic affiliations.

Migration from rural areas to the cities has made Taiwan an urbanized society. By the early 1980's, 69% of the total population lived in cities of 50,000 inhabitants or more, and 13% of them lived in the capital Taipei (Greenhalgh 1984: 531). It also brought a new and diversified set of strategies for traditional extended families in villages. In some cases the move of one son triggered a subsequent chain migration of the whole extended family and several related neighbors. In other cases, a son left with his immediate family and started a new life outside of the control of family and community. Indeed, for some Taiwanese, migration was the *"first opportunity to limit contact and relations"* with fellow villagers, relatives and their extended family (Gallin 1978: 279).

Not all individual migrants made such radical changes, some stayed involved in the web of obligations that comes with family membership (Greenhalgh 1984: 542). And others enlisted family members back home to take over the duties of ancestor worship (Gallin 1978: 268). However, the new economic conditions made interaction with family, lineage and village organizations a voluntary choice. This was especially possible for those who got employed in large corporations or the government, since they did no longer need to rely on family investments or family connections for their well-being.

The new city dwellers also reported less time for socializing compared to their life in the village. Work and individual advancement was the main goal resulting in lower degrees of social cohesiveness (Gallin 1978: 280). Kin and village based relationships continued to be important, but unfolded between individuals rather than in reference to groups. Lineage and common origin associations became less influential. However, the close relationships between individuals and their family members continued to play a crucial role for people engaged in petty capitalism or larger private-owned business enterprises. Despite the tangible wealth brought by the land reform, the rather archaic banking system in Taiwan made loans rather inaccessible. Family members, rotating credit unions founded by sets of neighbors, and the investment of a wife's dowry were the main means for getting ahead (Greenhalgh 1984: 551, Gates 1982).

Both strategies, keeping closely involved with family and village or freeing oneself from the tight control, have influenced the demographic trend towards the formation of nuclear families in the city (Parish 1978: 294-296). Economic opportunities made the Taiwanese more mobile and further decreased their dependence on family and community (Knapp 1971: 155, DeGlopper 1995). However, the principles of social interaction practiced at the village level, the formation of subgroups, the creation of overlapping alliances and the resulting wide-ranging networks, have served Taiwanese people well in the cities as well as overseas (DeGlopper 1995: 249).

Indeed, the movement started by the exodus from the villages did not stop at Taiwan's shores. For some family members moving to the city was merely a stepping stone towards eventual immigration to the United States. By taking advantage of the better educational system offered in Taiwan's urban areas they were in turn able to gain access to higher education and job opportunities in North America.

In Taiwan itself the industrialization and urbanization that has transpired since the second world war has also produced a new social system based on interrelationships of class and ethnicity (Gates 1981: 273). While the traditional society in Taiwan had been divided into landlords at the top, tenants and petty capitalists in the middle and farm workers at the bottom, Hill Gates identified five classes as a result of economic restructuring (Gates 1981). They are the proletariat of the unemployed and deviant; next comes the lower class including both Taiwanese and Chinese factory workers, Taiwanese non-land owning farm workers, and low-ranking Chinese soldiers. The third and fourth levels are at a par, the traditional Taiwanese middle class and the ethnically mixed new middle class. In combination the new face of middle class includes both educated small and medium size business owners and salary earning employees in government institutions, schools and large corporation (Chu 1996: 208-209). The fifth class is the upper class, which includes Taiwanese industrialists and Chinese high-ranking bureaucrats (Gates 1981: 278).

What made this a "new" system was that opportunities for upward mobility existed for both the lower class and the middle class and for both Chinese and Taiwanese. People in Taiwan identified two means for upward mobility, namely through engagement in commerce or in public service. It was once assumed that advancing through commercial activities was more attainable for the Taiwanese, since their ethnic affiliations and networks of friends and extended family members and their strong desire to improve their fortunes were instrumental in developing good business reputations, income and status (Greenhalgh 1984: 534). Mainland Chinese, on the other hand, were believed to have less kin obligations and to be not limited by attachment to a local

community. Therefore they could concentrate on educational advancement and placement in government institutions and corporations wherever they were needed (Greenhalgh 1984: 537).

While ethnic distinctions continue to exist for the older generations among upper class members, this no longer holds for the new middle class. The traditional middle class professions, such as ownership of a service industry operation, are now run by many mainland Chinese as well. Over the course of their 50 years living on Taiwan they have established wide ranging business contacts based on ties with family members, schoolmates, army buddies and association members. At the same time the new middle class professions which are solely based on educational attainment have also become accessible to the Taiwanese. Many of them have formed nuclear families and given up folk religion to lessen the impact of family and community obligations. In their quest for educational attainment and in order to ensure the success of their children, some have even ceased speaking Taiwanese at home (Gates 1981:278).

As a result, though both groups of ethnic affiliations presume themselves to be homogenous, class and ethnicity do not completely coincide. Many Taiwan citizens running their own businesses in trade or manufacturing are not much different in income and status from people employed as white-collar workers. Therefore the distinction between "rich" and "poor", "little people" and "those with connections and influence", as well as "those which are educated" (shouguo jiaoyu) and the "uneducated" is more often used in describing one's position in the social fabric of Taiwan than a reference to ethnicity (Gates 1987: 67).

These tendencies show that ethnic identification is at times emphasized and at times deemphasized depending on the class aspirations of an individual (Gates 1981: 265). Overall, the socioeconomic changes in Taiwan have brought the population less inequality, higher incomes and more access to higher education. At the turn of the millennium Taiwan has more to offer than in the previous decades. The decision making process involved in the continuous drive for advancement has also changed. However, the opportunities both inside and outside Taiwan have been evaluated differently throughout the 1960's, 70's, 80's and 90's. As one informant from this study, representative for many others, stated:

*"... not everyone in Taiwan wants to leave though. After all, people in Taiwan like to enjoy and indulge in good things.<sup>17</sup> Those who come here - they have to suffer - they have a hard time here - in Taiwan everyone wears great cloth and even if they go to the market they*

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<sup>17</sup> 挺享受 (ting xiangshou) = indulge very much.

*dress up - in high heels - there is quite a dress code - if you don't dress up - you count as someone who has no sense of respect." (informant #23)*

Indeed, why have people left and why do people continue to leave Taiwan despite the seemingly increasing number of opportunities in Taiwan and improved chances for attaining a middle-class lifestyle? A closer look at the specific group of informants in this study will shed some light on their rationales for immigration throughout the last four decades of the 20th century.

### **Who Migrated When? Demographic Profiles of Informants**

It is not possible to state conclusively how representative the sample of informants in this study is for the overall population of immigrants from Taiwan to cities in South Orange County. Suffice is to say that the selection resembles the average composition of participants at various community events, which range from fund-raisers to concerts to spring festival gatherings, association meetings and religious activities. In the following sections, the specific profile of informants is described.<sup>18</sup> The above listed tables on the proportion of immigrants from the most prominent sending countries and their distribution in selected counties of California may serve as a reference point.

#### **Gender, Age, and Ethnicity**

##### **Gender**

Among those immigrants in the study, 68% of informants for the structured core interviews were women and 32% were men. The proportions for all informants, including key informants and informants who provided data based on unstructured, semi-structured and structured interviews, were about 60% for women and 40% for men (see table 6.3). More men were interviewed in unstructured background interviews compared to the set of structured interviews due to the higher number of male informants who were leaders of their respective organizations in Orange County.

Although the larger proportion of female informants did not correspond with the exact proportion between all male and female immigrants in recent years to California, indeed more women migrate from Taiwan than men. The U.S. Bureau of the Census lists figures for female immigrants out of the total immigrant influx from specific countries of origin in 1996 at 62% for Japan, 59% for Mexico and 58% for the Philippines. Unfortunately Taiwan as a sending country is

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<sup>18</sup> Unless otherwise specified, the data refers to the information obtained from structured interviews (N=60).

not listed separately in this statistic (State of California, Department of Finance, 1999). However, there are a few general findings on the total immigrant population which provide some insights nonetheless. While the overall proportion of female immigrants in the year 1996 was only slightly above average, at 56%, men were more frequently 18 years old or younger at the time of immigration than women. In the age group of immigrants being over 25 years old, the proportion of female immigrants was much higher than that of male immigrants. *"The immigrant flow becomes predominantly female by age 20, much earlier and to a greater extent than for either California or the United States. During the main working ages, from age 20 until age 65, there are only about 70 males for each 100 female legal foreign immigrants in each age group* (State of California, Department of Finance 1999: 9).<sup>19</sup>

### **Ethnic affiliation**

As introduced above, three distinct ethnic groups of immigrants came from the mainland of China to the island of Taiwan. They are identified as 'Hoklo' (fulao), 'Hakka' (kejia) and 'mainland Chinese' (waidiren). Among the informants of this study, only a few self-identified as Hakka. Many of them were actually members of ethnically mixed marriages with either a ethnic Chinese or ethnic Taiwanese partner. Other than in Los Angeles County, there was no distinct organization of ethnic Hakka in South Orange County at the time of the study, with the exception of a Hakka Christian Fellowship group that is introduced in chapter 8. For the sixty structured interviews that elicited network data and biographical information, the proportions of Hoklo was 45% (46% of all informants), 8.3% Hakka (7% of all informants) and 46.7% for Chinese (47% of all informants). Table 6.2 shows the distribution of ethnic affiliation for all 112 first generation informants.<sup>20</sup>

**Table 6.2** Number of first generation informants listed by ethnic affiliation and gender

Ethnic affiliation	male	female	sum
Hoklo-Taiwanese	23	29	52
Hakka-Taiwanese	3	5	8
Chinese	19	33	52
sum	45	67	112*

\* N=112 refers to 3 key informants, 19 background informants, 60 informants of structured and 30 informants of semi-structured interviews.

<sup>19</sup> The predominance of women in the legal flow of immigrants stands in contrast to the flow of illegal immigrants, who are predominantly men, at least based upon apprehensions by the INS.

<sup>20</sup> A detailed breakdown of the different types of interviews is presented in chapter 4.

As elaborated in the section on identification above, most Hakka feel more closely related to the descendants of Hoklo than to the mainland Chinese. Therefore, for the remainder of the analysis the groups of Hoklo and Hakka are aggregated and referred to as 'ethnic Taiwanese'. Table 6.3 present the proportions of men and women in each aggregated ethnic group in which informants are affiliated. Table 6.4 shows the proportions of ethnic group members among the subsets of male and female informants.

**Table 6.3 Distribution of gender within each ethnic group**

Ethnic group	male (in %)	female (in %)	sum (N=112)
Taiwanese (Hoklo and Hakka)	43.3	56.7	100
Chinese	36.5	63.5	100
all informants	40.2	59.8	100

**Table 6.4 Distribution of ethnic affiliation by gender**

gender	Taiwanese (in %)	Chinese (in %)	sum (N= 112)
male informants	57.8	42.2	100
female informants	50.7	49.3	100
all informants	53.6	46.4	100

### **Age of informants and length of residence in the United States**

All 112 informants were first generation immigrants. At the time of fieldwork they all were between 35 and 77 years of age. The year of reference for reporting the age of informants is 1998. The average age of female informants was 47 years, while the average age of males was 53 years. For male informants, 75% were between 40 and 60 years of age. The majority of female informants, 88%, were between 35 and 55 years of age. The average age at emigration for the entire sample was around 30 years of age. Men migrated earlier in life, with an average age of 27, both for ethnic Taiwanese and Chinese. Women migrated at an average age of 31, whereas ethnic Chinese women migrate earlier (28 years of age) compared with ethnic Taiwanese women (34 years of age). This reflects the fact that many Mainlanders continued their migration from mainland China to Taiwan eventually moving to the United States for reasons of entering a university or finding immediate employment. Ethnic Taiwanese who migrated at a young age were mostly men who came to attend a university in the United States and therefore arrived on their own without a family. Eventually these students married at a later date in Taiwan and their wives

arrived in the United States at a somewhat older age. There were also more ethnic Taiwanese than ethnic Chinese who decided to emigrate once they had accumulated the necessary finances in Taiwan as discussed more fully below.

To establish a valid comparison between ethnic groups and gender in terms time spent in the United States it is initially helpful to look at the time informants have lived in the United States in absolute terms. The sample of informants reflects the overall trend of immigration from Taiwan to the United States as demonstrated above. None of the male informants from either ethnic group has lived in the United States for less than 10 years. The average number of years was 24 for male informants. In comparison, the average number of years female informants has spent in the United States was 16. Looking at both genders combined, ethnic Taiwanese have spent 17 years and ethnic Chinese have spent 20 years on average in America.

More important than the absolute amount of time informants have lived in North America is the proportion of one's lifetime spent in the United States. This variable, the lifetime proportion, is calculated as the number of years lived in the United States divided by age. The time span is expressed as a percentage. The lifetime proportion for the sample of immigrants ranges from 2% to 68%. Female immigrants tended to have spent less time in the United States as a proportion of their total life when compared to male immigrants. On average, women have lived in North America for 34% of their life time ( $sd=0.151$ ) and men 45% ( $sd=0.145$ ). Ethnic Chinese have spent an average of 41% of their lifetime in the United States, while ethnic Taiwanese an average of 35%. This reflects the fact that in general, ethnic Chinese arrived in the United States in larger numbers during and before the 1960's than the ethnic Taiwanese. As alluded to earlier, many of these Mainlanders engaged in a series of migration strategies in 1949 after fleeing mainland China as a result of the communist takeover (Huang 1997).

### **Family Structure: Marital Status, Children, and the Extended Family**

The family composition of informants is an important component of immigrant life. With few exceptions, most first generation informants were married. Arranged marriage was very common among earlier waves of immigrants who came in the 1960's and 1970's, usually to study in the United States. Moreover, all informants were married to spouses who themselves grew up in Taiwan.<sup>21</sup> A small number of informants were divorced or widowed and lived alone. Though

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<sup>21</sup>In a study on immigrants who came to the United States to attend graduate school, Chang found that 90% were married and 83% of their spouses were Chinese or Taiwanese as well (Chang 1992: 30).

divorce is still rare among the older cohorts of Taiwanese and Chinese immigrants it might increase in the near future. Since industrialization and urbanization in Taiwan has caused the society to move farther away from traditional gender role expectations, the greater acceptance of divorce has followed suite (Thornton and Lin 1994: 202 ff.).

### 'Astronaut' spouses

A large subset of immigrants from Taiwan faced a different challenge to their marital relationships. Many couples lived in separate residences. The wife and children stayed in the United States, while the husband lived and worked in Taiwan, mainland China, or elsewhere in Southeast Asia in pursuit of income to support their families abroad. The frequency of husband's visits to the United States depended on occupational demands and the nature of the relationship between husband and wife. A detailed discussion of the type and frequency of communication between geographically separated families and its influence on social interactions is presented in chapter 7.

However, residential separation did not occur where gender roles were reversed. It was uncommon for the husband to stay in the United States and the wife to permanently reside and work in Taiwan. As evident in table 6.5 the proportion of married informants whose spouse lived in Taiwan was exclusively female. Exceptions to this arrangement, as reported by informants, were cases of divorce in which the woman returned to Taiwan and her former husband continued to live and work in the United States. In another example of a possible reversal, the wife of a couple residing together in the United States may have spent several months in Taiwan looking after an ailing parent or sibling.

The phenomenon of families living in two separate countries is particular wide-spread among recent immigrants from East Asia. Immigrants call these traveling heads of household 'astronauts' (taikongren) in reference to their frequent time in the air in transit between North American and East Asia.<sup>22</sup> The term allegedly was first coined in Hong Kong, pronounced 'taihungyan' in Cantonese, to capture the tendency of upper middle class and upper class Hongkongnese who,

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<sup>22</sup> 太空人 (tai kong ren) = astronaut, man suspended in wide open space. 太空 (taikong) means "outer space, universe". 人 (ren) stands for "man, person." The original Cantonese word uses the same characters but is pronounced different: "tai hung yan" (transcription in Pin-yin). The expression is also used for puns regarding the notion of being without a wife, since 太 (tai) is part of the word 太太 (taitai) meaning "wife" (see also footnotes 63 and 64 for related puns). Further relations link the expression to 'parachute kids', who are dropped off over Southern California by their astronaut parents, 空投 (kongtou) = dropped off over open space, parachutes.



while still working in Hong Kong, sent their families to live in Canada in preparation for the communist takeover in 1997 (Asiaweek June 16th, 1997).<sup>23</sup> International commuting has become widespread in the 1990's among Taiwanese and Chinese already living in North America. This can be seen in part as an adaptive strategy to the restructuring and downsizing of companies, research cutbacks and economic recessions in Canada and the United States (Cheng and Yang 1996: 305-306, Davison 1998, Wong 1998:87, Zhou 1998: 684, Ong 1999).

However, informants in this study, who started their immigration experience as late as the 1990's, all decided prior to emigration to set up astronaut households. In these families, the main breadwinner did not attempt to find adequate or comparable employment in the United States, but continued to generate their main income in Asia. Whereas previous research has shown that many recent immigrants tend to return to their country of origin and even their former jobs after failure in North America (see Wong and Salaff 1998, Salaff 2002, Hiebert 1999 and 2000 for studies on middle class immigrant experience in Canada), the particular group of informants in this study skipped this step with respect to their immigration strategy.<sup>24</sup>

Established immigrants and newcomers alike had a difficult time making sense of the new family dynamics and its consequences. Informants would frequently make fun of the situation considered unpleasant by both, those who experienced separation and those who observed the effects of separation on friends or fellow association members. In reference to the classic proverb 'the man is responsible for outside affairs of the household and the woman is responsible for the inner affairs' (nan zai wai, nü zai nei),<sup>25</sup> they rephrase it as 'the man is in Taiwan and the woman is in America' phenomenon (wai zai tai, nei zai mei).<sup>26</sup> The significance of the phrase lies in the allusion to the classic notion of male and female role expectations using the word 'wai' which translates into the 'outside representation of the household' to stand as the word for 'man'. 'Nei' translates into the 'inside representation of the household' and stands for 'woman'.<sup>27</sup> The rhyme of

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<sup>23</sup> Many social scientists in the field of immigration studies have picked up the "astronaut" metaphor and write about the "astronaut syndrome" (Beal and Sos 2000, Waters 2000) and female headed astronaut households (Skeldon 1996: 448).

<sup>24</sup> Immigration officials in New Zealand and Australia have dealt with the "astronaut syndrome" and its impact on family structure, child development and local communities and put out several publications to this effect (see internet for information). For both countries the phenomenon is more visible than in Canada and especially North America since they only recently began to receive large cohorts of immigrants from Taiwan. Among recent immigrants the practice of setting up astronaut households is particularly wide-spread.

<sup>25</sup> 男在外女在内 (nan zai wai, nu zai nei) = men are outside, women are inside.

<sup>26</sup> 外在台内在美 (wai zai tai, nei zai mei) = the outside is in Taiwan, the inside is in America.

<sup>27</sup> See Linck 1989 for an extended discussion of the Chinese dichotomy of male and female roles in the traditional family as they are separated by assigned activities related to the outside and the inside world of a residence.

the two sets of words 'wai'/ 'tai' ('outside' and 'Taiwan'), and 'nei'/ 'mei' ('inside' and 'America') turns it into a pun and gives it added meaning. Informants always chuckled at the obviousness of the 'nei'/ 'mei' combination. 'Mei' means 'beautiful', America is the 'beautiful country' and naturally a woman's place is associated with the notion of a beautiful location.<sup>28</sup>

Another phrase is 'taidu fenzi', a label for those men who live separated from their wives in Taiwan as 'experts in independence'.<sup>29</sup> The word 'tai' here again refers to Taiwan, and the word 'du' stands for 'alone, single, solitary'. The combination 'fenzi' by itself means 'member, belongs to (xy) organization'. This ending is often used to attach a distinct social label, such as intellectuals (zhishi fenzi) or political activists (jiji fenzi). However, the phrase gets an added twist when expressing the phoneme 'tai' with a different character and tone direction as the word for 'tai-tai', which stands for 'Mrs.' and 'wife of'.<sup>30</sup> 'Taidu fenzi' then means 'group of men separated from their wives'.<sup>31</sup> Using it this way such men are categorized as 'loners' or 'the lonely guys'. Independent of the specific interpretation, astronauts are classified as a unique group. This group assignment fits right into the practice of binary distinctions in Chinese culture. Thus, there are 'astronaut families' and 'complete families' among immigrants from Taiwan.

**Table 6.5 Marital status and residential location of spouse of first generation informants**

	all informants (in %, N=112)	informants of structured interviews (in %, N=60)
married, spouse lives in the United States	57	51.7
married, spouse lives in Taiwan	33.3	40
divorced or widowed	7	6.6
never been married	2.7	1.7

### The role of children

One of the main reasons for family separation was the desire to provide children with a better quality of life. Indeed, children were and are a central part of the immigration experience, since they were often the original motivation for emigration. Only a very small number of the 112 informants, a total of 4 individuals, had no children. This reflects a central theme in Chinese

<sup>28</sup> 美 (mei) = beautiful, is part of the word 美国 (meiguó) = the beautiful country, America.

<sup>29</sup> 台独分子 (tai du fenzi) = Taiwan - alone (independent, orphaned) - "expert".

<sup>30</sup> 太太 (taitai) = wife, madame, Mrs. The repetition of the same characters points to a modern Chinese word creation.

<sup>31</sup> 太独分子 (tai du fenzi) = wife - alone (independent, orphaned) - "expert".

culture that the family is the core unit of social life. Having children is a primary goal for a Chinese person (Greenhalgh 1984, Fei 1990, Ahern 1991, Saso 1999). However, informants had on average only two children. Families with one child constituted 12.5% of all informants, families with two children were 58% of all informants, those with 3 children 11% and those with 4 children 15%. The family size of informants was much smaller relative to the size of families in which they grew up in Taiwan. This is a partly a function of changed values as a result of modernization, the achievement of higher economic status, and the immigration experience itself (Greenhalgh 1984: 552). Informants who immigrated early in life cited the lack of family support for raising children and the costs of higher education in the United States as reasons for having only one or two children. Families who had three or more children were all born in Taiwan prior to immigration.

Children were another indication of an informants' position in the life cycle. Their age, as reflected in children's grade level, can be important for understanding the role children play in an informants' life.<sup>32</sup> Most of the women in the study were not the primary breadwinners of the household. Further, many did not work at all and those who had only pre-highschool age children did not join community association with the possible exception of their children's Chinese language school and parent supervision or support groups related to their children's activities. Once children were in highschool they were allowed to attend events on their own, learn how to drive their own cars or have friends who can shuttle them around.

*"Most of the ladies here - if they have 2 or 3 kids they can't do much else - they are busy, because the kids need to be driven around. There is no time for yourself. Only in the morning you have time - but in the afternoon you have to start cooking. If the children are older you have more time. But the young ones - you have to run a lot and facilitate a lot. They have to study so much on the side." (informant #23)*

Since many informants had more than one child, it was instructive to look at the level of education of the youngest child as a point of reference. The rationale here is that as long as parents have a younger child that needs supervision and transportation, they had less time to engage in out-of-home activities and were less likely to join different community organizations. The various samples were biased towards immigrants who participated in the public space and interacted with others at association and at community events. Indeed, in the sample of selected informants, the number of parents with children in elementary or junior highschool was underrepresented.

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<sup>32</sup>Children attending elementary school are between 6 and 11 years of age, junior high school students are 11 to 14 years of age and high school students between 15 and 18 years old. College students are between 18 and 22 years old.

Consequently, the number of informants with children in highschool or college tended to be overrepresented in the sample.

The effects of this selection criteria can be viewed in the following manner. Indeed, female informants were more likely to join community organizations and undertake activities when the youngest child was in highschool or even college.<sup>33</sup> In contrast, male informants were actively involved even if they had children in elementary school. This is also an indication that most men in the sample became fathers after emigration. Furthermore, offering children a highschool education in America was one of the main incentives for emigration among those informants who did not arrive as university students. Their children were usually Taiwan-born and had received part of their earlier years of schooling in Taiwan. This group of children fits neither the description of first generation immigrants who left Taiwan only after completion of their basic education nor the second generation immigrants who were born and raised in America (Rumbaut 1994). Since these children came to the United States in the midst of their personal development, usually between the ages of five and twelve, they are called the 'in-between generation', or '1.5 generation' of immigrants (Zhou 1998). They are caught between two cultural influences, their parents' culture and the culture of their adolescence in the United States.

Some informants had older children who remained in Taiwan. This applied only for families with three or more children. In some of these cases, a family had two older and two younger children. While the older children stayed in Taiwan to complete their education or enter the job market, the mother left Taiwan with the younger children in order to provide them with an American education. It had not been feasible for the older children to attend American schools at a comparable age since the household lacked the financial resources during that period of its development.

*"After the first 2 were born - when there was more time in later years, when the children were around 8, 9 years old, I was able to get pregnant again. Before that we were so busy with setting up the business and my husband and I - we didn't spend much time together - maybe because of the stress of children and work, there was not much excitement to share."  
(informant #74)*

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<sup>33</sup> This finding does not support studies on the number of membership affiliations among white middle class residents in America's Midwest who found that women do join associations other than those related to their children's activities and in addition change the affiliations rather frequently (Knoke and Thomson 1977, Rotolo 2000). Membership fluctuation among ethnic Chinese and Taiwanese is addressed in chapter 8.

**Table 6.6 Informants' position in the lifecycle according to educational grade level of children**

grade level	male informants (in %)		female informants (in %)	
	Taiwan born children	U.S. born children	Taiwan born children	U.S. born children
elementary school	0	23	0	3
junior highschool	2	0	2	7
highschool	8	12	27	17
college	8	29	27	10
hold jobs	6	12	7	0
sum	24	76	63	37

note: 50% of informants had Taiwan born children, 47% had U.S. born children, 3% (2 female informants) had no children at the time of the study.

The ability of children to speak their parents' language varied by their place of birth and age at emigration. In addition, ethnic Taiwanese parents had to make a choice which language to promote at home, Taiwanese or standard Chinese. Many Taiwanese parents of American born children decided to encourage the acquisition of standard Chinese because most of the Chinese language schools in the area did not offer Taiwanese classes.<sup>34</sup> The ability of speaking standard Chinese was also thought to be an investment for future job opportunities in the global market place. Taiwan born children of ethnic Taiwanese immigrants usually spoke Taiwanese better than standard Chinese, since Taiwanese was spoken in the home and most did not attend Chinese language schools where they could practice standard Chinese. Eventually some chose Chinese language classes on their own once they began their college education.

Of all the children born in Taiwan, 80% continued to speak their native languages fluently. Depending on the language spoken at home they either maintained Taiwanese or standard Chinese language skills, while losing total fluency in the other language. Most could speak but not write the language anymore. Children who immigrated before they reached the age of six, the time at which they would have entered elementary school in Taiwan, usually lost their ability to be fluent in their native language due to the demands of learning a new language. They were able to

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<sup>34</sup> Parents of Hakka origin did encourage their children to learn standard Chinese. There were usually not enough Hakka speakers around to provide language exposure. Many ethnic Hakka were not married to spouses who were Hakka speakers, so the language was not spoken at home.

understand and take part in basic conversations, but preferred to speak English at home. This was often encouraged by parents who wanted their offspring to catch up in school as quickly as possible. In contrast, 80% of the U.S. born children spoke Chinese or Taiwanese only at a rudimentary level, which caused their parents much distress. Despite enrollment in Chinese language schools, it was not an easy task for parents to ensure their children's language maintenance.<sup>35</sup>

### **Residential location of parents and extended family members**

The location of parents and siblings in either the United States or Taiwan influenced the composition and structure of social networks as well as the frequency of travel to Taiwan as discussed in chapter 7. Informants with at least one parent still living in Taiwan constituted 67% of the sample of structured interviews (N=60); 13% of informants had no living parents. Though a mere 20% of these informants had parents living in the United States, differences between ethnic groups were apparent. Only one quarter of informants with parents residing in the United States were ethnic Taiwanese. The majority of informants in this subset was of ethnic Chinese origin.

Many informants were not the only members of their extended family who immigrated to the United States. In some instances a person was sponsored by a brother or sister or a sibling of his or her spouse to enter the United States. In other cases, it was the informant who applied on behalf of members of his or her own family or a spouses extended family to become a permanent resident of the United States. Several ethnic Chinese had a slightly different strategy. After one child had immigrated, the parents first obtained citizenship and then sponsored the arrival of the remaining children, which sped up the process considerably, since children are given priority over siblings by the rules of the Immigration and Naturalization Service. There were also informants who arrived on student or business visas and never had any other sibling, cousin or nephew requesting sponsorship. They were the only members of their families to come to the United States.

Analysis shows that the occurrence of sponsorship is a function of the birth order of an informant and his or her spouse. Individuals who were the first or second born child in their families were more likely than informants who were the youngest to sponsor the entry of family members to the United States. Interestingly, many of the immigrants who were the first members

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<sup>35</sup> The distribution of language skills among informants' children is as follows: 6.7% were fluent in Taiwanese, 26.7% were fluent in standard Chinese. Mandarin: 26.7%, and 18.3% were both fluent in Taiwanese and Mandarin. In addition, 10% had rudimentary skills in Taiwanese, 33.3% had rudimentary skills in Mandarin, and 5% spoke both rudimentary Taiwanese and Mandarin.

of their family to enter the United States, usually to attend American universities, were either the last sibling or second to last in their families. This reflects changes in economic conditions in Taiwan. While older siblings had to contribute to the family income in the 1950's and 60's, the younger ones had more opportunities to advance themselves through education (see Greenhalgh 1984 who confirms some of these strategies among Taiwanese families). Most of the informants of this study had grown up in large families. The average number of siblings in such families was 4.7 (sd= 2.05) and ranged from 1 to 10 siblings (see Thornton and Lin 1994: 50 on comparable data from Taiwanese statistics). In middle-class families in Taiwan, including those who had achieved middle-class status over time, the older siblings were less interested in leaving their life style behind and beginning all over again once their younger siblings were able to sponsor their immigration to the United States

*"All my brothers and sisters are still there and I call them quite often. We are nine siblings. I am the youngest. But they don't want to come here. They were educated in Japan. They speak Japanese - they cannot survive here. They come here just for visiting."* (informant #30)

Since the majority of informants had some number of relatives living in the United States, table 6.7 presents a brief summary of the percentages of different relations. The relationship types cousins, nephews and siblings, parents are listed separately. Percentages are displayed by differentiating between some (one or two siblings) and all (no sibling left in Taiwan) family members of informants and their spouses.

**Table 6.7 Proportion of extended family members of informants living in the United States**

A. Extended family members other than parents

no relatives of either spouse or informant in United States	12%
cousin or nephew of either spouse or informant in the United States	13%
some or all extended family members of spouse in the United States	15%
some members of informant's extended family and some or all members of spouse's family in the United States	42%
all of informant's extended family members and some or all family members of spouse in the United States	18% (5% Taiwanese, 13% Chinese)

B. Parents (of informants, not spouses)

parents deceased	13%
parents living in Taiwan	67% (42% Taiwanese, 25% Chinese)
parents living in the United States	20% ( 5% Taiwanese, 15% Chinese)

Again, it is clear that ethnic Chinese were more likely to settle as complete extended families in the United States. Many lacked extensive roots in Taiwan, either in the form of personal or ownership relations. In contrast, ethnic Taiwanese reported a larger number of relatives still living in Taiwan. However, many of these Taiwanese families had undergone transformation as well. Exposure to urbanization in Taiwan cities after leaving rural areas in search of jobs had already shaped the size of many families prior to immigration to North America (Gallin 1978).

*"My family is small - because they moved from Tainan to Taipei when I was little and so the relatives go scattered to begin with." (informant #39)*

In this context it is also important to note that although relatives of informants lived in the United States and sponsored or had been sponsored by a sibling or parent, very few chose to live in close proximity to one another. Some informants who were sponsored by a cousin had only occasional contact with their kin, considering the relationship instrumental rather than intimate (see Chabot 1984: 285 for comparable observations in Hawaii). These arrangements influenced the nature of relationships between extended family members, as discussed in more detail in chapter 7.

### **Education and Occupation**

"The fuzzy concept of middle class should perhaps be replaced with the more precise categories of capitalists, professionals, and entrepreneurs each pursuing its own distinctive strategies of competition and resource accumulation" (Wong and Salaff 1998: 371).

### **Educational attainment**

The educational background of informants informs about the type and level of human capital they brought to their new home. The actual marketability of their acquired skills nevertheless depended on their ability to speak English and the number of jobs available in any given year. For this study the level education an informant achieved was important, but so too was the school he or she attended. The schools and universities in Taiwan are hierarchically ordered by level of difficulty. The most challenging schools provide a graduate with enormous prestige and recognition (Shaw 1996). In addition, according to Chinese cultural beliefs, shared identification with the same educational institution serves as a basis for the formation of relationships later in life, independent of actual contact while attending a particular school (Jacobs 1982).<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> See chapter 7 for further discussion of this phenomenon.



Most prestigious high schools, colleges and universities in Taiwan have chapters of alumni associations in Southern California. They stage annual meetings and offer several events including joint activities for members throughout the year. A comparison of educational attainment levels by affiliation with well-known high schools, colleges and universities in Taiwan reveals that attendance of these schools indeed predicts the educational success of informants in the United States. The proportion of informants with a graduate degree from an American university was higher for those who attended a famous alma mater in Taiwan. The relationship was significant for male informants ( $t(58) = 2.185, p < 0.05$ ), but even more noteworthy for female informants ( $t(58) = 5.335, p < 0.0001$ ).

Table 6.8 shows the distribution of educational achievements measured as the highest degree attained by informants. A few informants, all of which are female, completed only high school in Taiwan. Some informants graduated with a two year degree in Taiwan, which refers to the attendance of trade schools and vocational schools offering, for example, nursing degrees. A third level of educational attainment represents informants with bachelor degrees from a university in Taiwan. The last group signifies informants who obtained graduate degrees from North American universities, such as an MA, MBA or PhD degree, after graduation from a university in Taiwan.

**Table 6.8 Educational attainment of male and female informants**

Level of education	male informants (in %)	female informants (in %)	sum
Highschool in Taiwan	0	33	23
2-year vocational school in Taiwan	18	30	27
University in Taiwan	12	23	20
University in the United States (MA, MBA or PhD degree)	70	14	30
sum	100	100	100

Ethnic Taiwanese, in comparison to ethnic Chinese, had a higher number of university graduates, both from universities in Taiwan as well as universities in the United States. Thus, ethnic Taiwanese were more likely to rely on skills obtained in graduate school to finance their lifestyle, whereas ethnic Chinese were more likely to depend on employment in the service industry or their own businesses (see also distribution of occupations discussed below).

### English language skills

The ability to speak English varied among the sample of informants of structured interviews.<sup>37</sup> Three levels of skill were identified based on observations during the first phase of fieldwork. They are 'fluent in English, no significant accent', which applied to 30% of informants, 'fluent in English, very noticeable accent and occasional problems in finding a suitable word', represented by 38.3% of informants, and 'not fluent in English', as relevant for 31.7% of informants. The last category includes both people who had difficulties speaking and understanding English and people who may have understood English well but had difficulties speaking English. The second category reflects an important distinction, because noticeable accents and difficulties in expression had an influence on informants self-confidence in conversations with members of other ethnic groups.

None of the men had poor English skills. However, although 42% of male informants spoke almost accent-free English, the remaining 58% reported difficulties in being understood by colleagues at the workplace. Many attribute corporate America's lack of familiarity with accent-rich speech to the lack of promotion of first generation Asian Americans in large corporations. The experience of a 'glass ceiling' is partly blamed on the lack of appropriate English expressions, voice quality and body language (Fong 1998, Woo 1999).

*"Actually I wanted to teach before - but because of the language it wasn't so easy. If you apply for teaching, there will be more demands on language proficiency. Not like my job now - first it was laboratory job and now it's computers. So there is not much requirement for speaking ability. So I can't improve that much - and when I come home - we talk Taiwanese. I learned in Taiwan to speak English - but couldn't speak at all when I first came here - it took quite a while to pick it up." (informant #38)*

Women, on the other hand, accounted for all informants with no fluency in English. Many were at a comparative disadvantage because they had lived in the United States for shorter periods of time and lacked previous exposure to English given they had not attended an American university as did the majority of men. They often joined 'English as a second language' courses at adult schools to improve their English. However, most of the 46.3% of women who belonged to that category also reported that they had few opportunities and were most often challenged to speak English on a daily basis. Those among them who worked outside their homes were either

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<sup>37</sup> Evaluation of English skills was done by the researcher based on the informants' self-evaluation and the initial start of the interview which was conducted in English (see reference to language used in interviews in chapter 4). Evaluation of other informants was not attempted because no systematic use of English or Chinese had been employed in the course of the interviews.

employed in the ethnic economy (e.g., as beauticians or health food consultants) or worked part-time for their husband's business. As for the two other categories of English speaking abilities, 29.3% were fluent with a heavy accent and 24.4% had excellent English skills. Most of the women who spoke English very well employed in high paying jobs (e.g., investment banker, medical doctor, professor, computer programmer, chemist/research analyst).

### **Occupation**

The various jobs informants held at the time of fieldwork was consolidated into four categories. Many informants were professionals, a label which refers to educators (at both universities and schools), engineers, computer analysts, and medical doctors. Of those in the sample who fit this criteria, 80% were trained in the United States. This provides further evidence that the acquisition of a graduate degree from an American university was the primary manner in which to enter the U.S. labor market. Studies have shown that immigrants from Asia who arrive with professional training obtained in their country of origin often experience downward mobility upon arrival, because they lacked U.S. labor market experience and English language competency (see Cheng and Yang 1996: 327 ff., Fong 1998). Only after several years working in lower-level, but related, occupations or after a temporary or permanent shift out of their profession would they find employment in keeping with their original training.

When comparing professionals with other occupational groups, an equally large number of individuals in this study fell into the group of homemakers. This term refers to women who did not produce income but took care of household maintenance and child care. The word 'homemakers' has been preferred by the American media as a replacement for the word 'house wife', since it makes more of a reference to the work done in the home. Immigrants from Taiwan repeatedly used this particular English term in describing their daily routines. Homemakers in the sample were all women.

The third largest group were business owners. This occupational category consists of informants who owned businesses within the region of Southern California, such as restaurants or supply stores, as well as informants who were engaged in trading activities of computer parts or health care supplies, which required them to travel frequently between Taiwan, the United States, and other countries around the world. The smallest group of occupations is labeled 'service personnel' and includes accountants in insurance agencies, real estate agents, as well as providers of health service (nurses, etc. ).

Table 6.9 presents the distribution of occupational categories among informants.

**Table 6.9 Distribution of occupations among informants**

occupations	male informants (in %)	female informants (in %)	all informants (in %)
homemaker	0	54	38
service job	6	12	10
professional	72	20	35
business owner	22	14	17
sum	100	100	100

Distribution of occupations by ethnic group was relatively similar for homemakers, 56% were ethnic Taiwanese and 44% ethnic Chinese. The differences were more prominent in the other occupations. Ethnic Taiwanese were more likely to work as professionals, constituting 67% of all members of this occupational category. Ethnic Chinese were more frequently service providers (83%) or business owners (60%).

Further insights concerning the financial situation of immigrants were gained when comparing informants on the basis of household income, as indicated by the incomes generated by the various occupations. All informants who were listed as homemakers obtained monies for living expenses from their spouses, independent of their own participation in income generation. Merging the separate occupations of each spouse into one occupation per couple, the distribution shows that 8% of informants received the biggest portion of their income from jobs in the service sector, 65% of informants relied on professional occupations, and 27% owned a business.

This analysis reveals that none of the male informants were married to a spouse with higher occupational status than themselves. Women who were themselves professionals were married to other professionals or business owners. The inclusion in either category depended on the amount of money generated in each spouses job.<sup>38</sup> Most of the informants who identified themselves as homemakers were married to a professional (59%), and about a third had married a business owner (32%). Half of the homemakers whose husband were a business owner occasionally helped out with the American side of the business. These obviously were households engaged in international business transactions. Other household in this group obtained their income from businesses solely operated in the United States or Taiwan.

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<sup>38</sup> Informants were reluctant to give out exact salary figures, but it was possible to distinguish between higher and lower income ranges.

Another characteristic of occupational categories in this study was the high degree of self-employment among informants studied in the South Orange County area. The following classification of income generating activities into the four groups of 'self-employed', 'employment in higher white collar jobs', 'employment in lower white collar jobs', 'not employed' is adopted from Bozorgmehr et al. (1996) who studied the occupations, income and employment distributions of Middle Easterners in the Los Angeles area. Higher white collar jobs are identified as managers and professionals (Bozorgmehr et al. 1996: 354), specifically legal services, engineer services, education and investment service. Lower white collar jobs include service jobs in retail business and health care.

The proportion of self-employment in this study was 32%, including both male and female informants. In addition to entrepreneurs who run their own businesses, many professionals are self-employed as doctors, dentists, computer or security consultants, and real estate agents. There is a particularly high representation of ethnic Taiwanese doctors and dentists in the Orange County area. White collar workers constituted 25% of the sample for both genders, while low white collar employment accounted for only 5% and included only female informants. The category of 'not employed' corresponded with the occupational category of homemakers discussed above.

### **Immigration Cohorts: Summary of Demographic Characteristics**

Based on the analysis of demographic data and ethnographic accounts, the informants in this study can be grouped into four cohorts of immigrants who arrived between the late 1950's and today. Their different profiles reflect macro-political processes and the general trend of immigration from Taiwan to the United States during this period. The resulting cohorts are roughly identical with the decades of the sixties, seventies, eighties and nineties.<sup>39</sup>

**Table 6.10 Immigrant cohorts**

cohort	male informants (in %)	female informants (in %)	all informants (in %)
first cohort (1955-1967)	39	2	13
second cohort (1967-1977)	44	48	47
third cohort (1978-1990)	17	33	28
fourth cohort (1991-1998)	0	17	12
sum	100	100	100

<sup>39</sup> The decision for the intervals of the cohorts is based on the data. Cohorts were not developed in response to theory.

**First cohort**

The first cohort of immigrants includes people who arrived in the United States in the years between 1955 and 1967 on student visas. Most of them were men whose goal were to obtain a PhD in the natural sciences. Almost all members of this cohort decided to stay on and work in the United States. Many of them compared their situation with the recent situation of students coming from mainland China who left their country beginning in the 1980's continuing to this day.<sup>40</sup> The promise of opportunities in North America were great as were the economic and political differences between home and host country. Informants who left Taiwan at such an early time period, eventually became U.S. citizens. Citizenship was especially advantageous after the change of the U.S. immigration policy in 1965, the Hart-Celler Act, which was implemented beginning in 1967. Former students from Taiwan who were residents or citizens with employment in the United States were allowed to sponsor spouses, parents, and siblings for immigration to the United States. The men who had come on student visas went back to Taiwan to find a spouse or had relatives in Taiwan arrange for a potential spouse to be sent over to the United States.

**Second cohort**

The changing conditions of immigration resulting from the implementation of the Immigration Act of 1965 mark the onset of the second cohort which arrived between 1967 and 1977. Many immigrants in this cohort used their opportunities as relatives of citizens and permanent residents to enter the United States and directly take up employment. However, the influx of students from Taiwan who came to obtain an American degree continued. Ethnic Taiwanese were more likely to enter as students, ethnic Chinese came in larger numbers to seek employment and economic advancement, some also entered graduate school.

This coincided with changes regarding Taiwan's position in the global political arena, which in turn increased the numbers of immigrants. In 1971, president Nixon took the first steps to reestablish diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of China. The full recognition of the government of mainland China as the sole legitimate representative of China was eminent. The loss of Taiwan's role as a political heavyweight and the revived fear that the Communist Party of China might move to take over Taiwan, worried many people in Taiwan and caused them to contemplate emigration (Chang 1992, Wachman 1994, Rubinstein 1994, Huang 1997). A large

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<sup>40</sup> Since the late 1990's some mainland Chinese students have started to return to their home land. However, the trend is not comparable to extent of returns among students from Taiwan.

proportion of those people in Taiwan who had the means and opportunities to legally enter the United States applied for visas. Immigrants of very diverse economic and educational backgrounds began to settle in the United States. Usually, applicants arrived with their nuclear families and, in some cases, eventually sponsored the immigration of their complete extended families.

*"Well, it all started with my elder brother. He is 9 years older than me and he eventually got a PhD. He settled down in Canada, Ottawa, Montreal. And he always encouraged me to come to the United States. My older sister came through my brother later she moved here. My wife's siblings all came because of her. After we married, they came through the 'relatives visa' into the United States - they first stayed with us, then moved on. My younger sister came by herself. She went to graduate school, then went to New York and married there." (informant #42)*

Often, the parents emigrated to reunite with a son or daughter already living abroad. Over time they obtained a greencard and later, if possible, citizenship. This way the process of emigration for younger children was made somewhat easier and faster (Jasso and Rosenzweig 1990). The intention of most immigrants of that cohort was to establish themselves in North America and settle for good. More ethnic Chinese than ethnic Taiwanese found themselves in the situation as facilitators for immigration of members of the entire extended family. Having left mainland China only two decades earlier, the roots in Taiwan were not sufficient enough for people to feel attached to Taiwan (Gates 1987). Many Mainlanders expected to return to their former provinces of origin and never bothered to either learn the Taiwanese language or adapt to both the natural and social climate in Taiwan. In addition, available occupations for those ethnic Chinese in Taiwan without special relations or outstanding achievements were mainly in government and the military. Other economic opportunities were only accessible for rich mainland merchant families. "Many Mainlanders who can do so emigrate, usually to the United States, and even some Taiwanese legislators are believed to hold U.S. greencards for permanent residence (there), in case of a takeover from the mainland" (Gates 1987: 67).

It was only later, informants of the second cohort repeatedly stressed, beginning in the mid 1980's and becoming more widespread in the 1990's, that they began to reevaluate their settlement decisions. Some recalled that a few of their classmates actually had taken different routes after graduation in America.

*"... and many of them (classmates) graduated with a PhD but at the wrong time. 1970, in that time.<sup>41</sup> So they went back - usually that doesn't happen - not in other years - in other years none went back - but my tongxue (classmates) - 5 of us went back and they all do very well - one is a dean of graduate school, and one is chairmen of the department and one is in computers. All of them are doing really well." (informant #40)*

After graduation from an American university they returned to Taiwan in search of more lucrative employment. Those who had maintained personal contacts were better able to readapt to the more demanding lifestyle in Taiwan and also had a better chance of finding a good job (Chang 1992). However, members of the second cohort who returned to Taiwan right after obtaining their graduate degrees were an exception rather than the rule, as is evident from the previous quote. Contrary to expectations, the most highly educated immigrants are those most likely to return (Chiswick 2000: 70). Other patterns of return migration occurred among a few first and second cohort immigrants in the early 1990's. They chose early retirement from companies in which they saw no chances for future promotion and changed occupational trajectories to run their own import-export business or work as a corporate consultant in Taiwan. Those who took up positions in Taiwan or elsewhere in Asia kept a permanent home in the United States. Their wife and children continued to live in California receiving in a sense "reverse remittances" from the family's main breadwinner working overseas. As stressful as it might sound, many male informants actually envied those who had changed their jobs back to East Asia. Some even expressed hidden regret about lost opportunities.

*"Do I regret not going back? Nah. . . maybe. . . but sometimes the situation forces you, the job, the family. But I found a job and I raised a family and then your center already evolved in a certain direction. My kids were born here and it is good for them - and so I continued to stay here. It depends on the moment when you have to make the decision - where you are at. Some of my classmates went back in the beginning of the 90's when the economy was in recession. Yet I didn't go." (informant #36)*

Women did not ask themselves such questions nor did they express any desire to return to Taiwan even under the best of circumstances. Women who were employed in professional positions said that they found themselves in much better job situations than in Taiwan, especially in terms of career opportunities and promotions. Others who were not part of the workforce had gotten involved in numerous ethnic organizations, and were quite content with the level of

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<sup>41</sup> 1970 was a bad year for aerospace engineers. The Vietnam war was on the decline and the Apollo space program was ending with no new program in sight. Southern California went into a period of restructuring. Many aerospace research facilities closed and the prospects were dim for foreign graduate students who had to find employment right after graduation to keep their visa eligibility.



influence they had achieved. A few had arrived with little or no aspirations, but appreciated the leisure oriented opportunities afforded by life in America.<sup>42</sup> Women in the second cohort married to husbands who had recently returned to Taiwan to revive their careers were usually not very distressed about their husband's absence. After having lived together for a major portion of their adult life, they considered their husband's new occupational engagement as a temporary arrangement. In contrast to male informants, women had few illusions about returning to live in Taiwan. They were quite aware of the differences in lifestyle. They would certainly agree with the observations of a recent immigrant and member of the fourth cohort who described immigrants of the two earlier cohorts as follows:

*"They are used to the system here (in the United States) It's different from Taiwan. When they go back to Taiwan they go back for vacation, for seeing friends and relatives. When they come back here they talk about how hot the climate is (there), that they have to sweat all the time, it's hard to take and endure. That the situation is very chaotic, the cars are too many, the traffic bad. It's not as clean and ordered like here, and then the apartments are so close by each other, everyone has their TV on - and you hear everyone's noises, and you hear all those yelling and complaining about the traffic." (informant #42)*

### **Third cohort**

Members of the third cohort who immigrated between 1978 and 1990 had only slightly different profiles upon arrival than the second cohort of immigrants. The proportion of ethnic Taiwanese students was even higher than in previous years. Additionally, most of the ethnic Chinese immigrants who eventually settled in South Orange County were graduate students as well. Finding employment in the U.S. economy with credentials obtained in Taiwan was not a viable option for earning high salaries during this period. The main difference between the second and third cohort were the conditions of the U.S. economy in and around the time of graduation. The early and mid 1980's, or roughly two thirds of the Reagan administration, were characterized by high unemployment, high interest rates, and a downturn in the stock market (Massaro 1984, Alesina and Carliner 1991). The tough U.S. job market at this time created major occupational and visa obstacles, not just for a short period of time as experienced by a few second cohort immigrants, but continuously over the course of several years.

The regulations concerning F-1 student visas set by the U.S. government allow foreign graduate students to work for one year in the United States after graduation as part of their training experience. Students then have to secure permanent employment during that one year period in

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<sup>42</sup> More detailed discussion on the activities of female immigrants follows in chapter 7 and 8.

order to be eligible for a work visa that can eventually be converted into 'permanent residence status' (greencard). Therefore, finding a job within a short time after leaving the university was essential for students from Taiwan.

*"In 1980 it was hard to find a job, because the economy was in recession. My husband wrote over 200 resumes, mailed them out. We had no choice which state to go to. He got two calls: Los Angeles and Newport Beach. He took the Newport Beach job as his first job. We both didn't want to go back to Taiwan. In fact we were afraid to go back because of the communists. My parents also didn't want us to go back. America had security and my parents had the army security in Taiwan." (informant #39)*

More so than earlier cohorts, the aspiring immigrants of the third cohort had to reevaluate their plans and options for the future. Overall, ethnic Taiwanese students were more likely to return to Taiwan than ethnic Chinese students. Several informants reported that they found employment through relatives or family friends in the ethnic economy, often with no relevance to their previous training, to fulfill the requirements for the work visa applications. During the same time period the economy in Taiwan had been on a steady upswing. Opportunities for highly educated people became more plentiful with many openings for high paying jobs.

*"It's easier in the United States (life in general). Yet now the competition among people from Taiwan is growing. Students receive a lot of support in Taiwan and so now at home it's better: with an MBA or even BA - there are good jobs in Taiwan." (informant #6)*

Even graduate training in Taiwan improved significantly, with more institutions offering graduate education and hiring professors of high caliber, often themselves graduates of American universities (Chang 1992). However, the hurdle of gaining admission in a highly competitive field remained in place. Male informants said that they advised their nephews in Taiwan to get educated in America but not to attempt settlement in the United States, at least not without having first accumulated a large amount of funds.

The effects of macro political changes are often not felt until years after they are instituted. Since people in Taiwan, who had applied to immigrate on the basis of family ties, often had to wait for several years to obtain their visas to enter the United States, many arrived looking for employment in high skilled jobs right in the middle of the economic downturn (Wong 1998, Salaff 1998, 1999). Like the group of graduate students discussed previously, they had to face a number of unanticipated circumstances. Informants stated that the only exception to these circumstances were immigrants who had been running their own business in Taiwan or elsewhere in East Asia and who had simply extended their scope of operation to North America (see also Chiang 2000, Luk 2001).

After a period of searching for adequate employment in the United States similar to what they had in Taiwan or after receiving a degree from a U.S. institution, members of the third cohort chose to respond to job offers in East Asia in much larger numbers and at a younger age than in any previous cohort. Disappointment about the lack of career opportunities and chances for promotion in American companies made them even more inclined to accept the high salaries, generous research grants, and other perks that companies and government institutions in Taiwan had offered to entice overseas graduate students and professionals to return home (Wong 1998).

Indeed, beginning in the mid to late 1980's, a large number of scientists and engineers with graduate degrees returned to Taiwan. This constitutes a remarkable change since historically "*over 90% of highly trained professionals have chosen to remain in the United States*" (Fong 1998: 112, see also Ong et al. 1994). It stands in contrast to most of the findings in the literature that strong family ties, rather than economic factors, are the major incentive for return migration (Bettrell 1986, Basch 1994, Gmelch 1995, Margolis 1995).

Those immigrants of the third cohort who took job offers from Taiwan usually returned without their wife and children, despite the fact that many had only recently settled in the United States and had spent only a few years there. As a result, many female informants in this group, homemakers and professionals alike, were estranged from their husbands. Although they often expressed frustration about their situation, the majority never considered returning to Taiwan. Their rationales for these choices and some of the coping strategies are introduced in the following chapters.

One further consequence of the changed economic conditions were that over time fewer numbers of relatives decided to immigrate. Members of later cohorts, who are the first member of their extended family to migrate, reported no family members expressing any desire to use the opportunity for family reunions or obtaining an American greencard. They feared the risk of having to face more uncertain economic prospects in the United States as compared to Taiwan. As a member of an earlier cohort observed:

*"The newer immigrants are different, they don't have their complete families here in the United States" (informant #38)*

#### **Fourth cohort**

Immigrants of the fourth cohort who arrived in the United States, particularly South Orange County, beginning in the early 1990's had a few things in common with immigrants of the third

cohort. Mainly, the predominance of households in which a woman and her children lived in Southern California, while the husband was working in East Asia earning income. For members of the fourth cohort this was, however, the result of a different set of decision criteria than for those in the third cohort.

This subset of informants was the most homogenous of all, including only women who worked part-time from home or were homemakers. Many of the women recounted that it had been a joint decision between them and their husbands to immigrate together, yet without changing the husband's workplace. Although the economy in the United States began to show signs of recovery and eventually began to expand in the mid 1990's, these families were able to generate much higher incomes through the husband's employment as either a doctor, builder, or business owner in Taiwan than in the United States. Entry visas to the United States were either acquired through the sponsorship of a close relative or granted in response to financial investments in the United States (E2 visas). It is important to note that this profile of immigrants applies specifically for immigrants to South Orange County and is not representative of most immigrants from Taiwan arriving in the 1990's.

Informants of all cohorts used the English words 'parachute families' to characterize such families who started their immigration experience while living in two different places. This is a different translation of the Chinese version of 'astronaut' husbands introduced earlier and refers to nuclear families who were "dropped over the United States" by the providing husband.<sup>43</sup> Many female informants in this fourth cohort did not rule out the possibility of returning to Taiwan once all their children had completed their undergraduate education at a college or university in the United States. Only further study of these more recent immigrants will reveal whether they changed their minds or truly established a different immigration strategy than previously and started a new phenomenon.

'Parachute families' were more likely to be ethnic Taiwanese than ethnic Chinese. This is not surprising given that ethnic Taiwanese did immigrate later on average than ethnic Chinese, registering larger percentages than ethnic Chinese among immigrants from Taiwan beginning in the late 1970's. The upper middle class strategy for immigration is more likely to involve the separation of spouses. As the next section on motivations for immigration illustrates, the

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<sup>43</sup> Informants actually preferred to use the English terms 'parachute families' and 'parachute kids' instead of the Chinese expression 太空人 (taikongren) or 空竹分子 (kongzhu fenzi). However, they never used the word "astronaut" in English.

objectives for this practice among immigrants was to gain the status and security of residency in the United States, but, more importantly, the desire to provide children with an American education.

## **Why Migrate?**

### **Future in Taiwan?**

The reasons for leaving Taiwan and emigrating to the United States cited by the informants are many. The main theme shared by all informants in the 60 structured interviews is the quest for improvement of the livelihood of oneself and one's immediate family. More than 88% of immigrants made the general statement that they saw no future for themselves in Taiwan. A detailed account of how the individual informants defined "improvement of future outlook" is described below. Immigrants were asked to reflect on their decision to emigrate. They were encouraged to mention more than one specific reason. Since every informant listed between two and four reasons, they were then asked to identify their primary reason for leaving Taiwan. The major incentive for emigration corresponds with the time period which had passed since the original decision, and reflects the existence of the four distinct cohorts. The list of multiple reasons cited by informants provides insights into the complexity of their decisions. Table 6.11 displays the distribution of both sets of reasons, both the primary and secondary rationales.

However, it is important to note that the immigrants' decisions for emigration were not made in isolation. Immigrants also had to make choices in selecting a specific region within the United States and, more specifically, a neighborhood in which to live. Reasons for choosing Orange County, and a housing district within it also reflect the expectations immigrants had upon leaving Taiwan. It illustrates what informants, after settlement, continued to appreciate in America in comparison with their home country. These additional rationales are presented in tables 6.12 and 6.13. Only by explaining the range of all possible choices can we gain a better understanding of the factors that played a role in the decision to change both the geographic and economic focal point of a given household.

**Table 6.11 Reasons for emigration**

Reason	primary reason (in %)	secondary reasons (in %)
education (parent generation)	41.7	23.7
education of children	23.3	15.3
communist threat/ in search of security	16.7	24.3
family reunion	8.3	13.0
economic opportunity	6.7	12.4
quality of life (pollution, space, quiet)	-	6.2
curiosity	-	2.8
avoid family in Taiwan	3.3	2.3
	100	100

### **Education**

Members of the first and second cohort of immigrants most frequently cited either their own education or their husband's education as the main reason for leaving Taiwan. They recalled that in the 1960's and 1970's the technological and educational gap between Taiwan and the United States was substantial. Many students of the best universities in Taiwan decided to pursue further education in the United States

*"Well, you know at home I went to Taiwan University - and at that time we didn't have like any advanced studies, no graduate school - so most of the students from the electrical engineering departments went abroad, came to the United States. Because that time - the technical care was quite big - and the divide between the advancement of technology in the United States and Taiwan was quite big. So I came here to do graduate studies." (Informant #36)*

Female members of the second and third cohort who came for their own educational advancement add that they expected better career opportunities in the United States. Some related stories of the lack of opportunities, while yet others reported they were repeatedly overlooked for promotion despite excellent qualifications.

### **Economic Opportunities**

Immigrants in search of more specialization and advanced degrees also appreciated the increased economic opportunities in the United States. At the time of the first and second cohort's departure, Taiwan's economy was rather poor and the opportunity to study in the United States offered great hope.

*"In Taiwan we made \$25 a month. But the scholarship agency in America provided \$ 200 a month. Quite a difference." (Informant #38)*

A smaller group of informants in the second and third cohort, who did not have access to the colleges and universities in Taiwan that would prepare them to pursue a graduate degree in the United States, immigrated explicitly to take advantage of the perceived economic opportunities in the United States. Immigrants who emigrated with the sole goal of earning higher incomes in the United States were underrepresented in this sample. This reflects the fact that only a few had been able to earn the high incomes necessary to purchase a residence in South Orange County. They moved into affluent neighborhoods without an advanced degree from an American University and without owning a transnational business. The cities of Monterey Park, Hacienda Heights, Arcadia and San Gabriel in Los Angeles County, to name a few, had been more attractive to immigrants who sought direct employment or for those who opened up a business with primarily local or regional reach. Those in the sample fitting this particular profile had often been members of the Taiwanese Army and emigrated through the sponsorship of a family member already living in the United States. They made a decent living in the service industry, in real estate, hotel industry, restaurant business, advertising, travel and beauty parlors.

*"We came over, when my husband got the discharge from the Army. My husband used to be a soldier and therefore was free from specialized school education." (informant #34)*

In contrast, immigrants who owned a computer supply or health care supply business in South Orange County had all switched their careers after short periods of employment in other areas following graduate studies. Their first reason to emigrate was the pursuit of higher education.

### **Fear of Communism**

Most informants expressed doubts about their future in Taiwan which was primarily a reference to the frequently cited fear of a communist takeover of Taiwan by mainland China. It ultimately influenced many individual's decision to pursue a higher education as an entry ticket to a different location. As discussed in a later section in relation to the education of the next generation, many informants believed that the achievement of higher education opens the door to a variety of opportunities, including the option to live in any place one might desire. However, the purpose of emigration as a means for finding a more secure place of residence outside the relatively unstable political climate of Taiwan was significantly linked to the wishes of the parent generation.

Members of the first cohort who had the opportunity to enter the United States on a university scholarship in the 1960's got extra incentives to leave from their parents.

*"In my time Taiwan was a war zone, people were always afraid, and therefore sent their kids to a place with safety, a place which was rich. That was the hope at that time, so people sent their kids to America." (informant #6)*

The goal of many middle-class families in Taiwan was to establish at least one child in the United States, or alternatively Canada, New Zealand or Australia, such that in case of a political turmoil the rest of the family could also emigrate. Up to the 1980's, families with several children often encouraged the younger siblings to seek scholarships to attend a university in the United States. Approximately two thirds of the informants in this study, or their spouses, fit this profile. The other one third were either only children or the only male child in the family. The concern for the long-term security of the family often times overruled purely economic considerations. The small sample of ethnic Chinese male informants among the third cohort who emigrated in the early 1980's reported, that although they had difficulties in finding employment in the United States after graduation due to the economic recession, they gave in to their fathers' request to stay in the United States sometimes accepting positions they felt were beneath them. The data suggests that only the generation of ethnic Chinese who themselves had left mainland China for Taiwan traced their primary motivation to memories of the Chinese Communist party.

Ethnic Taiwanese informants were not as consistently in establishing a permanent residence in the United States. For the ethnic Taiwanese immigrants of the third and fourth cohort the concern with a Communist takeover had lost its urgency, though some continued to mention it among their list of secondary reasons. The change in priorities had also been intensified by recent political developments in Taiwan. In 1999 Taiwan elected the second ever ethnic Taiwanese president and the first president to represent a party other than the long ruling Nationalist party, the original opposition to the Communist party in mainland China.

As time progressed, parents of immigrants from the third and fourth cohort chose more frequently not to immigrate, which included both ethnic Chinese and Taiwanese parents. For many, the transition had become too difficult to make once they compared benefits and costs. Life in Taiwan had become more comfortable and the security issues were less dominant. In addition, they had access to the health care coverage in Taiwan, but not in the United States. In Taiwan they also had a well established social circle and could easily get around by bicycle, bus and taxi. The lack of public transport in Southern California and their lack of English language skills made



emigrating even more unappealing. Nevertheless, safety remained to be an important secondary reason for immigration, which is confirmed by the reasons stated for the choice of South Orange County as the preferred place of residence.

### **Status and a Better Quality of Life**

Many informants mentioned their desire for a better quality of life for themselves and their extended families as an incentive for leaving Taiwan. They defined quality of life as a combination of clean air, reduced overall pollution, safety from increasing crime in Taiwan's large urban centers, and more personal space both on streets and in homes.<sup>44</sup> Though not all informants expressed their desire for a better lifestyle as the primary reason for immigration, all listed it among their other reasons for either leaving Taiwan or picking Orange County as their final destination. The presumably more comfortable and safer lifestyle in American suburbs was also viewed as comparatively cheap by many recent immigrants. Those who came into wealth in Taiwan either through their occupation or their inheritance, especially the sale of land, were able to buy larger houses in Orange County than in Taiwan for the same money.<sup>45</sup> Among third and fourth cohort immigrants, the ability to move to the United States and purchase a house was therefore considered a sign of status.

*"Another thing is the economic background - actually not everyone has the means to come to the United States. But in the last few years a lot of people made money with real estate and as doctors, and so now they strive for a better life - where it is nicer." (informant #23)*

In addition to the expectation of slowly-paced lifestyle in non-crowded, secure spaces, some informants also mentioned a sense of admiration for the presumed superiority of Western scientific and political thought and curiosity towards America in general as a driving force to immigrate. Earlier immigrants, especially ethnic Taiwanese, recalled their hopes for a different model of society which would allow them to escape the confines of their own society and the limits to upward mobility, specifically the importance of social connections (*guanxi*) as a means for advancement. Some of the later arrivals who had romantic ideas about America, reported they knew in advance the shortcomings of the American society, the high numbers of uneducated

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<sup>44</sup> Hijackings of children and money extortion are mostly a consideration of very affluent informants who were worried that their wealth would invite such a fate if they stayed in Taiwan. Stories of hijacking pursuits can be watched on Chinese language TV stations in California - often in real time. These crime were often allude to by informants during interviews

<sup>45</sup>The economic boom in Taiwan which started to unfold in the early 1980's had the effect that many farmers were able to make a fortune when they sold their land to developers of shopping malls and residential areas.

people, the dirty streets, and the high crime rates in inner cities. Instead, they were in pursuit of the bohemian ideals, as they called it, of having studied abroad, especially for their children.

The acquisition of citizenship was an important strategy in the quest for an improved quality of life. American citizenship was thought to provide security and protection from a potential Communist Chinese takeover. It was also considered to bestow an individual with higher status in the eyes of fellow Chinese in other places around the world. Immigrants who obtained American citizenship view themselves as Americans. However, this did not interfere with their primary identification as Chinese. According to informants, being Chinese or Taiwanese was reflected in their cultural practices, values and the memory of ancestors. For further discussion of the notion of citizenship and identity see Ong (1993, 1996, 1999), Mitchell (1997), Laguerre (1998), Miron (1998), Ong and Nonini (1999), Faist (2000), and Lin (2001).

### **Educating the Children: Serving the Crown Prince and Crown Princesses**

Offering one's children the opportunity to attend highschool in the United States was a very central reason for emigration among the two later cohorts of immigrants. It was also the main reason for members of earlier cohorts to keep the household residence in the United States, even if the main breadwinner had returned to East Asia. Parents considered it a vast improvement in lifestyle since they were able to shelter their children from the harsh competitive school system in Taiwan.

Many viewed the Taiwanese school system as inept in responding to the individual needs of their children. Seen as overly authoritarian the system is known for its strictness and "*demands for conformity to canonical ways of thinking*" (Shaw 1996: 191). It is the duty of a student towards his family and community to achieve high grades in school. The accomplishments of an individual make the whole group shine. This also applies to classrooms. A class of good students brings honor to a teacher, while students with lower abilities disgrace a teacher. Lack of achievement is contributed to a lack of effort on the part of the student, but not the teacher (Shaw 1996: 193).

*"First it is hard on the children to start school in America. Now my son likes it - it has advantages. In Taiwan - other than sleeping and eating - you just have to study around the clock. It's very hard - not much free time. He was very nervous. - lots of pressure - lots of homework. Here it's different. So of course he doesn't want to go back. And he has friends here now. And the people are all nice, the teachers are very nice. The teachers in Taiwan are not so nice - they just want them to listen. And then you have to feed the teacher - that was when my son was in Kindergarten - just a bit over 5, right before we left - you have to be nice to them - but they don't have to be nice to them (the children)." (informant #23)*

The emphasis on collective interests, putting the well-being of the group above the desires of the individual, does not cater to the increasing interest of both students and parents for more personal intellectual autonomy brought on by cosmopolitan influences (Shaw 1996: 188). Many parents wished for their children to have more time for self-development outside the daily grind of high achievement.

*"Seems like a lot of countries have this problem - Japan, Korea. Taiwan is special as it does have a lot of very rich people- but the environment is tough. They want to send their kids to the United States to study - because then it is not so hard for them - life is more fun and more rewarding if you go to school in the United States - not as hard as in Taiwan." (informant #58)*

Nevertheless, parents in Taiwan want their children to excel and achieve a higher education, preferably a college degree or even a graduate degree. Since the competition for one of the rare places in a college or university in Taiwan is grueling, many bright students who have difficulties keeping up such a pace, are in danger of being placed on the a secondary track within their school (Shaw 1996: 197). Those who do not make the academic track, the small circle of "good students", will not receive much in the way of support in their quest to enter an institution of higher learning. The proportion of students who were accepted by a college accounted for 8% of all 18 year olds in Taiwan, compared to 30% of all 18 year olds in Japan and 50% in the United States (Shi 1995).<sup>46</sup> A different source lists the rate of college attendance as 30% of all young people between 18 to 21 years of age in Taiwan (Thornton and Lin 1994). In contrast, attending junior highschool and highschool in the United States offers a much better chance for college entrance. Students also get an early start on learning English, the language informants in this study accepted as the international language of business and science. They considered flawless English as a great advantage to achieving a bright future either in Taiwan, the United States or elsewhere.

So it is not surprising that many parents try to make it possible for their children to attend school in the United States. In the past, parents had a greater incentive to enable sons to have such scholarly opportunities (Zhou 1998). The sample of this study, however, does not confirm this. Rather than the child's gender, several informants cited a network effect as more influential in the final decision to emigrate.

*"Oh, basically there is not much of a difference anymore - girls and boys are quite equal - sometimes the decision to come to America is also influenced by the social environment - if a lot of other kids and friends leave Taiwan for the United States - then maybe your child*

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<sup>46</sup>For mainland China the proportion was less than 1% in 1980 (Zhou 1998).

*wants to go too. And because they are very bright and have not enough options in Taiwan." (informant #17)*

However, having male children generally dictated the time of departure. Boys must emigrate before they reach their 15th birthday. Otherwise they are required to register for the mandatory two year military service after graduation from highschool. Only acceptance to a four year college in Taiwan can defer military service. The ability to enter the workforce earlier was an added incentive to attend highschool in North America. Therefore, some parents did not wait until they got their actual greencard. They bought a house in the United States and moved back and forth between the two countries on tourist visas for home owners and student-visas for the children while waiting for the their adjustment of status through the sponsorship of relatives.

Parents were willing to sacrifice a lot in order to offer their children a wider variety of options both in schooling and individual development, especially for members of the third cohort who did not have the best economic prospects awaiting them in the United States.

*"We thought long and hard - because he (husband) did well in Taiwan actually. and it was hard to decide to give everything up and start all over again - live low and try to support a family while studying in graduate school and starting from scratch. In the end we decided to do it - solely for the children - because the educational background would be better for the children and they would have a brighter future." (informant #62)*

This quote is representative of those informants who, despite being economically secure in Taiwan, decided to start a new life in the United States for the sake of their children. However, not all parents who wanted better educational opportunities for their offspring in order to 'glorify the ancestors' (guangzong yaozu) as an old Chinese saying goes, were able to leave.<sup>47</sup> For some parents, for example, immigration was not an option, since the wife had a good job or business in Taiwan and was unable to leave without hurting the economic well-being of the family. Another reason concerned the relationship between husband and wife. Some couples preferred to stay near each other instead of separating physically. Families in such circumstances who had financial means to provide an American education for their children, sent their children to attend highschool in the United States by themselves. Children of this group of families were called 'parachute kids' (Hamilton 1993, 2001, Zhou 1997b, 1998). Since this practice began as early as the late 1970's the children were the original stimulus of the use of the word 'parachute', which was later modified to label whole 'parachute families'.

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<sup>47</sup> 光宗耀祖 (guangzong yaozu) = to glorify one's ancestors

Informants also used the term 'little foreign exchange students' (xiao liuxuesheng), to express that these high school students were the younger version of the university students who arrived in the 1960's and 70's.<sup>48</sup> They were either sent to live with a relative of the family or to live with a hired caretaker or host family paid by their parents. Very affluent parents who could afford to buy a house in California, placed their children in the home under the care of a trusted house servant. Unless the teenagers lived with a very close relative, they were practically on their own, or as Zhou coins it "*on remote control*", receiving money from their parents in exchange for scholarly success both in highschool and subsequently at a university (Zhou 1998: 684-688).

Though the cities in the San Gabriel Valley had both a high proportion of immigrants from China and a high number of parachute kids, informants from South Orange County also talked about the 'parachute kids' who had been dropped in their neighborhoods and in their children's classrooms. Some were hosts to a teenager themselves, usually the child of a sibling or of a very close friend with whom they share a fictive kin-relationship (ganmei).<sup>49</sup> They did not call them 'parachute kids' but referred to them as their nephews (zhi-nü, or zhi-zi) .<sup>50</sup> Most high school students originally from Taiwan who lived on their own in South Orange County lead quiet lives. But there were also occasional reports of the flaunting of wealth, unruly behavior, and gang activities by these 'parachute kids'.

Informants interviewed for this study included some former parachute children as part of the sample of second and 1.5 generation immigrants, but for obvious reasons no parents of parachute children were interviewed. Since the focus of analysis was on first generation adult immigrants over 35 years of age residing in South Orange County, only female heads of 'parachute family' households were included in the description of cohorts above. Nevertheless, the presence of 'parachute kids' in South Orange County had an effect on the lives of informants. Almost every immigrant of the earlier cohorts had an opinion about the teenagers and the rumors surrounding them:

*"Just like we - we came here as a student - most of them, eh, their parents have professional skills. But the kids, the American born kids, they consider themselves American. They don't mingle around with the kids who just came from Taiwan. Not have the same background.*

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<sup>48</sup> 小留学生 (xiao liuxuesheng) = little foreign exchange student

<sup>49</sup> 干妹 (gan mei) = close sister, adopted sister. This form of address is often used between two female friends who grew up together, either because they lived in the same neighborhood or attended the same school, or shared other aspects of their adolescence together.

<sup>50</sup> 侄女 (zhinü) = niece; and 侄子 (zhizi) = nephew. These terms are used for children living in the household other than one's own, independent of actual kinship relations.

*They are real newcomers. This, you know, actually makes for some problems here in this society. Most of these kids, because these kids, they spend money just like nothing. And some other kids, some other gang will get in conflict with all this kind of situation. Because it happened a couple of years ago in Woodbridge High. They were shooting. Gang involved. Chinese with local kids. But this is something which needs to be done. We don't like it - this kind of makes people think that this is the Chinese image. But it is not." (informant #58)*

While the outcome of the practice of sending children through the western educational system was not predictable, parents considered it to be their ultimate insurance policy to guarantee the continued well-being of the family. The dominance of education as a theme in informant interviews has its roots in the traditional national civil service examination system of ancient China. Any male child of a family had the chance to bring glory to his lineage by passing the national examination and acquiring an administrative position. The only hurdle was access to a teacher. In theory every man in China was able to attend the examination. In reality, this was only possible for those who could spare the time and funds to study for the grueling testing sessions (Miyazaki 1976, Shaw 1996). The concept of access to more status and influence through education remained and has become attainable for more and more families since the turn of the 20th century.

*"Almost 80% of all people I know in Taiwan, even those who don't have much money want better education for their children. They do their best to support the children. If you don't have a good education you suffer. In the society, in the ranking, rich people marry with people from rich people and poor people marry poor people. People like to have their children to have a better education. Like in China a long time ago, poor families could go through exams and become officials if they passed the exam. So most Taiwanese have the same concepts." (informant #43)*

Indeed, the widespread opinion among parents that a direct correlation exists between educational credentials and individual achievement is surprising, given the reality of their social world in which social connections (*guanxi*) continue to be the most important means for improving one's life's chances (Shaw 1996: 202). The strong conviction that education will guarantee a good job is apparently characteristic for many developing countries.<sup>51</sup>

The struggle for their children's future among parents of this study did not end with their offspring attending highschool. Further investments, both personally and financially, were necessary to facilitate their children's college education. This applied for parents of both groups of children, the second generation immigrants born in the United States and the foreign born 1.5

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<sup>51</sup> Shaw refers to a book by Ronald Dore (1976) which calls this phenomenon the "diploma diseases" (Shaw 1996: 202).

generation, including the 'parachute kids'. Nothing was too expensive as long as it improved the odds for advancement in life. While other American parents are believed to encourage their children to attend a public university rather than a private university and choose a public university within the boundaries of their home state in order to save costs, parents from Taiwan urged their children to apply to the most prestigious private and public universities.<sup>52</sup> Even if the child did not get a scholarship to help defray the cost of tuition, parents were more than willing to make the financial sacrifices necessary for their child to attend the school with the highest academic merit.

*"But nowadays there are a lot of people who clearly can't afford it. The majority of people is not rich, but they try to make it possible. The ancient thinking is still there, - that you can get ahead through learning and obtaining a good education. If our children - if they can go to Harvard - we do the best to support it. Because to us its a glory, that our children are so smart. We do our best, we save the money, we don't travel. We do the best to support it. For example a friend of ours has both Berkeley (a public university within the home state) and Duke (a private ivy league university in a different state) as an opportunity. The daughter wants to go to Duke. And the parents they don't have much money, but they say, we support it." (informant #30)*

In this respect informants frequently compared themselves to Jewish people. They had heard that Jewish parents supposedly dote on their children and make their children a central part of their lives. They also had shared notes with Jewish parents in their children's school. They came to the conclusion that none of the other parents, except those of Asian or Jewish descent, shared similar attitudes to them, mainly to work hard and achieve the education no matter the price tag. Chinese and Taiwanese parents often mocked their total commitment to the cause of their children by referring to them as "our crown princesses and crown princes" (gongzhu wangzi).<sup>53</sup>

### **Seeking Family/Avoiding Family**

Informants also listed family relations as a primary reason for emigration. This applies to women who had come to the United States to meet and marry their future husband and men whose parents and several other siblings had already emigrated. Several of the informants among those who had come the United States to attend graduate school mentioned that their marriages had been arranged by a fellow classmate. Many immigrants of the first and early second cohort married the sister,

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<sup>52</sup> State run universities (not the private institutions), such as the schools within the University of California system, charge different rates for in-state students and out of-state students. The difference between in-state and out-of-state tuition can be as much as four times the amount.

<sup>53</sup> 公主王子 (gongzhu wangzi) = crown princess and crown prince

brother, or cousin of a friend or schoolmate during times when the overall number of Taiwanese in the United States was rather low.

*"I met my wife through a classmate in the Midwest who was from Taiwan also. He told me 'when you go back to Taiwan, you should see my sister'." (informant #30)*

Those who came to reunite with their extended family always cited problems with their economic prospects in Taiwan. Some had just finished college in Taiwan, others had few chances for career advancement in Taiwan, and others even brought up marital problems. The family reunion theme was used primarily by immigrants of the second cohort. Even among this group the dominance of this theme needs to be questioned, since many informants might have mentioned their family relationships because they had been the grounds on which they obtained their entry visas, not their actual motivation.

In contrast, it is actually surprising how many informants were the only members of their families who have emigrated to the United States. This reflects the strategy of many extended families among middle-class ethnic Taiwanese in Taiwan. Those who had established residence in the United States were considered an overseas hub for any future immigration needs for other members of the family. Siblings could send their children to live with their relatives in the United States and get educated (zhi nü and zhi zi relations). A few informants explained the low number of siblings in the United States with stories about relatives who had applied for a greencard but found better opportunities in Taiwan during the waiting period. Others knew that not all potential immigrants look forward to relying on their family members during the initial period of immigration and adjustment to the new environment. Many siblings would prefer entering the United States through financial investments or job offers rather than arrive without any employment prospects (see also Wong and Salaff 1998).

Indeed, not all informants craved the company of their parents, siblings, uncles and aunts, or looked forward to being embedded in the web of obligations and responsibilities of family relations, especially in cases where their own economic well-being was so dependant on family. Although only a small subsample of informants admitted that they immigrated to escape the tight grip of their family in Taiwan, it is noteworthy that an additional set of informants rationalized their first choice for locating in Orange County and a particular neighborhood within it as offering them a reasonable distance from their relatives who lived elsewhere in North America.



Family relationships were an important factor in the immigration experience. They played a role in facilitating, sustaining and motivating immigration, both in terms of participation and escape.

### **Who Migrates Where?**

The main reasons for emigration mentioned by informants in this study, better educational and occupational opportunities, threat of a communist takeover, and improvement of the family's quality of life, also apply for emigration from Taiwan to other popular countries such as Canada (Lai 1990, Smart 1994, Froschauer 1998, Mosk 1999), New Zealand and Australia (Burnley 1999, Beal and Sos 2000, Chiang and Kuo 2000). It is therefore of interest to look at the rationales behind the choice to settle in California and Orange County in particular.

### **The Choice for Southern California**

Although all informants made it clear that Southern California was their preferred place of residence, immigrants arrived at such a decision in two different ways. One group of immigrants moved to Southern California after having lived elsewhere in the United States for a number of years. The other group settled in Southern California either directly from Taiwan or within three years of immigration.

The first type of settlers included mostly members of the first and second cohort, and those third cohort members who immigrated as students. All had attended a university and worked in their first entry level job in a state other than California. Though many reported that they were always attracted to Southern California, their first place of residence depended on which institution accepted them as graduate students or employees.

*"...like a long time ago - we had no choice. Like me I went to Cleveland, before moving to Indiana for a job, because I got a scholarship - at that time it was the only choice I got. Nowadays, the new immigrants from Asia, they have much better financial support, they have choice." (informant #30)*

The move to Southern California, then, was facilitated by the acquisition of credentials and work experience. This explains the rather high proportion of informants who listed business or job opportunities as their main reason for selecting South Orange County. However, it was a combination of several incentives that made immigrants look for an opportunity to relocate to this specific area. This is not to say that none of the informants were able to gain acceptance to a graduate school or research institution in California during the beginning of their immigration

experience. In fact, such cases accounted for 33% of all informants who chose Orange County after completion of their training years. Nevertheless, all had been elsewhere in California and had to move to South Orange County. The other informants in this group lived in a variety of other states before finally landing a job in Southern California. Approximately, 31% had studied and worked in two or more states and 36% in one other state before moving to California. However, with the exception of a one informant, who went to graduate school in northern California and took his first job at the East Coast of the United States, none of the informants had left California for other places once they settled in their location of choice.

The other group of immigrants that chose California prior to emigration, or within the first three years of their orientation phase in North America, included members of the third and fourth cohort whose main route for obtaining an entry visa or greencard was through economic investment or family sponsorship. They had more flexibility in choosing a place for permanent residence than the former graduate students. Those who had lived in one other state before relocating to Southern California (33% of this group) explained that their sponsor resided in a different state. After a short period of becoming familiar with the new environment with the help of their relatives they decided to leave and move to California. Half of the immigrants who chose Southern California prior to emigration, often because their sponsors already lived in that state, settled in South Orange County directly upon arrival. The others chose South Orange County after a short period of residence elsewhere in LA County.

*"The year before we came to the United States - we looked at San Francisco, then we looked at Orange County - I had a tongxue (schoolmate) here in Fountain Valley and I liked the weather a lot - that was the most important thing, Some people like to be near big trees and plants - I liked the way of the sun here. My husband has a younger sister in New Jersey - we also went there and had a look. and I found out that this place is the best - the sun is good and the kids of my schoolmate are in the same age of my children - that was good for my children. This schoolmate came 2 years before us. If you are a foreigner and you don't know the ways here - that's very hard to do. So we first looked around to see which place fits us most to live at." (informant #55)<sup>54</sup>*

The above quote affirms the fact that the rationales behind choosing where to live were many and varied. People usually mentioned several reasons rather than just one. The following sections present the various reasons informants gave for the specific choice of Orange County within their

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<sup>54</sup> 我们先看一看什麼地方合适我们住 (women xian kan yi kan shenme difang shihe women zhu) = we first took a look around to see which location fits us best.

preferred location 'Southern California'. Table 6.12 shows the distribution of primary reasons and the extended list of secondary reasons based on the text analysis of interviews.

**Table 6.12 Reasons for choosing Orange County, California as a place of settlement**

Reason	primary reason (in %)	secondary reasons (in %)
quality of life (weather, new house, clean, quiet, nice scenery, space, planned community, middle class lifestyle, close to Taiwan)	11.7	30.6
security	10	8.4
good investment of money	6.7	6.2
business and job opportunities, good infrastructure	31.7	18.1
education of children: good opportunities	13.3	8.8
relatives in the area, both in OC and LA County	15.0	10.6
schoolmates in the region who recommended it	8.3	3.5
good shopping of Chinese goods, other Taiwanese in the area	-	8.0
not too many other Chinese	3.3	5.8
	100	100

### **Moving to South Orange County**

*"After I graduated over there (different state), I started to work in (other state). I worked there for 8 years. The weather was so cold. So we wanted to move to the West. We asked to be relocated to California." (informant #57)*

Obviously the mild climate of Southern California made the region very attractive for immigrants of all cohorts. The year round warm weather was considered to be even nicer than in Taiwan. It is part of the package that validated the need to achieve a high quality of life for all family members. Other points frequently mentioned as an expression of a quality lifestyle were the options to own a brand new house (2.2% in the list of all reasons), the cleanliness of the neighborhoods (5.3%), the low level of disturbing urban noises (2.7%), the wonderful scenery and the recreational opportunities therein (2.1%), the availability of space both inside and around houses (6.6%), and the overall design of the planned communities as a symbol of middle class urban culture and status (4.4%). All these different aspects lead informants to consider the purchase of a house in South Orange County at large as a very promising financial investment (6.2%). According to informants, their high standard of living was also reflected by the high level of security for both the family's well-being and its material acquisitions, especially in comparison to the life in Taiwan (8.4%). Last, but not least, what added to the quality of life in comparison to

other potential places of residence within the United States was the relatively close proximity of Southern California to Taiwan.

*"The weather in Southern California is very good, it resembles Taiwan. And its fast to Taiwan, very close to it. I didn't want to go to a cold place away from it all. Although In Orange County, we didn't know anyone." (informant #63)*

While the pleasant environment was a big draw for living in Orange County, job opportunities to facilitate such a lifestyle were equally important, especially for those members of the first, second and third cohort who had to generate their income within the United States and not in East Asia. As mentioned earlier, many informants reported that a good job offer allowed them to move into the area, a choice they consistently attributed to their increased level of education and skills. Business owners also talked about the attraction of the industrial parks and office spaces in South Orange County. The infrastructure between these parks and individual neighborhoods was also rated highly.

In addition, informants valued the opportunity structure presented by the school districts of South Orange County. The schools in all school districts had received very high marks in terms of the average level of SAT (scholarly aptitude test) scores and the percentage of students admission to well-known colleges and universities.<sup>55</sup> The quality of the highschool education in the area was directly linked to the dominance of upper middle class residents in the southern part of Orange County. The design of master plan communities attracted potential home owners with substantial incomes as well as an orientation towards family life. Therefore, street violence and traffic accidents were relatively rare.

In the United States it is the local taxpayers living in the district immediately surrounding a school who provide funding for it through property taxes. As a result, the higher the income of home owners in a given area, the higher a school's or school district's revenues. In turn, a school can hire better teachers and purchase more and better equipment for laboratory facilities, computers, libraries and exercise facilities. It is important to note that the linkage between neighborhood and school is also binding in the sense that only children of residents within the district associated with a school can attend that school. Each district and the neighborhood within

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<sup>55</sup>SAT = Scholarly Aptitude Test. Highschool students need the results of this test for their application to a college or university. The higher the score, the more likely it is that they will be selected by a high-ranked state university or ivy league school.

it, is assigned specific elementary schools and generally, a junior high and senior highschool. This is a factor which effects the desirability of real estate and subsequently its price.<sup>56</sup>

Former classmates and relatives had an influence on an immigrant's selection of where to live. The fact that some friends or relatives lived in a particular area served as a general recommendation and, possibly, an incentive. Although in some cases informants moved into the same neighborhood as a close relative, it was rare that people tried to find houses within walking distance of one another. For others it was sufficient to live in the same area as friends and family, given the area had a good school district and affordable housing. The role of classmates and relatives, as well as the influence of spatial distances on their relationships is discussed in more detail in chapter 7.

Those informants who cited close relationships with people already living in Southern California as their primary reason for settlement often wanted to overcome the isolation they had experienced in other states, where only a few co-ethnics were in the area for social interaction.

*"Anyway, there was that one chance that he (husband) found a job here (Southern California) - plus I had a lot of relatives here. So I really wanted to come - just get out - I have relatives in Texas and a lot of them in California. And I was over there (other state) all by myself and really depressed. So, after that, it was 10 years ago, I was so happy. Of course we had to make new friends - from step one. Because most of my relatives actually lived in Los Angeles. But still." (informant #35)*

Indeed, whereas many informants preferred their relatives living within driving distance, as opposed to flying distance, they did not want them living too close. They met relatives during important holidays, but not for regular socializing or joined recreational activities. Many did not even talk on the phone with relatives on a regular basis. Moving near family was often an added bonus to the aforementioned quality of life and the increased opportunities for leisure activities outside the work setting with fellow ethnic Chinese and ethnic Taiwanese in the area. In other cases, immigrants spent time with relatives in the early months of their arrival in Orange County, eventually expanding interaction spheres to include other ethnic Chinese or Taiwanese families with whom they had more interests in common. Having a relative nearby was first of all

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<sup>56</sup>There are exceptions to this statement. In school districts with a large disparity between neighborhoods in terms of perceived racial differences (distinct separation between black and white neighborhoods), each school within the School District is required to have a certain percentage of minority students (black students) which come from other residential areas within the larger school district to a school outside their residential area (they get taken their by bus, referred to as being "bussed in"). Other school districts try to overcome income differences between neighborhoods and the schools they support by developing a specific formula which distributes students evenly along racial and income lines.

considered to provide a comforting sense of security, and as insurance for hard times. Relationship with actual classmates who lived in the same geographic area were, once they had been reinitiated, maintained and nurtured.

The high likelihood of meeting fellow ethnic group members with similar interests as well as educational and vocational backgrounds made Southern California further added to its attractiveness.

*"As a matter of fact, you realize that why nowadays so many noble prize winners are from California. California doesn't have boundaries or barriers. There is more room for so many people from different countries. It's a more free than New York. New York I am sure is more modern and also free. But California is quite different. Because California, for the new immigrant most of them like to move here. The older generation, they moved to New York because at that time New York offered a lot for them. But nowadays, people from Asia can move wherever they want to." (informant #6)*

While the cities of South Orange County offered a number of stores, services, and recreational facilities that catered specifically to ethnic Chinese and ethnic Taiwanese, they were not as plentiful as might be found in other areas of Southern California. Immigrants in search of a higher concentration of ethnic stores and services would have to live in either Monterey Park, Hacienda Heights, or other cities in the San Gabriel Valley (Tseng 1994, T. Fong 1995, Horton 1996, J. Fong 1996, Li 1999).

*"Monterey Park I don't go there often. Sometimes, to eat food which is the food made in my home area.<sup>57</sup> Rowland Heights has those things. When you eat, you are in search of your culture, that's when you go to these specialty places. So we go and buy art pieces, buy a piece of Chinese culture. That's what Monterey Park and Rowland Heights is for us. It helps us to keep our culture alive. We cannot go to Mainland China and we cannot go to Taiwan for a while - so we need to surround ourselves with pieces of China, art, food." (informant #20)*

In this respect it is important to understand informants views of the San Gabriel Valley area to better appreciate why some immigrants chose South Orange County over northeast Los Angeles County. Several informants had, in fact, moved from residences in Los Angeles County "down" to Orange County. However, none planned to move from Orange County to a city in the San Gabriel Valley or knew people who had done so.<sup>58</sup> Most reasons stated for the preference of South Orange County reiterated the notions of safety and a higher standard of living. The newer subdivisions of

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<sup>57</sup> 吃我家那的东西 (chi wo jia na de dongxi) = eat the things which are from my home (Heimat).

<sup>58</sup>The exception is the contemplation of some informants to put their parents up in a nursing home in the area - as an alternative to the nursing home in Santa Ana, the only facility with a substantial number of ethnic Chinese and Taiwanese elders in Orange County (at the time of the research).

South Orange County were home to a large homogenous group of middle class residents. Though Los Angeles County had a few very upscale neighborhoods in which ethnic Chinese and Taiwanese resided, such as Palos Verdes Estates at the Pacific Coast and San Marino north of Monterey Park, as well as a few newly built subdivisions and smaller master plan communities in Rowland Heights, West Covina and Pomona, they were interspersed and surrounded by less affluent, ethnically heterogeneous, and older neighborhoods that also had higher crime rates. Safety and stability was assured for residents of these areas.

*"The area around Hacienda Heights is no good, and the air is not good either. Not even Santa Ana (North Orange County) is very good - that's where we started first. Where we live now is wonderful. Irvine is good too. Newport is of course the best, but we can't afford that." (informant #34)*

Aside from the specific reasons for moving to South Orange County already discussed, such as work or business opportunities, and friends and relatives living nearby, informants who were less constrained in the course of making a decision mentioned wanting to avoid living in an area with too many Chinese around. Many stated repeatedly that the area around Monterey Park was simply too large in terms of the ethnic Chinese and Taiwanese population. Immigrants expected that with the high density of co-ethnics of various socio-economic backgrounds, quality of life issues might be compromised.

*"Going to Rowland Heights: yes. But not really Monterey Park, not even for visits. It's too chaotic there, too dangerous." (informant #62)*

The city of Monterey Park was viewed by some as having too many people of lower socioeconomic status and too many "newcomers". Indeed, some informants of the second and third cohort had started their immigration experience in this area eventually relocating. In recent years this area has been mostly populated by immigrants from mainland China (Fong 1994). This served as an incentive for ethnic Taiwanese, especially affluent ones, to distinguish themselves by moving elsewhere. An often repeated rumor among ethnic Taiwanese informants was that Orange County, and South Orange County in particular, was dominated by ethnic Taiwanese, whereas the San Gabriel Valley was mainly settled by ethnic Chinese of various social classes. Such rumors, whether is reflected reality or not, influenced individual perception of the areas.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>59</sup>It could not be confirmed since the nationwide census as well as county and city statistics did not elicit data on ethnicity at that level of detail and did not publish a separate category for ethnic Taiwanese. Only some of the school districts and university had some records of ethnic Chinese and ethnic Taiwanese enrollment. Unfortunately, in earlier years not all ethnic Taiwanese had insisted to get counted in a separate category. Apart from not having the option, the lobby for a change of categories was not very strong until the early 1990's.

## Who Resides Where?

### Opportunities for Switching Neighborhoods

Immigrants who decided to move to South Orange County either to start a new job, open a high technology business or enroll their children in the area's schools, had a variety of residential choices. Houses varied in terms of size, age, and location within a neighborhood, as well as within a city's administrative borders. Before discussing the individual reasons for a particular choice in reference to informants' characteristics (e.g., position in their life cycle), it is important to note that all informants had purchased a house, some immediately on arrival in South Orange County, while yet others after a short period of renting. The acquisition of a house by informants follows the general trend in the United States. People generally buy a house rather than rent if they live somewhere longer than a year (with the probable exception of expensive urban areas such as New York). They also frequently move within an area or between areas, selling and buying houses along the way.

In fact, being able to buy a house was one of the allures of moving to the United States. Though single family housing prices in California were in general well above the average price of a house nationwide, they were still more affordable than a single family dwelling in Taiwan. In the urban areas of Taiwan, most people lived in apartments which they either rent or bought. The tendency there in Taiwan was to buy an apartment in one of the newly built high-rises when upgrading. Due to Taiwan's crowded urban conditions, the ownership of a single family house was beyond reach for most people. Thus, even a \$ 400,000 house in Orange County was considered relatively cheap in comparison at the time of fieldwork (1997), especially when immigrants considered the amount of space (300 m<sup>2</sup> and up) they were able to purchase for the money.<sup>60</sup>

The investment of \$ 200,000 plus for a house was not easy for all informants. Immigrants of the first and second cohort who started out as graduate students reported that they had initially been shocked by housing prices in Orange County since they were significantly higher than the housing prices in areas where they had previously lived. In some cases the differences were as much as

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<sup>60</sup>The average house price and square meters values were derived from a collection of catalogs distributed by builders and real estate firms, as well as New Homes Magazine, January 1998, a bimonthly publication by MDM Publications, Inc., 3151 Airway Avenue, Suite #C-3, Costa Mesa, CA. The square meters are based on conversions of square feet as listed in the advertising material which was picked up during tours of model houses in various new and old subdivision. At the cheapest end of the distribution \$ 200,000 could buy between 140m<sup>2</sup> and 185m<sup>2</sup> (1500 to 2000 square feet) of space. At the other end of the spectrum, \$ 400,000 could buy between 230m<sup>2</sup> and 370m<sup>2</sup> (2500 to 4000 square feet) of space depending on design and overall neighborhood amenities. Note that the prices are listed for 1997/1998 dollars. Inflation and demand has changed the price structure since then.



three times higher than in other suburbs with comparable distance to a major city.<sup>61</sup> In response, many initially bought an older house eventually exchanging it for a new dwelling once they were financially more secure. Members of the earlier immigrant cohorts had more difficulties in accumulating the necessary funds to purchase a home early on, since their savings were derived from years of employment in American companies within the United States itself. Nevertheless, the purchase of a large home in a secure environment was a primary goal. Members of these cohorts were not able to pay cash for their house like a few fourth cohort members were able to do. Instead, like most Americans, they financed their houses through mortgages. But in contrast to many Americans, they provided a substantial down payment thereby reducing monthly payments and their overall debt.

*"We don't spend money like a bunch of drunken sailors. Like most these people in Irvine who are white have a negative net worth. That means they owe more than everything they have - if they would sell everything, they wouldn't have it. And we Chinese people go: "what do you mean? How can you do that -how is that possible?" (informant #35)*

Newcomers from Taiwan on the other hand, were not surprised by the prices. The income of fourth cohort immigrants was generally the result of business activities in Taiwan. The immigrants of the fourth cohort did not immigrate prior to having enough funds to buy a house in the United States. In many cases the purchase of a house took place even before a greencard was obtained.

Informants who sold one house then buying another cited several reasons for such behavior. Only 15% of all informants, members of the third and fourth cohort respectively, had no other residence in the United States but the one they lived in at the time of the interview. For others, 42% had moved once, 22% owned their third house, and 21% had purchased three or four homes, and as many as eight different residences. Members of the first cohort had on average acquired between three and four houses, second cohort members were even more likely to have owned at least two or three homes. Third cohort immigrants had a majority of members who lived in their second home while fourth cohort members had the highest proportion of first time home owners in the United States. As for moving patterns within South Orange County, informants were generally sedentary. Approximately 85% said they still lived in their first residence within South Orange County. That holds especially true for members of the third and fourth cohort. However, among the 12% who reported having moved at least once within South Orange County and the 3% who

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<sup>61</sup>The differences in price can be explained as follows: a) the cities of South Orange County are not considered to be suburbs to Los Angeles by both buyers or sellers. b) the influence of inflation on the U.S. real estate market, and c) the high demand for houses in Southern California due to climate, schools and recreational opportunities.

already lived in their third residence in the area, only second cohort members have moved at least two times. All first cohort members had made multiple moves prior to coming to Orange County. Nevertheless, one third found what was their second house in South Orange County, usually an upgrade to a larger new house, located in a better subdivision.

Though most did not move as often as the following informant, the willingness to change locations for various economic and recreational reasons was experienced by a number of informants.

*"We first had a house in Dana Point - that was kind of nice - then after a couple years we went to Lake Forest - we first thought to move to Irvine - but that was kind of hard at that time - everybody wanted to have a house in the new areas - and they had a lottery there. We were looking at a house in Mission Viejo - and 500 people showed up - only 50 got it - we didn't get in - so a friend showed us a house in Lake Forest and we liked it. Then my son joined a swimming team and the pool was in Mission Viejo - so we moved closer to the swimming pool in Mission Viejo. And then my wife didn't get along well with our neighbor - we tried to build a fence and they didn't want to - they were Americans from Eastern Europe - and then some other friend moved nearby - so that was ok. Then Laguna Niguel - that was a very new area - and then my wife didn't want to move to far away from the church and I wanted to stay in the area - we wanted to stay in the same track - to keep up with friends." (informant #36)*

Before presenting a discussion of informants' the reasons for choosing one residence over another, it is important to examine the geographic distribution of residences. Figure 4.2. above and 5.3 in the next chapter give an overview of the locations in space. The majority of informants, 60%, lived in the city of Irvine. This might arguably reflect a biased selection of informants. However, Irvine was by far the largest city in South Orange County and had the highest percentage of residents with Asian ancestry (22% in 1996). Cities in the surrounding areas recorded between 6 and 11% of Asians and much smaller populations in absolute numbers.<sup>62</sup>

Within South Orange County, informants lived in the areas of Costa Mesa/Fountain Valley, Santa Ana/Tustin Foothills/Tustin Ranch cluster, the Corona Del Mar/Newport Coast area adjacent to Irvine,<sup>63</sup> and in the various neighborhoods of Irvine itself. Further south they resided in such places as Lake Forest, Laguna Hills, Laguna Niguel, Aliso Viejo, Mission Viejo, Rancho San

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<sup>62</sup> As evident in table 4.7 presented above, the only other city with a high proportion of people of Asian descent is Fountain Valley (21%). Aside from the fact that Asian Americans in Fountain Valley were largely of Vietnamese ancestry, the total population of the city is less than half that of Irvine's. In 1996, Irvine had 127,200 inhabitants while Fountain Valley had 55,296 people. Irvine has room to expand and planned to permit the building of several more new subdivisions. Fountain Valley had almost reached its geographic limit thereby limiting its ability to expand.

<sup>63</sup> The latter, Newport Coast Drive is geographically very close to Irvine, and basically a southern extension of Irvine. The Irvine Company built all the subdivisions. At the time of the research, Newport Coast Drive had not been officially incorporated into either Newport Beach or Irvine.

Margarita, and as far south as San Clemente. More important than the actual city within which a house is located, is the nature of the respective neighborhoods within the city. A variety of subdivisions throughout the region had similar characteristics and were equally attractive for families with given income levels, expectations and preferences. Since most ethnic Taiwanese and Chinese chose housing in reference to their economic abilities, upgrading their homes whenever finances and opportunities allowed, the respective subdivisions in which they lived, was an indicator of their wealth and a reflection of their social status.

The subdivisions in Irvine, for example, had very distinct differences in prices, style of housing, and degrees of privacy. Turtle Rock, the new section of West Park, and the part of Woodbridge which featured single-family houses were known as homes for very affluent residents.<sup>64</sup> Houses in these areas were priced at \$ 300,000 and up in 1997/98. These prices included homes that were 10 to 15 years old. About 30% of all informants lived in these two neighborhoods. The other 30% of informants also living in Irvine had resided in less affluent neighborhoods. They resolved to purchase slightly older homes in the neighborhoods of Deer Park, College Park, the older part of Northwood.<sup>65</sup> The latter was mentioned as the most preferred subdivision by families of the first and second cohort.

*"As far as the family is concerned - we better stay in Northwood. At that time (when they arrived) we didn't know much. But one thing we knew was that we were limited by the money. We couldn't afford the most expensive one. So we bought a house, the one we have, which is located in Northwood. But I found out that it is a really nice community, family oriented. very quiet, in daytime and also nighttime. One thing I like is a lot of trees, like park. It's not very expensive but has a nice environment."* (informant #44)

In the southern part of Irvine, the subdivision University Park, which includes areas around the University of California Irvine, has a similar profile. Two or three bedroom houses were available at \$ 200,000 and above in 1997/1998.

When matching neighborhoods with their high schools it became clear that housing prices also reflected the association with the better performing schools. The high school assigned to Turtle Rock, and the southern parts of Woodbridge and West Park, was University Highschool, known to produce the highest average test scores. Students living in the northern part of Woodbridge and

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<sup>64</sup>Woodbridge is a rather large area of Irvine with a mixed building plan. Single houses are featured in some areas, attached townhouses and condominiums in others. The single houses are very expensive, while other residential forms are more affordable. This is true to the "original plan" of the Irvine Company to facilitate modern living for all income groups.

<sup>65</sup>At the time of research, new subdivisions in Northwood had just opened and were much talked about among informants as a potential place of residence.

West Park, as well as southern parts of Deer Park and College Park were sent to Woodbridge High. The northern parts of Deer Park and College Park, as well as the area of Northwood reported to Irvine High.<sup>66</sup> Families who lived in University Park were assigned to University High, which made living in that area very desirable for people with children. In some cases informants who owned houses elsewhere in South Orange County, rented affordable apartment in one of the condominiums of University Park. Having a local address associated with University High school enabled them to enroll their children in this preferred school.<sup>67</sup>

Subdivisions along the Newport Coast Drive, where 6.7% of all informants live, were the newest, largest and most affluent neighborhoods in South Orange County at the time of research. Houses were all located in gated communities and started at \$ 500,000. Many other houses easily exceeded a million dollar in value. These houses were custom designed in keeping with the overall design of the area, also called Mediterranean style. Children attended University Highschool in Irvine.<sup>68</sup> North Tustin, also known as the unincorporated area Tustin Foothills, and Tustin Ranch were locations with newly built subdivisions as well. Approximately 10% of all informants owned houses in these areas. These were rather affluent neighborhoods, comparable to Irvine's West Park. Some subdivisions were even slightly more upscale, featuring gated communities with houses listed for over \$ 500,000.

The 15% of informants who lived in subdivisions in Fountain Valley and Costa Mesa had purchased newer houses within older subdivisions. They were comparable in price to the older houses of Deer Park and College Park in Irvine depending on condition. Houses in Laguna Hills, Laguna Niguel, Lake Forest, Mission Viejo, Rancho San Margarita and San Clemente, together home to 8.3% of all informants, are reasonably priced as well (from \$ 200,000 for smaller spaces to \$ 280,000 for larger spaces), but located in an area that consisted mostly of recently built subdivisions. Rancho San Margarita was the newest subdivision at the time of research. Though comparatively far away from the major shopping centers of South Orange County as well as the beach, it offered new homes for families with less income.

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<sup>66</sup> Since the time of fieldwork a fourth High school has been established in Irvine to deal with the growing population of students, especially in the new subdivision to the northeast and southeast of Northwood.

<sup>67</sup> The practice of separate residences for parents and children in order to ensure the best school for the children is very common in Taiwan. Children who manage to score high enough to enter one of the elite high schools there, often reside in separate locations from their parents within the same city. They live either with relatives who happen to reside in the vicinity of a respective school or in the school's boarding houses.

<sup>68</sup> see footnote 97.

*"We looked around a lot and then went with one of the new areas in Mission Viejo. Compared to Irvine it's much cheaper, we have more space. We have a friend who has the same house by the same builder but it was \$ 100,000 more." (informant #27)*

Looking at the distribution of informants in these various subdivisions by cohort, some patterns are evident. Though all cohorts were represented in each of the locations listed above, certain cohorts were more likely to cluster in some affluent neighborhoods than others. The majority of immigrants from the first cohort had managed to buy a house in the affluent neighborhoods of either Irvine, Tustin or Newport Coast after one or two moves from other regions and states. For the second cohort residential locations were equally distributed between the upscale neighborhoods of Irvine and less expensive areas of Northwood, as well as the subdivisions southeast of Irvine, including Lake Forest, Laguna Hills and Mission Viejo. Among members of this cohort, families in which the husband had returned to East Asia had the highest proportions living in the more affluent neighborhoods. Immigrants of the third cohort preferred the comparatively less expensive, older neighborhoods of Irvine and Fountain Valley. Thus, the fourth cohort, displayed a different pattern. Informants whose husband earned income primarily in East Asia purchased houses in the most affluent new neighborhoods of Irvine and Tustin. This pattern reflects some of the differences between members of each cohort as described above. The residential location of network members, such as friends and relatives, in relation to an informant is discussed in more depth in chapter 7.

### **Choosing a Neighborhood**

In addition to financial considerations, other factors influenced the final choice for housing within a specific subdivision. Given that the same amount of money could buy more space and the most up to date styles in locations outside the city limits of Irvine, it is obvious that other factors were at work as well. Some of the rationales discussed here illustrate the complexity of these decision making processes. However, it is also important to look at informants' evaluation of Irvine as a place of residence. Not only did the costs and benefits vary among locations both inside and outside Irvine's borders, but informants repeatedly used Irvine as a standard for comparison when choosing a place to live. This becomes more evident in the discussion below. Table 6.13 presents a list of primary and secondary reasons, as cited by informants, for the selection of a particular home.

**Table 6.13 Reasons for choosing a particular house in a subdivision in South Orange County**

Reason	primary reason (in %)	secondary reasons (in %)
good investment, affordable	35	23.1
new house, clean, ample space, great view	15	19.7
planned community, middle class lifestyle	6.7	8.7
security	3.3	7.0
close to school of children	15	11.4
close to job, good infrastructure	8.3	9.6
relatives live in area (broker)	5	6.3
recommended by a friend (broker)	1.7	2.3
Chinese shops and institutions nearby	5	5.2
low number of other Chinese in the area	5	6.3
	100	100

Informants preferred new housing if financially able. This is in line with the desires of the American public. The preference for a house within one of Irvine Company's master plan communities reflects the desire for a new housing. In addition, it is for some residents a more conspicuous display of their economic and social status. The names of specific subdivisions were variously recognized in the social circles of the area.<sup>69</sup> Claiming residence in one of the more prestigious neighborhoods instantly informed others of one's families financial capabilities. Associations with such affluent neighborhoods was more important for some than others.

*"We were thinking of maybe getting one of the newer houses in the new division of Northwood. Years ago when West Park was first offered, it was very expensive.<sup>70</sup> A friend of mine paid half a million dollars for a house when it was first offered. Just coming from Taiwan he paid cash. Since then the prices have dropped. It lost \$ 150,000 over the following 2 years right after West Park was opened. Hhm hm, because Irvine is relatively new and its more like a trademark as far as a new city, a small city goes. It's a unique situation here. The Irvine company owns more than 90% of the area here. The company can gradually develop the land. Most other companies are under pressure they have to develop rapidly. Irvine is a model for many cities, not only in the United States also overseas."* (informant #32)

<sup>69</sup> Only anecdotal evidence can be brought to bear on this recognition.

<sup>70</sup> New subdivisions such as Irvine West Park have always drawn a lot of requests from potential customers when they became available. The builder, in this case the Irvine Company, has often resorted to holding a lottery for potential customers. Only those who got a winning ticket priced at \$ 5,000 each, could purchase a house. Those who did not win lost a small portion of their initial investment to enter the lottery (as a participation fee).

The secure environment offered by a master plan community with its relatively homogenous residents was another incentive to seek housing in one of the newer subdivisions. Immigrants with most financial capabilities, often moved into a gated community surrounded by walls and guarded 24 hours a day.

Next to the various facts concerning the age, size, price and surroundings of a house, the location of a house in relation to the quality of assigned junior high and highschools was critical for some informants. The rules for assignment of neighborhoods to specific school districts introduced above, added one more important consideration as to where to live. An obvious reason for attention to school location is exemplified by parents who preferred to live within walking distance to their child's school, a convenience that could save them from the daily shuttling by car of their children to and from school and reduce the risk of accident either in a car or school bus.<sup>71</sup> However, the most effort on the part of parents came when selecting the most suitable highschool for them, a selection that is critically important for their child's future college prospect. The choice of highschool was even more important than other features of a neighborhood. For these parents, the reason most often cited for a change of residence was the enrollment of one's children in the high school of choice.

*"We were looking for school district and also for a nicer area to live - and that's how we found this area. At the time - in Fountain Valley - the school district didn't have a special program for the gifted kids - and this area had a program for gifted kids - so we choose for student education. The previous house was about a mile up - but that's a different school district already." (informant #37)*

For informants with children, the need to place high school age children in the highest quality school ranked higher than even informants' desire to upgrade the house in terms of style or neighborhood status. Many informants whose youngest children had already entered college contemplated moving to a smaller, but newer home. Thus, the choice of schools explains much in terms of the residential patterns found among middle income immigrants.

However, informants with children born in the United States were less eager to enroll their children in the high schools within the Irvine School District as the informants who arrived in the United States when their children were between 6 and 15 years of age. This was for practical reasons, but was also based on the information, generally word-of-mouth, immigrants obtained while still living in Taiwan. Practically, not all schools in Orange County offered ESL programs

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<sup>71</sup>Many middle class parents all across the United States choose not to rely on the school busses. They bring and pick up their children in their own private vehicles.

(English as a Second Language) that helped in easing the language difficulties facing newly arrived foreign students. The establishment of an ESL program at a given school depended on the number of immigrants of a given language group within the school district. Not all subdivisions attached to a specific school reached the critical number necessary. For example, the otherwise excellent school 'Foothill High', near the affluent Tustin subdivisions, had no ESL program and students living nearby had to attend the more distant Tustin Highschool, which was of lower quality and had a large number of Hispanic students. All schools in the Irvine Unified School District offered ESL programs and were therefore a natural choice for newly arrived immigrants.

Within the Irvine Unified School System, University High School ranked highest among the three system wide high schools in average test scores. It was therefore the preferred choice among immigrants whose main objective was their children's educational advancement. Of course, the average score of the senior class does not guarantee high results for any individual student. However, the traditional Chinese view of education assumes a direct relationship between the achievements of a group of students and the achievements of a single member. Diligent learning was perceived as the main change agent, able to solve almost all problems independent of other possible factors such as personality, family structure or geographical area. If students were willing to work hard and make their teacher shine, the entire class would yield high results (Shaw 1996).

In addition, both third and fourth cohort immigrants had heard various rumors and suggestions about the best schools in Southern California while still back in Taiwan. The fact that the children of former neighbors and distant relatives had managed to enter outstanding universities in the United States after attending high schools in Irvine was a good recommendation.

*"My son (...) - at the time we needed a house for the youngest son. So either near Uni High or Irvine High. Because a lot of the people in my neighborhood in Taipei did go to school at Uni High or Irvine High. My Taipei neighbor's children, a lot of them. And many of them later went to UCI. Houses close to Uni High were then \$ 300,000 something, houses close to Irvine High were \$ 200,000. But because I didn't have that much money - only \$ 200,000 something - that's why I bought this house here close to Irvine High." (informant #21)*

As for educational expectation beyond high school and entrance to a quality university, many parents mentioned that one of their primary educational goals for children was to prepare groom them to do well in both social worlds, Chinese/Taiwanese and American.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> Other issues in relation to the education of the second and 1.5 generation, such as their struggles with language acquisition and choice of friends in terms of ethnic affiliation, are interesting as well but are beyond the scope of this study.



Since parents of American born ethnic Chinese and Taiwanese children were less consumed about high test scores for their children, they also took other factors into consideration when shopping for a new house such as average commute time to work.<sup>73</sup> That explained the relatively high proportion of first and second cohort immigrants in Northwood. This neighborhood, on the north side of Irvine, had medium-priced older houses and was demographically family-oriented. Informants living in this area held jobs within the administrative borders of Irvine.

*"The job made a difference (in the decision), because of the traffic. Of course you can save a lot of money. But the traffic. Right now it's so close to the job, we carpool together. I gave the car to my son. I work for ... (company name) which is on ... (street) in the Irvine Industrial Park and he (husband) works in that area as well." (informant #35)*

Though the fact that residence and work place are both located within the city limits does not necessarily indicate a short distance in South Orange County (for example, certain neighborhoods in Tustin and Costa Mesa are as close to the Irvine Industrial Park as is Northwood). Among the families whose main breadwinners worked in Orange County, Northwood residents had the shortest average commute in distance and time. Many other informants lived in one part of South Orange County and went to work in another part. The absolute distance in miles in these cases could sometimes be quite large. However, informants reported that what was really important for them was not simply distance, per se, but how convenient both their house and place of work were to highway off ramps and how congested the section of the highway tended to be between the two locations.

There were a few other factors which influenced informants' selection of a particular location. The appeal of a house according to the principles of "fengshui" was one example.<sup>74</sup> Fengshui is a school of thought which offers specific rules for alignment of doors inside a house in reference to a street which is believed to influence the flow of air and energy within a residence. It also provides knowledge of hidden sources of water on the property that can create fields of positive and negative energy. Potential home owners either hired a Fengshui Specialist from Monterey Park to help find a suitable home or had the specialist arrange rooms and doors after the home was purchased.

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<sup>73</sup>American born children are generally native English speakers and well-acquainted with the requirements of the U.S. educational system.

<sup>74</sup> 風水 (feng shui) = wind and water. Refers to the coordination of the energies of wind and water surrounding a particular place.

The nature of the relationship with the real estate agent also had an effect on the choice of houses. Although the role of personal relationships in finding a house is discussed in more detail in chapter 7, it is noteworthy that several informants reported that either a spouse, or a friend of a former classmate, or a relative had a real estate license and advised the informant on the selection of a house upon arrival in Orange County.

*"We looked around - I like trees - and this one has 3 trees in the back. We found this house through my tongxue, my school friend - her little sister's husband is an agent, her brother-in-law." (informant #52)*

All informants employed the services of a co-ethnic real estate agent when buying or selling a house. Indeed, many middle-class immigrants, especially women, worked as full-time or part-time real estate agents depending on their client base. It is not surprising that the referral chains worked well and informants with a connection, however distant, to a real estate agent known by a friend or relative, felt compelled to request their services. Real estate agents did filter and pre-select choices for potential buyers. This is especially true for slightly older residences. The new houses in newly opened subdivisions can be bought directly from the builder or a real estate agent representing the builder. Under such circumstances immigrants were less obligated to purchase homes through friends and family members, or their acquaintances, who worked in the real estate sector. At any event, real estate agents played an important role in the lives of recent immigrants. In addition to the selection of suitable housing, they also assisted families with school enrollment, hiring of tutors, choosing banks, filling out forms, and any other situations where the lack of language ability or familiarity with life in America could pose problems.

### **The Choice For or Against Irvine**

As suggested in the beginning of the previous section, opinions about the city of Irvine as the prime real estate location for immigrants from Taiwan varied among informants. Nevertheless, all informants volunteered their evaluation of the city and its residents without being directly asked to provide such comparisons. Some were very vocal about their preference for Irvine, including those who decided against buying a house in one of its neighborhoods. Others justified their reasons for living elsewhere as a conscious decision to stay away from Irvine. The presentation of informants' perceptions concerning Irvine shows the city's importance as a reference point for immigrants from Taiwan in a region lacking urban centers or visible borders.

### The choice for Irvine

The perceived positive characteristic of Irvine included such descriptors as "good air," "good atmosphere," and well planned. The presumably perfect design appealed especially to the many engineers and scientists among the informants. Among them many listed an interest in more orderly ways of living as one of their motivations for leaving Taiwan. Other informants focused more on the green, well-maintained landscape and the outstanding educational credentials of Irvine.

*"What makes Irvine so important is that its the cultural and educational capital of the area.<sup>75</sup> You find it only here. And it has very good fengshui, it has rivers, and waterways and parks. It's America's fourth most beautiful city." (informant #17)*

The word "Irvine" was repeatedly used as the metaphor for "new." Informants wondered aloud why they rarely observed repairs being made to streets and city thoroughfares or were rarely, if ever, inconvenienced by construction site traffic.<sup>76</sup> In fact, the city had ordinances against roadside billboard advertising and other "eye sores". Even large shopping malls could not advertise their existence miles in advance as was common in most other areas outside Irvine. The city of Irvine, and the Irvine Company as its builder, also curbed the spread of bars and night clubs. Restaurants were only allowed to operate within the confines of shopping malls. There was only one bar and one discotheque in the city and these were adjacent to the University of California, Irvine (see also Soja 1996 on the opening of the one and only bar in Irvine). This made for a very homogeneous environment in terms of architecture, landscape and in residents' income and levels of education.

*"South Orange County is one of the more conservative areas to live in the United States - which matches the traditional concept of us Chinese. We like it conservative, emphasize order and education." (informant #40)*

However, Irvine was also a focal point for those who lived in many of the adjacent cities. The opening of the Chinese Supermarket 'Ranch 99' in the mid 1990's in one of the centrally located shopping centers in Irvine, and the subsequent arrival of ethnic Chinese and Taiwanese businesses and services in other retail locations, attracted co-ethnics living elsewhere in South Orange

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<sup>75</sup> 爾灣是文化都市和教育都市 (erwan shi wenhua dushi he jiaoyu dushi) = Irvine is a cultural metropolis and a educational metropolis.

<sup>76</sup> This is of course an optical illusion since new subdivisions were built almost constantly. However, these subdivisions are built as clusters in the areas away from the main roads. Only people who specifically visit the site of a subdivision in progress will witness construction. In addition, the building of single family homes is extremely fast paced.

County. Nowhere else in the region was there a higher concentration of ethnic Chinese and Taiwanese stores and service providers.

*"Way back when, when we lived in San Diego - we had to drive all the way up to LA to buy food - then in Orange County the places in Westminster opened - and then - Irvine got an area." (informant #56)*

These ethnic stores increased the desirability of certain Irvine neighborhoods. Some older Chinese residents in the new subdivision of West Park, for example, were excited about no longer needing a car to go shopping. For residents in other Irvine neighborhoods the availability of ethnic food and services nearby allowed them to shop without having to enter a highway. Driving on a highway was still a frightening endeavor for some of the recently immigrated housewives who had only recently taken their first driving test.

Irvine's attractiveness was not strictly limited to the availability of good shopping facilities. The accumulation of ethnic banks, accountants and medical services also served as a magnet for ethnic residents of Irvine and adjacent cities. Business owners who wanted to relocate to Irvine found good infrastructure in both the Irvine Spectrum area, which promotes high technology investment, and the Irvine Industrial Park, which specialized in the trade of medical supplies. The rate of concentration of ethnic businesses was not as high as in the San Gabriel Valley, but such businesses were more clustered within the Irvine border than elsewhere in South Orange County.

*"The advantage of Irvine is that it's closer to everything. And Irvine has good schools, plus it was planned by the same company. That makes it homogenous. Irvine has a higher concentration of Chinese people - Mission Viejo and Laguna Hills don't. There are a lot of activities for Chinese people in Irvine. It's like a center for Chinese. In recent years there have been more and more Chinese people in the area. Turtle Rock is really nice - business people, Taiwanese live there - and then their relatives come and friends. The reason why there are more Chinese in Irvine - is that the businesses are coming to Irvine and that drags more Chinese after it." (informant #8)*

Since the city of Irvine offered both more space in absolute terms and a larger ethnic population than any other city in the area, it is not surprising that informants considered Irvine, independent of their own residential location, the commercial, industrial and recreational center of their social world.

*"Why is it that there are 8 or 9 Chinese banks in this town, ok ? There isn't even any distinguished Chinatown around. No, the whole town (Irvine) is Chinatown! And it's not even very conscious. It just so happens, the Chinese schools, the different groups" (informant #35).*

Indeed, Irvine had the highest number of ethnic churches, ethnic recreational clubs and community organizations of all cities in the area. The Irvine Chinese school helped in facilitating the formation of yet other ethnic groups and associations. It was not church operated like traditional Chinese language schools (Palinkas 1988) and offered Chinese language instruction for children on Sunday mornings. Since Irvine had a large number of Chinese and Taiwanese residents,<sup>77</sup> the school was bigger than any other in the region.<sup>78</sup> In addition to the Chinese language classes other courses and activities were offered for both students and their parents. Though the majority of participants were members of the first and second cohort whose children were American born, the activities for parents attracted recently arrived immigrants as well. Many non-religious groups developed out of relationships formed at the Chinese school and then eventually establishing separate agendas and meeting schedules outside the school's framework.<sup>79</sup> That had the effect that informants not from Irvine found themselves frequently driving to Irvine to attend social events or participate in organizational activities.

*"Somebody who is in a social group in Irvine, has much more of an active life and much more opportunities. Its an environment with lots of frequent interaction with other fellow Chinese." (informant #49)*

Even informants who preferred to keep a low social profile and avoid social obligations named Irvine as the place they visited more often for social engagements than any other place in the region.

*"Most of my friends are in Irvine, because my church is in Irvine. Most of my people are there. My students are also all in Irvine. My circle is very narrow. I am not very active, don't go to lots of different places. I am also not a social type. The places I go to are pretty much reduced to Irvine." (informant #66)*

### **The choice against Irvine**

Not all immigrants considered the rise of Irvine as the center of the region's Chinese population a positive development, including those who took advantage of the city's services and attractions. Discontent with Irvine had two primary sources. It was either a response to the assumption that

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<sup>77</sup>Both ethnic Chinese and ethnic Taiwanese families frequented the Chinese school. The school only teaches Mandarin Chinese (guoyu, standard Chinese in Taiwan). Some ethnic Taiwanese families also attempted to expose their children to Taiwanese, minnanhua, but were often glad when their children learned at least the official Chinese dialect. San Diego had a Taiwanese language school, one of the few in the United States to date. There was talk of offering Taiwanese language instruction at the school to be opened by the Tzu-Chi Buddhist congregation. Any developments in that direction could not be verified.

<sup>78</sup>Fountain Valley and Westminster have independent Chinese schools as well. South of Irvine, no other non-church based Chinese schools existed in South Orange County at the time of fieldwork.

<sup>79</sup> See more on community organizations in chapter 8.

only upper class people lived in Irvine or a response to the social climate of rules and obligations that comes with a larger concentration of co-ethnics in an area. The image of Irvine as the home of rich ethnic Taiwanese doctors was quite persistent, even among immigrants who had lived in Irvine for an extended period. It shows that immigrants replicated the class consciousness acquired in Taiwan after their arrival in the United States.

*"Sure, Irvine is not bad either. But, well we heard that a lot of Taiwanese doctors and the children of doctors move to Irvine. Those who buy big houses all live over there. And we heard that their children at school, they compare a lot. They talk comparison, display their new cars and so on. So we thought that is not the right environment for our children. This Fountain Valley here, its not so high class, but it is still very clean and peaceful. Our children won't get off the right track here either. So I just feel it suits us better as an environment." (informant #52)<sup>80</sup>*

A lot of informants wanted to distance themselves from "those Taiwanese." In fact, almost all informants considered themselves to be different from all other immigrants. There was a clear perception of what "immigrants from Taiwan" were like. The individual informant, then, saw him or herself as an outlier to the norm. However, not only did ethnic Chinese struggle with these assumptions, ethnic Taiwanese also avoided association with "those Taiwanese". In recent years both mainstream and even ethnic media had published stories about white residents who were upset about the behavior of wealthy immigrants. Since Asian immigrants were seen as flaunting their wealth by paying cash for new houses and cars they were thought to drive up the prices for the rest of the upper middle class in South Orange County. Articles about the conspicuous consumption of immigrant children and related gang behavior also circulated. While these were isolated incidents, the profile of the ethnic Chinese and Taiwanese residents in South Orange County had been rather distinctive until the arrival of the third cohort of immigrants. All members of the older cohorts of immigrants had attended graduate school in the United States and worked as professionals, either as engineers, doctors or professors. Members of the third and fourth cohort

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<sup>80</sup> 爾灣也不错，但是我们那时候听说阿，那边是台湾来的，很多都是医生，医生的孩子什麼。他们买大房子都在那边。听说的了，那地方小孩子那会比较话，用这个什麼：“你开什麼好车子，我开什麼东西”。那，我们觉得这个环境对我们的孩子来讲不好。我觉得这个 Fountain Valley 就是，不是很 high class 的地方。但是也还曼干净，很平静。这样的话，我觉得小海子也不会去坏路。我自己本身觉得，就是比较合适的，比较适合我们。= Irvine is not bad either, but at that time (when they moved) we heard that over there were a lot of people from Taiwan, but all were medical doctors, and the children of doctors. Those who buy big houses are all over there. We also heard, in that place the children do a lot of comparison talk, use words like: "what kind of car do you drive, I drive this kind of thing." Well, we thought this kind of environment is not good for our children. I think this place here, Fountain Valley, is a good place, even though it is not a high class place. But it is also quite clean, and very peaceful. This way, I think the children will not embark on a bad track (road). I myself think that this is suitable, it quite fits us (informant #52).

referred to these earlier cohort members as 'lao meiguoren' ("the Americans").<sup>81</sup> Immigrants with blue collar occupations who had established international or local businesses in Orange County, felt somewhat inadequate in comparison to neighboring doctors and professors. However, in contrast to other immigrant groups in the United States (e.g., Brazilians, see Margolis 1998), immigrants from Taiwan did not avoid each other.

A related topic of conversation regarding Irvine was its comparatively large number of ethnic Chinese and Taiwanese. A sentiment expressed by one third of all informants is as follows:

*"As for my taste, there are too many Chinese in Irvine already." (informant #40)*

This attitude represents informants primarily living outside Irvine. But several longtime ethnic residents were also perplexed about the growing visibility of ethnic Chinese and Taiwanese in the area.

*"When we first came to the United States - we saw any Chinese - we were so happy - because we didn't see that many. But now you see them everywhere - it's nothing anymore." (informant #39)*

The dynamics among immigrants had changed. South Orange County as a residential location for immigrants was clearly no longer an outlier void of ethnic residents. Informants who had lived elsewhere in the United States with low concentrations of immigrants from Asia reported that the community they had built with fellow Chinese and Taiwanese in these areas had been more closely tied and intimate. Being only one of a few co-ethnics in a town provided a stronger sense of belonging and connectedness. People relied on one another and looked out for each other (informant #49). Certainly, that resulted in a lack of opportunities to choose friends. Yet, the reduced complexity of the group, the low level of social obligations due to fewer ethnic clubs and events, was a relief to some.

Informants who had only lived in Southern California also noted that the increasing number of immigrants from Taiwan to South Orange County had brought changes they had not anticipated when first moving to the region. As outlined above, many had wanted to avoid a predominantly Chinese environment such as Monterey Park or other cities in the San Gabriel Valley. While Irvine and surrounding areas did not resemble any of these locations, many informants felt that over time it had become more difficult to escape the influences of the growing Chinese

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<sup>81</sup>老 美 国 人 (lao meiguoren) = "old Americans." Used in resemblance to the catchy phrase "old Chinahands" which labels experts of Chinese culture who have spent a long time there. 老 (lao) is also used in addressing closely related people as a form of endearment.

community in the region. For example, people were questioned by co-ethnics when they chose to pursue a hobby, such as dancing or singing outside the realm of conventional ethnic organizations. Though the number of ethnic Chinese and Taiwanese in the region was too large for everyone to know everyone else, those who participated in public spaces exposed themselves to social evaluation.<sup>82</sup> This was reinforced by the fact that most immigrants crossed paths with co-ethnics one way or another through involvement in their children's schools.

*"There are more Taiwanese people in California than in New Jersey. New Jersey offered actually more opportunities for expressing oneself as a Taiwanese than California. Because here, a lot of people are Taiwanese and watch each other. Here, there are too many Asian people. Here, when you come home, you can watch Chinese TV, Taiwan news, you have your newspaper here, you are always up to date. Here you don't have to interact with anyone else but other Taiwanese people. But they watch you. The people in the Adult School think, how can you go to the events all by yourself? That is dangerous. You know, why that all is? Because my husband is not here. Whenever I meet someone here I talk to, they tell on me. It's like being in prison." (informant #24)*

While people appreciated the convenience of ethnic stores and services as well as the recreational facilities made possible by the ever-increasing presence of ethnic group members, many would prefer not live in a Chinese dominated area. After all, they did immigrate in order to experience something different, to experience a different way of life, and in some cases even satisfy their curiosity.<sup>83</sup> A duplication of life as it was in Taiwan was not desirable, particularly for many female immigrants. Half of all informants predicted that South Orange County would get even more densely populated with immigrants from Taiwan, given it offered what the most affluent immigrant families were looking for, namely good schools, new houses, and secure master plan communities with convenient highway access, and a sufficient number of local ethnic stores. Nevertheless, no one mentioned any other state or region in which he or she would rather live. However, even those informants who had good experiences with smaller communities of co-ethnics in other regions of the United States did not want to leave the good climate, security, and cultural infrastructure South Orange County had to offer, both in terms of mainstream cultural events and ethnic cultural gatherings.

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<sup>82</sup> A closer look at public spaces for ethnic Chinese and Taiwanese in Orange County is presented in chapter 8.

<sup>83</sup> Certainly, there is the possibility that informants wanted to portray themselves as interested in a culturally diverse environment when talking to an anthropologist.



## Perceptions about Life in America

Immigrants often explained their reasons for emigration and the selection of a specific place in the United States through insights on the changes they saw in their own living and their overall living conditions. When probed further many revealed that they had been trying to make sense of the differences between Taiwan and Southern California ever since arriving.

Many women had experienced changes in their personal outlooks on life. The longer they had lived away from home, the more the characteristics they once thought to be a hallmark of their ethnicity had faded and made room for other experiences and viewpoints.

*"I have made a lot of changes with myself. I have grown much more optimistic, I have become less serious about things, like many Chinese still are. I now have more of the 'so what?', 'who cares' attitude." (informant #19)*

The realization that over time it had become more tedious to switch between the expected role behavior in Taiwan and the newly acquired behavior patterns in response to life in America forced many first generation immigrants to reconcile their origins.

*"We have to look for the roots, because our roots are there (in Taiwan). So it doesn't matter where you grow and tend, you always have to look for your roots. If you want to have an effect, you always have to look for the root. For example if you want to get rid of a tree or a bush, because the bush came over from the neighbors plot and spread all over my property, you have to look for the roots to completely eliminate it." (informant #20)*

The roots metaphor is widespread among Overseas Chinese and expatriates (Li 1994). The believe that cultural roots bind forever allows immigrants to thrive in the American context, become American citizens and yet stay true to their identity. This was, with a few exceptions, not contested among the first generation immigrants among informants. On the other hand, most second generation informants did not share their parents' sentiment despite frequent attempts of elders to ease their children's struggle with questions of belonging. In the eyes of the parent generation, children and grandchildren should adopt the idea of one's cultural roots as the guideline for the formation of one's personal identity.

Indeed, parents often reflected on their children's well-being in the United States. They recognized the difference in experiences for children born and socialized in the United States and children who had been born and initially socialized in Taiwan. Parents whose children spent at least the first 8 years in Taiwan knew that the adjustment to the American school system would be

difficult.<sup>84</sup> In the beginning children seemed not to like life in the United States. They talked about being lonely and feeling deserted. Not only because they had to leave their friends behind, but also because they were unable to engage in many activities on their own. In Southern California they had to rely on their parents to solve their transportation problems. Wherever they needed to go in the new environment, they had to be driven by their parents. In addition, they were limited to mostly interaction with parents since there tended to be no uncles, neighbors, or family friends. The complexity of relationships was drastically reduced.

*"There is nothing to do without a car. In Taiwan it's not like that. A lot of neighbors, they all hang out together. So it's never far to the next person. There is always someone. You come out of your building - there you meet your neighbor and they ask you what you like to eat, and so forth. Everything is at you footsteps, shops, food. Life is easy. But in America, even for food you have to drive somewhere. So, it takes a while to get used to this place."* (informant #22)

However, after a while children got used to both the demands and advantages of their new environment. Depending on the age at arrival it might have taken some longer, but eventually all learned to appreciate the reduced school work load and eventually found friends who came from similar backgrounds. Children born in the United States usually engaged in friendships with students from all ethnic backgrounds, at least until they reached their teenage years.<sup>85</sup> Children who arrived from Taiwan at a later age mostly interacted with other students who were born in East Asia and who shared similar experiences upon entering junior high or high school in the United States. Nevertheless, the different approach to teaching in the United States had an effect on all immigrant children. They were exposed to a set of values and opportunities for self-development which was different from that experienced by their parents. It is not surprising that informants often wondered about the future effects of these changes. They also realized that they had to reevaluate their own personal approach to discipline and the rigid enforcement of their expectations upon their children. Many said that they found the practice of praising children instead of scolding them appealing.

*"Well, it's so funny, when I go to the Baseball league with all the other mothers. The little guys just hit something lousy, and the parents still cheer them on "hey great job -*

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<sup>84</sup>Age 8 at the time of arrival in the United States is a number most parents, even those who have not immigrated with children of that age, mentioned as a crucial point of separation in behavior and development. Children who are 8 years old have already had 3 years of schooling in Taiwan and have been exposed to the rigid drill of practicing the Chinese writing system as well as the overall framework of student guidance based on discipline and coherent group behavior.

<sup>85</sup>Many parents report that the social groups their children were in involved in switched in composition when they were in their sophomore years in high school (second of four years in high school, 15 years of age).

*.wonderful." Chinese parents would never do that. Me and my sister we talked about it a lot. About how our parents influenced us. And that it was always negative, a negative response. How do you say that? For example, when we got a B, our parents asked: "Why didn't you get an A?" and if it was an A: "Why not an A+ ?" American parents say: "Oh, a B - not bad." That's the American way. And that's a real struggle for me. It's very hard for me to show emotions and praise. Now, I know. Now, I love it. I might adopt the custom." (informant #35)*

Nevertheless, most parents who immigrated from Taiwan could not imagine any reduction in the level of aspirations they held for their children. They disagreed with the financial traditions of many American parents who expected their children's participation in the financing of their college education. Immigrant parents were willing to support their children as long as necessary and at almost any cost in order to graduate from the best university.

Changes in the family dynamics did not only affect the parent-child relationship but had an impact on marital relationships as well. The general opinion of female informants was that in the West a wife had a better quality of life and a more secure family environment. Women in the United States, as informants perceived it, did not have to deal with husbands who spent most of their time socializing in bars and dance clubs. Many explained that it was common knowledge in Taiwan that a man needed to make business connections which generally required spending time with clients or prospective business partners in bars and night clubs, some of which endorsed prostitution. In contrast, they saw American husbands as helping at home and participating in children's activities. A typical complaint is represented by the following:

*"Despite that the times have changed in Taiwan as well, it's still like this: women cover the inside and men cover the outside (nü zai nei, nan zai wai).<sup>86</sup> Men still can't go into the kitchen. In America they think it's the task of both, and then men don't really have many places to go - not like in Taiwan. Here, men like to buy houses and insurance and stuff, and then they have to pay it off. So it is all very regulated, and you can't really take off and change. And it's stable." (informant #28)*

This view of the mainstream American family was influenced by the media, both from information distributed in Taiwan and American and Chinese TV programs and movies consumed in the United States. It is representative of the generation of women age 40 and older who had been raised according to traditional Chinese role expectations. The appreciation of the American lifestyle was widespread among female informants. Their role as mothers and women was validated by the respect they thought they gained from the lack of entertainment opportunities for men in Irvine. South Orange County with its emphasis on cleanliness, security, and family values

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<sup>86</sup> 女在内男在外 (nu zai nei nan zai wai) = women are inside, men are outside (see further information on this saying above).

was therefore considered an ideal, albeit uneventful environment for them. As introduced earlier, not all male informants shared such a positive assessment of their immigrant experience.

In addition to their perceptions of the effects of immigration on family life and relationships, informants also commented on social life and public spaces. They had left a densely populated island and were now surrounded by relatively large amounts of open space and a clean environment. But this of course was at the expense of reduced opportunities for entertainment and chances for social interaction. While women appreciated South Orange County's lack of a nightlife when it came to their husbands, they themselves had fewer places in which to socialize as well. Nevertheless, most were more than willing to pay such a price in exchange for safety and a higher quality environment overall.

*"Well, after all I like Taiwan best, its so convenient (fangbian).<sup>87</sup> But I also like America, it's so clean and everyone abides by the laws. it also has lots of space, first of all makes it pleasant. But Taiwan is convenient, very convenient. In the United States after 8 o'clock in the evening, there is no one out on the streets, no store to stroll by, and night market. Taiwan has a lot of markets one can go to and stroll through, open 24 hours, you can spend your time that way. But Taiwan also has disadvantages. The air pollution is bad, really terrible. And it is too crowded, The traffic is terrible. All has good and bad sides to it." (informant 19)<sup>88</sup>*

The general sentiment was that large social circles as experienced in Taiwan were impossible to reproduce in America, and this was even true in Monterey Park, which was known for its much higher co-ethnic population density. All informants consistently contrasted the benefits and pitfalls of social life in the United States and Taiwan. Life in Taiwan was always perceived as easier, both in terms of opportunities to earn money in a short period of time and in terms of opportunities to socialize. On the flip side, Taiwan offered less freedom for self-expression and fewer personal

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<sup>87</sup> The frequent use of the word 方便 fangbian) is often translated as "convenient." When taken apart, of the many meanings of the character 方 (fang) the following stand out: "method, way, direction, aspect" . For 便 (bian) the translation is more clear: "fitting, appropriate, advantageous.." So, when reading "convenient" in the following statements, the reader might also want to associate it with "fitting, suitable, advantageous., handy."

<sup>88</sup> 还是曼喜欢台湾，因为很方便。但是我也很喜欢美国，因为很干净。然後大家都守守法。而且地方很大。初前很舒服，但是台湾很方便，非常方便。美国你到晚上八点钟都没有人，没有 store 去逛，又没有 night market. 在台湾好多 market 可以去逛阿，晚上二十四钟，24 hours 就怎麽过去。那台湾的坏处就是 air pollution 很坏，很糟糕。然後太 crowded. 那个 traffic 太糟糕。又好又坏的。= After all, I like Taiwan a lot, because it is convenient. But I also like America a lot, because it is clean. In addition, everybody obeys the law. And the space is big. First of all, that is very pleasant - but Taiwan is convenient, very convenient. In America, once you reach 8 o'clock in the evening nobody is on the streets anymore, there are no stores to stroll by, and there is also no night market. In Taiwan there are lots of markets to stroll by, in the evenings, and 24 hours around the clock, you can spend your time that way. Taiwan's disadvantages are very bad air pollution, very terrible indeed. In addition, Taiwan is crowded. The traffic is too terrible. It has good as well as bad aspects (informant #19).

choices. The environment was polluted and violent crimes were more prevalent. Life in the United States was considered to be a refuge from all the negative aspects of Taiwan. However, independence from family and the cultural norms of social conduct often resulted in feelings of isolation. Informants often expressed confusion about Americans' emphasis on individualism. They recognized that other non-ethnic residents in their neighborhoods valued their privacy. However, they were also keenly aware of the fact that even Americans sometimes felt lonely and isolated.

*"In America life is simple and everyone just cares about themselves (zai meiguo shei dou wei ziji).<sup>89</sup> Yet, in Taiwan life is more complex and often too much trouble with relatives and relations. But it has one advantage, so to speak, to live here. You have fewer relatives here, and fewer "friends." Therefore you don't have to attend many social events. In Taiwan on the other hand, it is most likely you have a lot of relatives, a lot of friends. Then there is that person marrying, and that one is having a birthday. Every day you are busy to the nines. Taiwan can be very exhausting." (informant #34)<sup>90</sup>*

Many informants were glad to leave behind the obligations and responsibilities towards their extended families. They also appreciated reduced need to constantly engage in socializing activities to maximize their financial and political potential. However, their desire for personal interaction remained. Chinese culture in general, in contrast to American culture and its emphasis of individualism (Hampden-Turner 2000), is consciously aware of the fact that people need each other and define themselves vis-a-vis others. Women who did not work outside their homes were especially eager to build relationships in the area.

*"When it comes to myself, I do have no problems here. But when it comes to friends - that's a problem. It's not easy to find friends here, everybody is so busy. This makes this place very boring." (informant #42)<sup>91</sup>*

The trade-off between more space, both literally and figuratively, and the relatively limited opportunities for social interaction was assessed differently by each immigrant. Informants adapted to these changes in a variety of ways. Therefore it is important to examine the emergent social relationships and the social structures they help form, in order to gain a better understanding of the everyday life of affluent immigrants from Taiwan in South Orange County.

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<sup>89</sup> 在美国谁都为自己 (zai meiguo shei dou wei ziji) = in American everyone just cares about himself (herself).

<sup>90</sup> 太热闹 (tai renao) = too lively. 热闹 (renao) is an often used expression for excitement and a good time spend in the company of friends. It has a positive connotation.

<sup>91</sup> 生活真无聊 (shenghuo zhen wuliao) = life is really boring (meaningless, uneventful).



**PART III**  
**RESEARCH FINDINGS**

## Chapter 7

### Personal Networks of Immigrants

"Social network analysis considers social structure to be the patterned organization of relationships among network members" (Wellman 1999: 16).

"But what makes structural analysis really information, it seems to me, is not the final positional picture at all, but the steps that lead to it (...) we profit not from having defined a social structure, but from trying to define it, not from having made the study but from making it" (Nadel 1957: 154).

#### Introduction

In an attempt to understand the factors that influence social connections both between immigrants themselves and immigrants from Taiwan and with others in the larger society, two sets of questions need to be addressed. The first set of questions refers to the structure of the personal networks of immigrants from Taiwan. In this respect it is important to know what kinds of ties are predominant; what are the types of roles people play for each other? How far do these social ties span spatial distances? What explains the most frequently occurring patterns in the resulting networks? And finally, what influence does the structure of the personal networks have on the likelihood of integration?

The second set of questions asks first whether a distinct community of immigrants exists in South Orange County and second, what is the nature of such a community? The necessity to understand the characteristics of a community is based on the assumption that community is the link between studies of whole societies at the one end and interpersonal social systems at the other. It is a key for understanding how individuals interact with the social system at large and how they gain access to scarce resources. As stated in chapter 2, in this study 'community' is not defined in reference to a distinct spatial area. Instead, community manifests itself in the personal communities created by egocentric networks independent of a specific locality (Wellman 1999: 19). Based on this definition of community, this chapter introduces some aspects of the personal communities of immigrants. However, the higher the degree of coherence of an ethnic community, the more distinct and visible it becomes beyond the individual personal networks. Community coherence is reflected in the extent of overlap among personal networks. Evidence of overlap is manifested in community organizations which consists of individuals and their network ties. These



aspects of immigrant social networks and the degree of connectivity between social groups are presented in chapter 8 and discussed in chapter 9.

The analysis of personal networks employing the tools of social network analysis introduced in chapter 4 reveals both the opportunities and constraints to interaction inherent in the structure of personal networks. Family composition of immigrants, the extent of their human and economic capital, their settlement preferences, their utilization of various media, information sources, and communication and transportation technologies, are expected to have an influence on the structure of personal networks, as the hypotheses developed in chapter 3 stated.

### **Network Characteristics**

All people who arrive in a new place, immigrants and citizens alike, face the task of interacting with strangers. While modern technology has made it easier to maintain contact with friends and family members in other places, many newcomers seek relationships in their new environment, some out of curiosity, others out of necessity. American cities and towns are often characterized by individualism with an absence of traditional, long-term communities (Wellman 1999:5 on various authors). Many residents are recent arrivals and will be on the move again in due course in their search for better economic opportunities. What kind of relationships develop in these rapidly changing environments, especially among affluent immigrants? How, in fact, do people find new friends and other relations?

### **First Contact**

An immigrant's first contact is to some extent related to the reasons for emigration. Informants who are the first in their family to leave Taiwan in search of educational opportunities for themselves or their children name professors and educators as their first contacts. Informants who have had family members living in the United States prior to arrival generally name family as contacts independent of their visa type (e.g., a student visa or family-sponsored visa). A few list classmates and friends of their parents. First contacts in South Orange County are only slightly more diverse in nature. Former classmates are important. So are new colleagues at the workplace. The real estate agent responsible for the purchase of the first residence in the new environment is also often named as the initial contact.

**Table 7.1** Types of informants' first contacts upon arrival in the United States and in South Orange County

types of first contact	upon arrival in the United States (in%)	upon arrival in Orange County (in%)
immediate family	42	18
extended family	18	16
educational institution	30	5
former classmate	3	17
friends of parents	7	0
real estate agent	0	17
colleagues at work	0	25
church congregation	0	2
	100	100

**Finding Others: Types of Ties**

Many informants pointed out that people in the region, both fellow immigrants and non-immigrants, are very preoccupied with the tasks of everyday living. Few have the time or the interest to develop new relationships. In coming to terms with the initial difficulties in getting to know other people, many informants felt like this informant who said:

*"Seems like in America everyone is busy<sup>1</sup>. Not everyone is as busy as I am- not everyone has a job - but then again, they do have small children and are busy with those." (informant #22)*

Nevertheless, over time immigrants manage to find other people with whom they interact more regularly. The following chapter focuses on moderately strong ties which link people.<sup>2</sup> These ties are not weak ties based on simple acquaintanceship or co-membership in a community organization. The ties reported on here represent dyads of people who seek each others company while attending organizational meetings, ask each other for advice, or join each other for recreational outings. Not all relationships are between best friends, but between preferred interaction partners for particular needs and interests. The degree of strength of these ties is also exemplified by the fact that on average these ties have a multiplexity of 2.08 (sd=0.59); that is, most ties overlap within two distinct social realms. Multiplexity is defined as an overlap or redundancy of ties, meaning there are multiple role relations between two people (Minor 1983). For example, a person whom one likes to sit next to during choir sessions is also the person whom

<sup>1</sup> 在美国都是比较忙得 (zai meiguo dou shi bijiao mang de) = in America everybody is quite busy.

<sup>2</sup> For definitions of the properties of strong and weak ties see section on data analysis in chapter 4.

one goes for walks with, or whom one asks for advice on health care issues. However, in some instances, the provider of instrumental support such as information on events, finances and places for good shopping may be related by weak ties rather than more moderate ties (Granovetter 1973).

An important question becomes how do these relationships form over time? In their biographical accounts of immigration and settlement experiences, informants talked about how they came to know other people. They mentioned that the most important venues for meeting new people were various types of social organizations. Most conversations centered around children, events in Taiwan or just simple exchanges of information. The name-generating questions used to elicit network data were created in reference to these early interviews (McAllister and Fischer 1983). The name generator questions were grouped by their purpose (i.e., the type of support provided). In this study, interaction partners were either sources of social support, emotional support, or instrumental support. Social support and emotional support relationships are also referred to as expressive ties. Relationships that provide information, assistance, or any type of referrals are called instrumental ties (Kim and McKenry 1998: 313).

Informants could name as many people as they wished in response to each question. In addition, a set of questions was asked about each alter listed by the respondent. Descriptions were obtained on the alter's sex, age, type of relation (e.g., cousin, classmate, etc.), marital status, occupation, ethnicity, place of residence, length of time in the United States, length of relationship, and frequency of interaction.

### **Sources of Social Support**

*"You have to keep your roots in mind. floating around brings exciting periods in life. yet, one has to keep connectivity and balance, stay connected." (informant #6)*

Chinese and Taiwanese people are consciously aware of their need for social relationships. In contrast to of western and American cultural ideals of individualism, Chinese culture is characterized by an emphasis on collectivism (Kim and McKenry 1998, Hampden-Turner 2000). Many informants reported that, although they had little need for help during immigration outside family members or visa sponsors, they were interested in seeking opportunities to socialize. The initial contact person for newcomers to Orange County usually had limited insight into the various aspects of Orange County social life. People in the immediate neighborhood were often also not the most knowledgeable contacts. Instead, many informants mentioned being more successful at meeting others through membership in recreational clubs. A few learned about such recreational

classes as Chinese Ballroom Dancing or Chinese Folklore Dancing through community brochures obtained from the city's civic center or the adult school's catalogue of classes for the municipality's school district.<sup>3</sup> Most however, got introduced to the range of community organizations through the local Chinese school, most notably the Irvine Chinese school.<sup>4</sup>

*"The Chinese School we joined right when we came. We heard about it before we came down from (other state) besides the oldest of our sons already attended Chinese school there. Nobody introduced us to the Chinese School in Irvine - we somehow just knew."* (informant #49)

The questions eliciting the names and relationships of people within an informant's personal network were:

- Who do you talk to about issues occurring in the neighborhood?
- Who do you talk to about issues occurring at the workplace?
- Who do you talk to about issues related to your child's education and development?
- Who do you go out to dinner with at least once a month?
- Who have you invited to your house for a cup of tea or dinner in the past half year?
- Who do you go shopping with (recreational shopping, not in search of assistance)?<sup>5</sup>
- Who do you ask to join you in a new recreational activity (e.g., dancing, playing golf, singing, crafts, etc.)?
- Who do you ask to join you in an organization (e.g., alumni association, faith based organization, political organization)?

### **Finding and Giving Emotional Support**

Questions regarding emotional support were designed to understand whom an informant has turned to for help in times of hardship, such as when problems with a spouse or children arose. The goal was to learn how immigrants coped with the stress of moving to a new environment, taking on the role of a newcomer, being permanently away from home and, in some cases, being separated from their spouse for a lengthy period of time. However, another question was added to learn about informants' importance to others. The intention was to understand who sought whom when it came to seeking advice in personal matters. The assumption was that the assistance in times of trouble was not necessarily mutual. Given that some immigrants were more experienced

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<sup>3</sup> The community service department of a city government is roughly equivalent to the "Volksbildungswerk" or "Volkshochschule" in Germany.

<sup>4</sup> See reference to this phenomenon in chapter 6. Further discussion of organization is available in chapter 8.

<sup>5</sup> This question was originally part of the section asking about people who provide instrumental support. After conducting the first set of structured interviews it became clear that informants did not ask acquaintances for help with shopping tasks but considered shopping a leisure time activity, looking for clothes and "having fun" (just as the commercials in American TV promote it).

in their adjustment to the new environment it was expected that some people might be looked to for advice more often than they themselves seek it.

The questions were:

- Suppose you have a serious problem with your partner or your children which you cannot discuss with them. With whom would you talk to about such problems?
- Suppose you are feeling depressed and you need to talk to someone. With whom would you talk to about such problems?
- Who contacts you to talk about their depression or their problems with spouses or children?

### **From Affective Relationships to Advice Relationships**

To be sure, many informants mentioned their spouse, a close relative, or a very dear former classmate as their confidante for much of their expressive support. However, answers to the questions also revealed that several established residents among the immigrants were specifically looked to for advice by newer immigrants. Matters of the heart are less important than knowing how to deal with the unfamiliar educational, political and economic institutions in the new area. Informants who are well known for their participation in various ethnic organizations are more frequently approached by neighbors, joint group members and acquaintances. In some cases such well-known immigrants are asked for essential information on administrative procedures in the United States, while in yet other cases they provide actual assistance in translation or as an interpreter. The most frequently cited area in which newcomers need help concerns their children's school. This is not surprising given that the group of most recent immigrants from Taiwan consists of mothers whose main goal is to provide a quality high school education for their children. Since they usually are unemployed, the educational system is one of the few points of contact with the larger society.

*"People always call me - even though they don't know me. But some friend will give my number to them. Some, they need information or they need some kind of hint where to get what. And they call me. I think its because I lived here for a while and have seen this city growing up. And, eh, I'm known for my involvement in my children's school (...). Some parents ask me about their children's school. If they have no idea - I tell them whom to best contact, whom you should contact. That's why they always call me, because I know whom to talk to. (...) Sometimes a parent calls me and says "I have a problem with school, I need somebody to talk for me, so I go with them." If you call me in advance, I try to schedule to them. So basically I try to help them out. I am flexible, besides I have many contacts. So if they need information, I try to help them out." (informant #58)*

The need for assistance by members of the fourth cohort is well recognized among immigrants with long-term experience in the United States. Prior to the 1990's South Orange County was not a

preferred place of first residence upon immigration for adults with poor English skills and no pre-arranged employment in the United States. Now, there are also workshops offered by insurance agents and investment bankers, who cover an array of topics on lifestyle and self-improvement in addition to the various products they promote. In addition, the real estate agents who provide assistance in the purchase of an immigrant's first house not only give out information on institutions and events in South Orange County, but are also actively approached by other newcomers.

*"Oh, yeah, very often people come to us for assistance. They come a lot, because my husband is an agent - so he helps a lot of people to get started and we are their first contact to solve any kind of problems. For example: schools, restaurants, the environment: getting to know the shops, Bolsa, Irvine, Chinatown, LA. On the weekends I take the wives. And my husbands also helps those kids whose parents return to Taiwan - and only leave the kids here. My husband "handles" those kids, starting at ages 17, 18 or so. Some are 15, 16. Some of them go to Uni High, some go to UCI. His English is quite good. He acts as their "legal guardian." (informant #34)<sup>6</sup>*

### **Instrumental Support**

Those advice relations not providing emotional support but that function as sources of information (e.g., where to find specific services) are more instrumental in nature. But such relations are not the only source of "instrumental support." Previous research on personal networks using the name generator approach inquired as to who people go to if the house needs repairs. If you need a recipe or ingredients for cooking after the shops are closed (e.g., a cup of sugar) and finally, who one can borrow money from (McAllister and Fischer 1983, Ruan et al. 1995, Freeman and Ruan 1997, Schweizer et al. 1998). In this study questions related to household repair or the borrowing of household items are not relevant since these relatively new homes are not in need of repair (builders generally take care of any initial repairs) and supermarkets are open 24 hours a day. Instead, it is more important to take into account the immigration experience the types of instruments used by immigrants in adapting to their new environment.

Information and access to information is an important currency in almost any interpersonal relationship. However, most immigrants face very different prospects for acquiring information in the United States than they did in Taiwan. In contrast to Taiwan, immigrants rarely have the same extensive network of kinship relations in the United States. Furthermore, informants who went to

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<sup>6</sup>他是他们的权人 (ta shi tamen de quanren). He is their legal guardian. (a person that has power of attorney).

graduate school in North America report their initial surprise when their professor did little in the way of helping them to find their first job. Over the course of time in the United States, information needs change and so do the sources.

Questions asked about instrumental support were:

- Who did you ask to help find your house?
- Who did you ask to help you find your current job? Who would you ask if you need to change jobs in the future?
- Who do you rely on if you need to make financial decisions such as general investments, retirement planning, financing the purchase of a house or financing the children's education?
- Who do you ask if you need a specific health care provider (doctor) or information about insurance policies?
- Who do you ask for help in buying a car? (changed later to: How did you decide which car dealer to go to?)
- Who do you ask about social and cultural events and activities in Orange County?

In addition, selected informants were asked how they obtained information about educational opportunities for their children and how they found special services such as travel agents and homework assistance.

### **Social Roles of Alters**

Before presenting the results to the network questions, a brief discussion on the people respondents mentioned as alters is presented. Rarely did informants give a name as their initial response to a question. Instead they answered in terms of role labels, such as "my high school buddy" (gaoxiong tongxue), or "my colleague," or "my fellow choir member." This is partly a function of the general reluctance of informants to give out private information and list names.<sup>7</sup> On the other hand, Chinese and Taiwanese people frequently use such labels in their conversations with one another. When describing joint activities with a third party, immigrants hardly ever use the phrase "my friend" (pengyou), or the individual's name, but instead talk about the absent person by referring to his or her role relation with ego. Therefore, the section on social roles presents the most frequently mentioned labels and their role descriptors. A typical account of one's social world is represented by the following:

*"Anyway, we know people from study - that was way back when. Then when we started working and then there are things like "Chinese cultural association", "Taiwanese*

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<sup>7</sup> Over time the interviewer refrained from insisting on obtaining names, but listed the role labels and tested the list of roles mentioned for redundancy (e.g., "is that former classmate the same classmate who also does go with you to XY event?")

*association" and we know friends of friends - there are some common interest, like classmates over there - and some are my highschool friends, we work together, do some investment club. Then church - many people are close to church. But church wasn't the main factor - after all we didn't grow up together - it was more the same background, with some people in (...city) we grew very close. Same background - 4 people from the same university, same engineering background - so we get together every month, have dinner, same background - common interest. And then there is someone at work - also a Taiwanese - I don't see him after hours, but while we are at work it's a very good relationship. We also talk about my daughter, his daughter, being at college - talk a lot about that." (informant #36)*

Since the term "friend" was seldom mentioned explicitly, informants were asked about their friends and what they considered to be the most outstanding characteristic of a 'friend.' With this approach, it became clear that many of the roles listed in response to the name generating questions actually described friends. The descriptions respondents gave as qualifiers for a friend are shown in Table 7.2. Except for the notion that 'a friend is someone who provides support and help', all other responses are variations of the requirement that 'a friend is someone with a shared background.' Obviously some of the descriptors could be collapsed further, such as 'same economic status' and 'same family situation,' or 'joint values' and 'joint faith'. However, the emphasis here is on the informant's emic representations. Most of the statements in each of the categories were astonishing similar and did not require any further aggregation.

**Table 7.2 The basis of commonalities: emic definitions of the notion of 'friend'**

Definition	%
joint values, thoughts, conversation topics	25
joint recreational interests	18
joint upbringing, attended the same school	17
joint faith	13
same economic status	10
same family situation (e.g., being a homemaker)	10
providing help and support for each other	7
	100

Most noteworthy is the widespread emphasis on similar backgrounds and joint experiences in defining friendship. It corresponds with teachings in traditional Chinese philosophy which recognizes five types of personal relationships. These five types of relationships (wutong guanxi) are based on the notion of sameness (tong). They exist between people of the same surname



(tongxing), the same lineage (tongzong), the same village, town or county (tongxiang), the same school (tongxue) and the same occupation or place of work (tonghang, tongye, tongshi).<sup>8</sup>

Among immigrants several contexts of similarity fulfill the criteria for declaration of a 'common background.' Some contexts are linked to past experiences, such as a similar region of origin in Taiwan, or the same school attended, as well as being a part of the same age cohort. Commonalities can also be based on life in the United States, such as joint participation in recreational activities, or joint membership in a church or alumni association. Many informants report that only after a joint membership is established can one meet another person with any frequency, whether intentionally and unintentionally.

*"Even with people who live nearby there is not much contact. Look with (... person) she also lives in our neighborhood, but I never bump into her. Over the last 7, 8 years I never ran into her - but ever since I started dance class - I see her all the time. Very strange indeed. Maybe I was too busy at work, there was just work and home. If the social circles are different, then you also don't bump into each other - you definitely need to be in the same circles." (informant #62)<sup>9</sup>*

As a consequence of the recognition of a joint background individuals are entitled to help and support one another in times of need. People with established commonalities can approach each other for favors and information.

*"Well, people who need help, they can ask their classmates, they are here - they have so much resources. I was in graduate school - that's the time I always remember - as a foreign student. We came here - and with other foreign students. And we have the same experience." (informant #36)*

*"When you haven't seen someone for a long time, you can not go and ask them for favors (...). (But) the more often you get together, the more familiar you get with each other. Closeness makes people more close. That's the way it is." (informant #45)<sup>10</sup>*

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<sup>8</sup> 五同关系 (wutong guanxi) = five similarity relationships; 同姓 (tongxing) = same family name, same lineage; 同宗 (tongzong) = same ancestor and clan; 同乡 (tongxiang) = same province, county; or town, village; 同学 (tongxue) = same school mate; 同事 (tongshi) = colleague at the same workplace. Additional specifications are: 同班同学 (tongban tongxue) = same class schoolmate; 同行 (tonghang) = 同业 (tongye) = same trade, occupation, or profession.

<sup>9</sup> 生活圈子不同，不会碰在一起 (shenghuo quanzi bu tong, bu hui peng zai yiqi, yiding shenghuo quanzi yiyang) = "social circles in life have to be overlapping in order to make sure people meet each other" (informant # 62).

<sup>10</sup> 人就是这样子：如果你经常跟那一些人在一起，一致会经常跟他们在一起。那很多人如果很旧跟你没有来往的话你就不会说可以说："阿我来照你一下"，或"干什么?"常常在一起就越来越熟悉就越会在一起 (ren jiu shi zhe yangzi: ruguo ni jingchang gen na yixie ren zai ziqi yizhi hui jingchang gen tamen zai ziqi. Na, hen duo ren ruguo hen jiu gen ni mei you laiwan de hua, ni jiu bu hui shuo keyi shuo: "ah, wo lai zhao ni xia ni", huo "gan shenme...?". Changchang zai yiqi jiu yue lai yue shuxi jiu yue hui zai yiqi. Jiu zhe yangzi) = "People are like this: if you are often together with a certain group or people, then you get together with them even more often. For a lot of people, if you haven't have any contact for a long time, you can

Table 7.3 table shows the overall distribution of role relationships among all alters that constitute active ties. The roles and the type of "friendship" associated with them are described in detail in the following sections. A few additional characteristics of the distribution of roles are noteworthy. Both recreational contacts and training related contacts are considered to be part of groups which are based on a joint hobby. Members of any associations, as well as faith related contacts, can be summarized into a category of joint social organizations. Fellow parents are categorized as joint social organization members in cases where an informant is officially a member of a parent teacher organization.

**Table 7.3 Distribution of role relationships in the personal networks of informants**

Role (based on joint activity)	% of all ties (n=587)
recreational contact	22
work related (co-worker or business partner)	16.5
classmate or other alumni	13.5
faith related contact	13
extended family member	9
fellow parent (child related)	7
association member	6
training related contact	6
other friend <sup>11</sup>	4
neighbor	3
Sum	100

### **Classmates and schoolmates**

The relationship between classmates is one of the five traditional relationships of similarity in Chinese culture. Whereas in western societies where expectations towards former classmates is rather implicit and the activation of a relationships depends on the actual feelings between individuals, in Chinese societies the relationship is quite explicit. Rules for proper conduct among classmates have a long tradition and are therefore culturally institutionalized. Four hundred years ago the visiting Jesuit priest Matteo Ricci described the importance of classmate relations in his

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not simply say "oh, I'll come over and ask you for a favor about something" or "how have you been, what are you up to...?." Often, those who get together become more and more familiar with each other and spend even more time with each other. That's the way it is" (informant #45).

<sup>11</sup> The role "other friend" refers to alters who are identified as "friends of friends" and people related through a previous joint activity which is not pursued anymore (e.g., a former church member who is no longer involved in church).

diary as follows: *"In this acquiring of degrees there really is something worthy of admiration in the relationship that grows up between candidates of the same year. Those whom fortune has brought together in attaining a higher degree look upon another as brothers for the rest of their lives. There is mutual agreement and sympathy among them, and they help each other and one another's relatives as well, in every possible way"* (Ricci 1953 reprint of 1583-1619 diary entries: page 70, quoted in Jacobs 1982: 215).

Today, classmates continue to be important resources for each other. Education has become mandatory in all countries where ethnic Chinese settle. Taiwan has a distinct ranking system among middle schools, high schools and universities. Entry and attendance is regulated by achievement. The higher an elementary student scores on the entrance test to middle schools, the better the school he or she will be accepted to. Often this results in young students attending boarding schools in the next bigger town, or preferably Taipei, if that is where the most attainable and prestigious school is located (Shaw 1996). Therefore affiliation with a well-known school or university provides status and prestige. In this respect educational achievement not only leads to greater human capital, but also cultural capital since these affiliations provide greater access to prestigious occupations and various elite social circles within a society (Bourdieu 1986: 243).

Proud former students of schools with a high reputation have founded alumni associations, both for high schools and universities. Many of these alumni associations have chapters in the United States, predominately in California.<sup>12</sup> The existence of these associations in the United States reflects the fact that the first two cohorts of immigrants from Taiwan consisted mostly of graduate students. At the time of these cohorts' immigration, in the 1960s and 1970s, Taiwan had limited opportunities for pursuing a graduate degree. A very high proportion of each class of students from the best schools in Taiwan left for the United States and stayed after graduation (Chang 1992).

It comes as no surprise then, that the importance of classmates as providers of access to resources is especially dominant among members of the middle class and upper middle class. Schools which require high achievements from students produce graduates who more frequently enter higher paying occupations. This study confirms for immigrants from Taiwan what previous research has demonstrated for immigrants from Hong Kong. Instead of relying on kinship relations, middle and upper middle class immigrants are more reliant on their networks of

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<sup>12</sup> For further discussion of alumni associations see chapter 8.

classmates both for planning emigration and in adapting to the new surroundings (Wong and Salaff 1998). Immigrants who do not file for investor visas often use kinship relations to obtain the initial visa for entry. However, after entering the United States or Canada they prefer not to live with or near to their respective sponsors. Instead they tend to set up a separate household and get assistance from a close friend, most likely a former classmate, in the early phases of their immigration experience (Wong and Salaff 1998: 370).

Among immigrants from Taiwan, there are three types of relationships between people who attended the same school together. The first are those relationships between people who were actual classmates back in Taiwan, shared a strong bond in school and never lost contact. The second type involves relationships between people who rediscover each other as former classmates upon settlement in a new city or town. The third type includes relationships between people who have attended the same school or college in Taiwan, but have had no contact or knowledge of each other while in Taiwan. The latter base their connection on a joint membership and not on a jointly lived experience. Each of these three types can link individuals who shared attendance at an elementary school, a middle school, high school or college. The further back the shared experience, the more important the bond.<sup>13</sup> The type of relationship most frequently mentioned by informants in this study is of the second type. Individuals may accidentally meet former classmates from high school or college after arriving in Orange County and quickly developing an important relationship.

*"My best friends are not in the (...xy) association. They are from school and college. Same high school, and college, Jinmei Nüzhong, and then they came here to the United States as well - now we are very close. We are still together. High school and college friends are my best friends here. And even one friend - he moved here from the East Coast - and he is my elementary school friend. We haven't seen each other for 20 years before we met up here again. He moved from the East Coast to (...z) neighborhood here. So we kind of see each other every weekend." (informant #58)*

Not all immigrants have access to associations in Southern California. Those whose former schools have chapters in the area are not obligated to join an association. However, immigrants who choose to become members agree and accept that they might be contacted for charity events or business propositions by fellow alumni who may essentially be strangers. In such cases the link between two alumni is binding and cannot be ignored. The same holds true for people connected

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<sup>13</sup> In many cases, the people who have been classmates in high school also have been classmates in middle school and elementary school.

by a go-between. Former schoolmates who are not members of the association but are friends of a member may be contacted in a similar fashion. The basic principles of "guanxi" apply.

Nevertheless, the nature of most relationships among middle class immigrants is social and rarely instrumental. Though the role expectations are binding and the relationship with a classmate or schoolmate cannot be severed, not all potential relationships are activated or actively maintained. In many cases, classmates go through phases of more or less frequent interaction. This also applies to the few instrumental uses people have for their classmate relationships. Doing business with a classmate is preferred when possible, but not mandatory.

*"Before my husband's former school buddy has a Travel agency in Monterey Park - and we got tickets real cheap there - and he send them to us: and that did cost money as well, but now, the ticket prices are only \$10 difference, so we buy at Orange County Travel in Irvine, so we do business there and save the cost of sending. No, my husband's classmate is not angry - he understands. Now he doesn't have to drive here and bring them - with airplane tickets you don't make much money anyway, so his classmate doesn't mind." (informant #34)*

Although graduates from U.S. universities have higher proportions of members from other ethnic groups in their networks (the relationships between level of education and percentage of non-ethnic alters is highly significant ( $F(3,56) = 8.421, p < 0.0001$ ), and even registers a difference between graduates of Taiwan universities and graduates who attended U.S. universities (Tukey HSD  $p < 0.05$ )), they do not list non-Chinese friends they met at an American institution of higher learning among their alters, let alone give them the role label classmate.

### **Co-Workers**

Informants who are not self-employed as either professionals or business owners often mention their co-workers as alters. Co-workers are usually people who have jobs that are similar in nature to ego. The likelihood of a relationship between co-workers is much higher if they are both from Taiwan, and even more so if they share the same ethnicity.

*"I am not really close with any co-worker. Only once, when I worked for UCLA medical center - there was one Chinese co-worker. We became acquainted - we went to office birthday parties together." (informant #6)*

*"Those coworkers who work together day by day they are the most closest. Same type of work. We go out and eat together with my wife and their wives. That kind of coworkers we are three. Two of them are from Taiwan also and one is native American." (informant #30)<sup>14</sup>*

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<sup>14</sup> This informant answered the interview questions in English. His expression "native American" refers to white American citizens.

The percentage of alters from ethnic groups other than Chinese or Taiwanese in the personal networks of people in the workforce in a professional occupation is 11% (sd=6.91) for networks with an average size of 13.5 alters (sd=3.76). The few non-ethnic network members are not necessarily co-workers.

The ties linking fellow co-workers are generally not multiplex and most ties are rather weak in nature. Co-workers exchange job related information and chat about general events. The primary instrumental function of co-workers is in providing information useful in finding a new job. In the event of a lay-off, for example, informants rely on relations with former or current co-workers for help in finding new employment. Especially in industries like computer software, engineering co-workers often follow each other to different companies. However, few co-workers engage in social activities outside the workplace with the possible exception of an occasional dinner. Most informants who are in the workforce, especially women, state having little time for social gatherings during the workweek. After long commutes, traffic jams, errands and housework, little time and energy is left for social activities. Instead weekends are reserved for recreational activities and other social enterprises. Co-workers who either live far away or do not share similar recreational or social interests are unlikely to become a part of an ego's set of multiplex relations.

*"Ah - when I used to work - I worked for an American firm - there were a lot of Mexicans - and one woman from Thailand whom I was a bit closer to - with the others- there was not much interaction. My husbands has a lot of Chinese colleagues. But we don't have much private contact with those Chinese colleagues either. If the interests don't overlap there is not much in common. Those who play Tennis or Golf - they can only hang out with their likes. He (my husband) can only go and be with those who golf since he golfs as well. That's ok - he does that - he goes out with those - but the his other colleagues - none of them dances - or likes Karaoke - so we don't go and have fun with them." (informant #64)*

### **Neighbors**

There is a lack of consensus in the literature on the importance of the role of neighbors in personal networks. Some research supports the thesis originally put forth by Fischer (1975, 1982, 1995) that urban and suburban residents usually engage in supportive relationships with people outside the boundaries of their immediate neighborhoods (Wellman 1979, Wellman and Wortley 1990, Schiefeloe 1990, Henning 1996). Yet others reject such a proposition, finding that ties between neighbors continue to be significant (Greenbaum 1982, Grannis 1998, Lee and Campbell 1999, Espinoza 1999). Proximity and spatial accessibility are influential in providing routine assistance and sense of neighborhood safety. These features also make the socialization of children easier

since they do not need their parents to drive them to friends and activities (Lee and Campbell 1999: 119). In this study neighbors are defined in the strictest sense of the term, as having potential for interaction due to accessibility resulting from the connectivity of streets rather than just single spatial proximity (Grannis 1998: 1534).<sup>15</sup>

A closer look at connected residential streets reveals that homogenous neighborhoods often have higher degrees of neighborhood interaction. This is only partly based on ethnic segregation and the lack of opportunities for spatial assimilation among minority groups (Massey 1981, Massey and Denton 1985, 1988).<sup>16</sup> Instead, homogenous neighborhoods are more a result of social class distinctions than ethnicity (Gans 1962, Yancey, Ericksen and Juliani 1976). While a neighborhood might be ethnically heterogeneous it is nevertheless homogenous in terms of the socioeconomic characteristics of residents. A comparison of both ethnically homogenous and heterogeneous neighborhoods of equal socioeconomic status showed that the transition from acquaintanceship to friendship among neighbors was both a function of choice and spatial proximity (Greenbaum and Greenbaum 1985). In either type of neighborhood, people living in 'face-blocks', which are named for the fact that front door entrances face each other, were more likely to interact and to facilitate the formation of social ties. However, proximity serves only to facilitate the establishment of relationships. It points to some attachment with a place, but not in the sense of shared identification with a designated territory (Taylor 1988: 103). People in ethnically heterogeneous neighborhoods often purposely avoided neighbors with certain ethnic backgrounds. In contrast, people in ethnically homogeneous neighborhoods made choices similar in nature to the heterogeneous neighborhoods but tended to develop relationships with people outside their neighborhoods despite the accessibility and compatibility of their neighbors. Significant relationships between neighbors in the same face-block seemed to develop only in the presence of additional shared experiences (Greenbaum and Greenbaum 1985: 72).

Informants in this study live in ethnically heterogeneous yet socioeconomically homogenous neighborhoods.<sup>17</sup> The design of recently built subdivisions which consists primarily of cul-de-sacs

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<sup>15</sup> The notion of accessibility through residential streets is important in the American context and especially the master plan communities of Southern California. Houses which are located in close geographic proximity to one another might only be reachable by driving along a residential street to a major street and entering another residential street from that major street. As a result, spatially close homes are separated by a street grid which consists essentially of extended cul-de-sacs. This notion is important for the observation of tie distribution in space (see 5.3 below).

<sup>16</sup> See related discussion of spatial assimilation in the section on immigration studies in chapter 2.

<sup>17</sup> The oldest neighborhoods in South Orange County have a lower percentage of immigrants from Taiwan than the neighborhoods which are 15 years old and younger. However, even the most preferred areas such as Irvine West Park sport no streets with more than 30% Taiwanese occupancy.

linked to larger feed streets significantly reduces the opportunities for interaction among neighbors of face-blocks. Neighbors in upper middle class subdivisions report even less contact than neighbors in middle class subdivisions. The general pattern of interaction within South Orange face-blocks is that neighbors know each other by name, but few engage in more than greeting relationships and even fewer have more than a greeting relationship and even fewer engage in relationships that go beyond neighborly assistance.

Several informants mentioned the Chinese tradition of treating neighbors well, especially when living far from home. However, when pressed to name incidents of neighborly interactions and assistance most had difficulty recalling even a single instance:

*"I have good relations with my neighbors. After all you want some good relations. There is a Chinese proverb on relations: "Far away relatives can't compare with close neighbors".<sup>18</sup> For the everyday problems it's the close by people, friends and neighbors who can help - when it comes to fixing things, helping out, the mother in a far away country won't be able to do that. We shouldn't isolate. We can't do that. We should never isolate ourselves. We should communicate. Like another Chinese proverb says 'We can't hide under a rock'. "(informant #20)<sup>19</sup>*

The length of stay in the United States in combination with the length of residence in a particular neighborhood increases the likelihood of development of more intimate relationships with neighbors that go beyond simple greetings. The findings of Greenbaum and Greenbaum apply here as well. In the case of additional shared experiences, such as a joint acquaintance from another context or children in the same age group, neighbors may, as a result, become more closely connected to one another (Greenbaum and Greenbaum 1985, Lee and Campbell 1999).

*"There are a few neighbors we know - whose kids are in the same age as ours - but we didn't plan for that. It just happened. Yes, we have some contacts when the kids are in the same school and through friends we knew each other. It wasn't that they are our friends - we just knew them. (...) If you have a friend and he knew somebody else who also moved in this area - they mentioned it and then there was a chance to introduce us to them. We aren't close - but became kind of related through those other people." (informant #39)*

The majority of informants, however, report very limited engagement between themselves and neighbors. If no additional joint interests can be established, the hectic pace of everyday life will not allow for many opportunities for interaction. This applies even for people living adjacent to

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<sup>18</sup> 远亲不如近邻 (yuan qin bu ru jin lin) = "Distant kin do not match close neighbors." This is the original phrase of the proverb.

<sup>19</sup> 井底之蛙 (jing di zhi wa) = "Like the frog deep in the well." A freely adapted translation into English reads: "We cannot live like the frog at the bottom of the well." The informant herself suggested the English phrase "under a rock" as a better translation into present day English.



fellow ethnic Chinese or Taiwanese. Informants share the widespread belief that one needs to work on relations constantly and continuously. If neighbors have nothing else but adjacent addresses in common and have no need for assistance or information, then there is less incentive to develop the relationship further.

*"In the neighborhood - in such a short part of the street - there are 3 Chinese families - but we are the first - eleven, almost twelve years ago. Sure, I know my neighbors - but that doesn't say much.<sup>20</sup> We only say "hi" and "ni hao." It's very polite, very basic. Because our respective times of going out, leaving the house are different. So there is no way to knock at each others door or talk much." (informant #62)*

Those informants who list neighbors as alters within their immediate personal network mention few non-ethnic Chinese or Taiwanese contacts. Of all the relations with neighbors, 73% are with people from Taiwan (almost two-thirds of them are ethnic Taiwanese) and 27% are with members of other ethnic groups, including non-Hispanic whites.

### **Fellow parents**

In their role as parents of school-aged children, immigrants have several opportunities to meet the parents of other children and establish either expressive or instrumental relationships. There are three different contexts which are conducive to interactions between fellow parents. Parents may meet at the one-on-one level when their children have established a close friendship and visit each other for play sessions. Parents may meet each other at school events such as theatrical plays or sports events where large crowds of students and their families gather. Parents also have opportunities for contact when they engage in school meetings at their child's school, such as the Parent Teacher Organizations (PTO). Each of the three contexts has different implications for the development of relationships between parents, especially for parents of different ethnic background.

The most likely context for the establishment of relationships between parents is the development of friendships between the respective children. The likelihood increases when two children live in the same subdivision and share similar extracurricular activities. Their parents, then, often schedule activities together and share responsibility for providing transportation. The situation is also very conducive to meeting people of different ethnic backgrounds.

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<sup>20</sup> 认识是认识 (renshi shi renshi). = "Knowing a person simply just means that: knowing who they are on the surface."

*"It has happened that we became close with other parents. Some of our friends... they happen to be of the same age and so their children are of the same age as well. With other Americans, if the kids are good friends, we become friends as well. In first grade, my son had a Jewish friend. And their parents knocked at our door. People who live in the same neighborhood, in XY. And the sons they went to stay overnight, here and there. My son was very popular. And then he did baby-sitting for the classmate's neighbor. And occasionally during some school events we got together." (informant #30)*

Parents who accompany their children to school events are usually on the lookout for other parents of the same ethnic background. They have more in common and share the same worries, such as their children's prospects for entering a good college and the preparations for taking the SAT test. They may also exchange information, such as the pros and cons of sending students to college preparation schools (buxiban) to ensure they attain the highest scores possible. Private Learning Centers, which students attend after their regular school period to improve their testing skills, are another arena for possible interaction between parents. Many of these Learning Centers are operated by ethnic Chinese and Taiwanese are specifically tailored for Chinese and Taiwanese clients. In any event, within the context of schooling, concern for their children's achievement is a major venue for of encounters among parents.

*"We met because our kids go to the same school. And we are both Chinese, so we chat and "oh.... ." So we go to lunch together. Their husbands are all doctors. One became my family doctor (....) and his kids are at MIT - and my daughter is now at MIT too - so through the kids we know all the friends and we tie up. We four families we always get together. Around Christmas the kids all come from college. And in summer time they all go away to college. Each year one of our kids goes away to college for the first time- and so we have parties . Each year there is one. Now the bigger kids, they are all graduated from college already and they are working now. So, its really interesting. And we really keep ties. We are very, very close." (informant #58)*

However, parents only continue to keep in touch with one another, as the above quote exemplifies, when they share more than just their children's various school activities. Alters who over time are linked to one another through more than one tie and have several interests in common, are more likely to maintain their relationships once the children have gone away to college. Instead, informants report more frequently that after the casual meetings at school plays and games cease to be part of their social calendar, relationships with other parents may simply disappear.

*"We did meet other parents before. But now he is in college - so there is no contact anymore. A lot of the school kids visited each other during the time my son went to school. No more of course. Very rarely, when the kids came over we have dinner outside with some parents. But never at home." (informant #34)*

The third arena for interaction with other people within the framework of school, Parent Teacher Organizations meetings, is rarely attended by the vast majority of immigrants. Most parents shy away from group meetings with teachers and parents. The general attitude of parents is that only in case of problems between a student and a teacher is an encounter deemed necessary. Outside of emergency situations meetings with teachers, parents tend to initiate any contact with teachers.

In some instances, individual parents get involved with the school at the institutional level and not only attend organizational meetings but also form separate organizations specifically for Chinese parents. The Irvine Chinese School at Uni High was born out of such a movement in the 1980's.<sup>21</sup> At Woodbridge High a Chinese Parent Teacher Organization developed in the 1990's. However, in both cases it was the activism of a single person and a few devoted helpers that started the movement and kept it alive. However, once such a charismatic parent's children graduate, they may take on less organizational responsibilities, possibly leading to the organization's demise. The teacher appreciation lunches and the newsletters for other Chinese parents are discontinued. The former organizers are often upset about the lack of institutional engagement among fellow Chinese and Taiwanese parents, especially in light of the fact that in some schools within the Irvine school district the percentage of Chinese students is almost 50%.

There are several possible explanations for the low level of Chinese parents' involvement at school. There are the traditional beliefs that teachers know what is best for students. This is based on the assumption that teachers are scholars which have accumulated much more knowledge than the average parent and therefore need to be respected as persons of undisputed authority (Shaw 1996). From a traditional point of view there is little need to question the actions of a teacher. As a result, immigrant parents do not find it necessary to monitor or discuss what is happening in the classroom.

In addition, lack of familiarity with the American school system and customary practices of interaction between parents and teachers keep many immigrant families away from active participation in PTOs. Lack of confidence about English speaking abilities is another barrier to

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<sup>21</sup> The beginnings of the Irvine Chinese school are described as follows: "Now, when she heard that only the white parents helped at the school but no Asian parents go involved - this former classmate of mine went and said: I'll do something - even though I can't speak much English and if it is only to get the pencils sharpened. She got the Chinese school started together with others. She developed relations with the school - they sent fruits, bought computers, have fund-raisers - all in the 1980's. This generation of Chinese parents did a lot of things and helped the headmaster a lot" (informant #37).

interaction, especially among recently arrived mothers whose husband is still living and working in East Asia. Opportunities for involvement are, of course, less possible for those immigrant families in which both parents shuttle between Taiwan and California. Parents of "young foreign students" (xiao liuxusheng) are rarely around to take part in school meetings because they have business engagements on either coast of the Pacific. However, for families whose members reside full-time in California, and have done so for a more than ten years, are not any more likely to be active in school organizations than the frequently absent parents. For these parents, the environment of the Chinese school their children attend on the weekends presents plenty of opportunities to discuss issues of importance with other parents and obtain reports from teachers on the progress of their children's learning.

The three contexts introduced above create different opportunities for interaction with fellow parents, especially with parents from different ethnic backgrounds. The main predictor of the number and overall percentage of non-ethnic alters in one's personal networks is not the age group of the children, such as elementary school, junior high, high school or college, but the child's place of birth. Children born in the United States, also called ABC's (American born Chinese), usually have parents who arrived in North America to attend graduate school and are members of the first and second cohorts of immigrants. Other than any of the children born in Taiwan, these children are much more likely to have close friends of various ethnic background, at least until the start of their second to last year in high school.

Associations in the last two years of high school, when many youngsters become more interested in the opposite sex, are also a function of the overall number of students from the same ethnic group in a child's school. In recent years the number of Taiwan born children has increased since many parents emigrated much later in life. Top university graduates among those younger cohorts of parents stayed in Taiwan, and did not attend graduate studies in North America in the kinds of numbers as immigrants from the 1960s and 1970s since Taiwan had established quality graduate schools of their own (Chang 1992).

A comparison of the network size between these equally large groups of informants reveals that there is a greater tendency ( $t(58) = 2.816, p < 0.01$ ) for parents of U.S. born children ( $N=30$ ) to have greater numbers of alters ( $X = 14.4, sd = 4.2$ ) than parents with children born in Taiwan ( $N=30, mean=11.6, sd=3.3$ ). Parents of U.S. born children are also more likely ( $t(58) = 3.588, p < 0.001$ ) to have a higher percentage of people with different ethnic backgrounds in their

networks ( $X=9.9$ ,  $sd=8.8$  vs.  $mean=3.2$ ,  $sd=5.0$ ).<sup>22</sup> The degree of multiplexity among ties between alters, however, is not significantly different between the two groups.

### Recreational contacts

Most informants in this study report engaging in one or more recreational activities on a regular basis. The activities range from playing cards or board games to practicing a sport, playing music or doing crafts. A few people engage in these hobbies on their own, such as jogging in the park, playing the piano at home or painting pictures. The majority of immigrants, though, engage in recreational activities together with others in group settings.

*"Here it's lot of parties, eating things and such. For example go out and play mahjong. You can also find people who like nature. But it's harder, you really have to look. In Irvine it's easy to find people who like to dance, play mahjong. and go out to dinner - they dance and then go for dinner. Before there was Karaoke and before we came to Orange County at other places all we did was having potluck dinners with other student's parents - that was for Chinese New Year." (Informant #49)*

Some of these groups are more informal gatherings, such as a circle of friends who play mahjong together, have karaoke singing sessions, or learn a few new dance steps in someone's garage.<sup>23</sup> Other, more formally arranged gatherings have been formed by several individuals for the purpose of practicing a certain activity. Examples include choirs, music orchestras, and sports teams (e.g., a basketball club or a golf club). A third type of recreational group are those formed by an instructor of a specific sport, musical instrument or craft. People come together and pay an expert to teach them a particular recreational skill, for example, ballroom dancing, folk dancing, the violin or the erhu, or learning flower arranging.<sup>24</sup> These recreational meetings usually take place on a weekly basis. Most are ethnically exclusive, being arranged by ethnic Chinese and Taiwanese for other ethnic Chinese and Taiwanese.

Many of the alter's informants go out to dinner or socialize with at parties and festivals are also joint members of recreational groups.

*"Well, most of the people we interact with, we have met after we started dancing. All of them we met through the dance classes. Most of them are from the very first class, a few came*

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<sup>22</sup> Comparison of tendencies is based on 'independent samples t-tests'.

<sup>23</sup> Karaoke is a form of entertainment. A person sings a well known pop or folk song while the Stereo or TV receiver plays the corresponding music arrangement in the background. Lay performers enjoy the illusion of being a pop star on stage.

<sup>24</sup> Erhu is a traditional Chinese string instrument with two strings and a bow.

*later. Most of them are from Irvine, some from Garden Grove or Mission Viejo, not very far away." (informant #62)*

People with whom informants frequently engage in recreational activities often introduce them to other activities of interest. However, the number of groups a person participates in at any given time depends on their life cycle stage (Rotolo 2000). Throughout people's lives the amount of free time available changes. Switching jobs or climbing the corporate ladder takes its tolls on an individual's ability to engage in recreational activities. Household composition and family structure can also have an influence on rates of recreational participation.

Informants in this study, who are on primarily middle-aged adults, have a range of opportunities for meeting others during weekly recreational gatherings. As stated earlier, many initiatives start through the meeting of parents at their children's Chinese language school. Yet other sets of recreational organizations are related through overlapping memberships in religious organizations, specifically Christian churches. The community service departments of individual cities in the area also offer ethnically oriented activities. Senior citizen centers are another option for joined recreational activities.<sup>25</sup>

The majority of people engaged in recreational organizations are women. For women, 73% of the alters participate jointly together in a sport, music, or craft related activity while for men it was only 27%. Women apparently take more advantage of the recreational opportunities available. The fact that a large subgroup of women are not working outside the home helps to explain the high number of female involvement to a some extent. However, women are also seeking recreational activities for reasons of self-improvement, a goal men rarely mention. Taking part in a new activity is seen by many as an opportunity for exploration and self-expression. Some learn new forms of dance moves, such as classical ballet, they always dreamed of, yet others learn to play a new musical instrument. The most popular activity, though, is the development of one's singing voice. In addition to joining a choir, a number of informants takes private voice training or master classes for solo vocalists.

*"I joined (... group) and committed to study voice. I have to study every day - it was very difficult - and lots of things I didn't understand. But everyone in the group was sincere and humble, and really wanted to learn. And despite their age, we all accepted the scolding of the teacher and wanted to improve. Character, music, everything - we wanted to grow" (informant # 81)*

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<sup>25</sup> A more detailed list of these recreational organizations is presented in chapter 8.

Migration to the United States has made these activities more accessible for women. Female informants report that they have more time for themselves in their new environment. Sometimes the lack of extensive relationships with family members, neighbors, schoolmates and others make life in America less eventful. However, most female immigrants find activities to fill their spare time in a less structured American lifestyle.

### **Fellow training course participants**

Informants also establish relationships at facilities for further education and training, such as adult schools, community colleges, community services centers, and self-improvement groups. These groups are closer related in character to recreational settings than to educational ones which are meeting places for fellow "class mates" in the traditional sense. A major incentive to take part in a training course, in addition to improving an existing skill or learning a new one, is to socialize with like-minded people.

Toastmaster clubs are, for example, a type of self-improvement group in which participants help each other to cultivate public speaking and related rhetorical abilities.<sup>26</sup> Adult schools usually are an offshoot of a given municipality's School District. They offer a variety of courses, both of recreational and educational nature. In addition to courses which teach crafts, they also have courses which cover high school subjects designed to help students earn the equivalent of a high school diploma. Furthermore, they schedule English as a second language and citizenship classes for resident immigrants.<sup>27</sup> Some community service departments of individual municipalities throughout South Orange County also offer English classes, as well as other languages and computer training. Community Colleges provide students with courses that teach marketable skills, such as accounting, computer literacy or skills of a specific trade, for example carpeting. Two-year degree and four-year degree programs (e.g., a B.S. or B.A. in a subject of choice) are available as well. Several informants, mostly women, have used their spare time to complete a B.A. in art history or social studies

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<sup>26</sup> Toastmaster clubs belong to a worldwide organization of "Toastmasters." Members get together to improve their skills in delivering speeches, such as toasts and other speaking engagements. The particular Toastmaster Club joined by immigrants of this study includes only Chinese and Taiwanese immigrants. Participants train both their English and Chinese free speech abilities.

<sup>27</sup> Citizenship classes are open to immigrants who wish to become U.S. citizens. They are instructed in U.S. History, Government, U.S. culture, and community services and agencies. They also study the rights and responsibilities of citizenship. The content of these classes help students to pass the mandatory I.N.S. Civics exam, a prerequisite for being awarded citizenship in the United States.

The educational courses most sought after by female immigrants are English classes at adult schools (ESL courses = English as a second language). Especially for homemakers who have not had sufficient training in the English language back in Taiwan. In addition, these English courses are a great place to meet other immigrants. Depending on the number of immigrants from any specific country in a municipality, the student body of an ESL course may include up to 50-75% women from Taiwan. However, these courses are not only attractive to recently arrived immigrants of the fourth cohort, but are of interest to others as well. In several instances a well connected person who decided to freshen up her English or further improve her language skills persuaded others, many of whom she knew from recreational activities, to join her.

*"... she is very active, very temperamental - but now she seems to go into another activity, she seems to go into another group - she got interested in ESL class and persuades the women from the choir now to join her there and study more English. She introduces them to the ESL class at Mission Viejo adult school" (informant #49)*

If former high school schoolmates and classmates are urged to participate as well, the commitment becomes all the more binding.

### **Faith-related contacts**

Though not all immigrants actively declare having religious beliefs or actively participate in an organized religion, religious organizations, for some, provide a special environment for finding social and emotional support. Practitioners and followers of different faiths are spread throughout Southern California. Various Christian denominations, several Buddhist groups, Daoists, and Baha'i have established places of worship in South Orange County, both for the general community and for ethnically specific groups.<sup>28</sup> Among the informants of this study, 32% said they are Christian, 25% reported they are followers of Buddhism, 7% are Daoist, and 36% stated that they do not feel closely related to any religion. Most of the religious organizations also welcome non-ethnic Chinese and Taiwanese believers. However, the actual proportion of participants from other ethnic groups is very low across all groups. Though many Christian congregations have separate services for English speakers, the interaction between ethnic Chinese and non-ethnic members has little influence on the composition of personal networks of individual Christian informants.

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<sup>28</sup> For further detail on the specific Christian churches and Buddhist temples see chapter 8.



Informants' religious organizational affiliations differ in their level and extent of group coherence and activities offered beyond the actual practice of the faith. The differences range from a large Buddhist temple which is frequented by individuals who visit according to their own schedule, to small, tightly knit Christian church communities and Daoist groups, such as the I-kuan Tao (Yiguan Dao) movement,<sup>29</sup> who provide members with daily fellowship meetings, and weekly English classes for adults, as well as Chinese language instruction for children. Only 33% of informants consider themselves to be actively involved in a religious organization of some type. In these cases, the congregation or religious study group is the focal point of their activities outside the home and the workplace. Obviously, informants who do not declare any particular faith are not actively involved in religious groups. The high number of inactive practitioners among the believers stems from the fact that most Buddhists practice their faith on an occasional basis but do not join a specific group. Only a few engage in study groups of Buddhist scriptures or are active members of the Tzu-chi Charity<sup>30</sup> organization, which is not exclusively Buddhist but is closely aligned with Buddhist teachings. All of those who proclaim themselves as practitioners of Daoist teachings are, indeed, actively involved in their organization. However, only 60% of all Christians of various denominations go to church on a regular basis and consider themselves members of a particular church.

Newcomers to South Orange County come in contact with members of religious organizations either through previously established relationships in Taiwan or are recruited by people they meet soon after arrival. Buddhism in combination with Daoism and folk religious beliefs is the most widespread form of religion in Taiwan. People are exposed to practices and teachings throughout their socialization. Nevertheless, many people do not practice actively other than having a family altar at home where they might ask for good luck in difficult times. Buddhism also does not require followers to gather on a regular basis or become a member of a clearly defined group. Immigrants usually have heard about the existence of the biggest Buddhist place of worship in Southern California, the Hsi-lai Temple (Xilai si) located in Hacienda Heights, prior to leaving Taiwan. So many do not necessarily feel a need to seek out fellow believers.

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<sup>29</sup> 一贯道 (yi guan dao), "I-kuan tao" in Wade-Giles latinization, is a Daoist study group which emphasize self-improvement and reading of the ancient Chinese philosophers Lao-tze, Confucius, Meng-tze and others. The group in Irvine have established a special unit, a children's study group of the ancient texts called 赞化书院 (zan hua shu yuan) = a school to assist transformation.

<sup>30</sup> More information on this particular charity follows in chapter 8.

A few immigrants, however, arrive in the United States as converted Christians or practitioners of the I-kuan Tao (Yiguan Dao) teachings and look for congregations that are similar to what they belonged to back in Taiwan. Some even have obtained contact addresses of ministers and congregation members while still living in Taiwan. Those who belonged to an active Christian church in Taiwan usually keep in contact with former members who migrated to the United States. Though most do not live close to each other, they feel spiritually as closely related as kin.

*"We have friends from Taiwan who live in Los Angeles who also go to the other E.F.C. churches in the area - there are about 11 of them. Yes, that's another interesting thing: most members of our original church in Taiwan have become immigrants to this area (...) Ever the often we have a get-together with our old priest who lives in (... North California) now. We have a sermon and sing songs. And it feels like most everybody is relatives... we are qin jin qing,<sup>31</sup> everybody from back then immigrates here and because we are so close to each other - almost really, like a family, you know - and then even though we are spread all over the area (...) - we still keep in touch. When we don't get together we all go to different churches in the area - but they are all Taiwanese churches. They all speak Taiwanese there. So we feel, just right there, we feel qin zi gan." (informant #35)<sup>32</sup>*

Most other immigrants, however, are introduced to a new faith, notably Christianity, after settlement in the United States. While they certainly have heard about the Christian faith in Taiwan, few people have had opportunities in terms of time or personal connections to explore the teachings and practices of individual churches. Living in Southern California provides opportunities for people to explore a whole range of religious options. Many informants report being introduced to a particular church through a former classmate, co-worker, or a fellow parent. They visit and may even join a church for a while, but few stay committed. A very small number of informants, however, are surprised by the rather different social environment they find there and willingly embrace Christianity. For these few, their particular church is a place of comfort. The majority of informants, however, generally eventually move on to other social endeavors, especially since most church activities are so time consuming that little time is left for other activities. Many feel they outgrow the need for such structured group settings and grow rather skeptical over time.

*"Well, there are a lot of associations - every god is good -you can't compare, it's difficult to capture. it's like tea and coffee. A lot of people come here, from mainland China, they are poor - they need help, they team up with some people from their old home - or they join a*

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<sup>31</sup> 亲近亲 (qin jin qing) = relatives, intimates, relatives through marriage. The character 亲 have two pronunciations, 'qin' and 'qing' with two separate meanings. 'qin' means "relatives, parents" and 'qing' means "relatives by marriage".

<sup>32</sup> 亲子感 (qin zi gan) = parent-child relation, feeling of loyalty and piety.

*church for comfort - those people in the churches they really know how to drag you there<sup>33</sup>. Or they go for other groups because they are lonely, they have no mate here, they need guidance. Like that church on (... street), I know you go there too (from a joint acquaintance) I have been there too. They speak Taiwanese (min nan hua) there - big church, small group of people, mixed together. They talk about a lot of nice and interesting things. But talk is one thing, action another. Sweet things come out of the mouth - but those things sometimes can't be accomplished." (informant #23)<sup>34</sup>*

In general, immigrants approach the possibilities for religious involvement with curiosity. Many benefit from workshops and lectures offered by church groups or study groups of various faiths. They do not make a commitment to any specific group but treat it as an occasion for socializing. In this respect, special events at places of worship become opportunities to meet weakly connected acquaintances and reconnect, for example, with a former acquaintance from a sports club or a fellow former member of a Parent Teacher Organization.

On the other hand, for those immigrants who are active practitioners of their faith, the congregation they belong to becomes the most important thing in their lives. For them, active membership in a church can be an all-consuming enterprise.

*"Almost all my friends are people from the Church - those are the people who are close, the ones who have the same believe." (informant #56)<sup>35</sup>*

*"My work keeps me so busy, from 8 to 5 - so I have not much time for anything else. And then the church keeps me busy, sometimes we have quite a lot of events, there is couples fellowship, then there is youth fellowship, and then I have to go and visit new members, or pay visits to people in need on Fridays. Usually I go to Church in the evenings for fellowships. On Sundays there is church and then there is practice of the choir after the joint meal. It goes until 3:30 (in the afternoon)." (informant #22)*

Nevertheless, while active membership in a Christian church or Daoist group may result in exclusivity of focus for individual immigrants, this does not necessarily lead to the total disappearance of contact with other ethnic Taiwanese or Chinese immigrants living in the area. There is no dividing line between different groups of religious practitioners or between people with and without any religious affiliation. Though mutually exclusive in terms of the participation in regular activities held on a weekly basis, interlocking relationships do exist between participants in the various settings. For starters, extended families have some members who attend a Christian church and others who take part in a Buddhist prayer group, or do not practice any faith at all. An

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<sup>33</sup> 很会拉人 (hen hui la ren) = they have the ability to drag people in.

<sup>34</sup> 很多人很会讲话 (hen duo ren hen hui shuo hua) = a lot of people really know how to talk you into things there.

<sup>35</sup> 同样的信仰 (tongyang de xinyang) = same beliefs.

overlap between the different faith groups is also facilitated by membership in alumni associations, where Christians, Buddhist, Daoists, and non-practitioners meet. For those who do not commit all their free time to a religious group, there are plenty of opportunities to meet others while engaging in recreational activities.

*"So you have this kinds of family interrelations or business interrelations, where, I mean - a person who is Christian can walk into there (a temple) and don't feel uncomfortable because he knows half the people there. A Buddhist from there can come to church and not feel uncomfortable. A lot of people try out a lot of things" (informant # 58)*

### **Fellow members of associations**

Fellow members of professional, cultural, and political associations founded by ethnic Chinese and Taiwanese immigrants to South Orange County have a different set of opportunities to establish relationships with one another. Examples of the wide array of associations include the 'Orange County Chinese Dentist Association', the 'South Coast Chinese Cultural Association' (SCCCA), and the Orange County Taiwanese Association (OCTA).<sup>36</sup> Associates do not meet on a weekly basis but on a quarterly or yearly basis. In comparison to casual get-togethers between co-workers or groups which gather to practice a recreational activity, these meetings have a purpose and the interactions are directed and are goal-oriented. Membership in these type of organizations is mainly a medium for the generation of weak ties. Informants who mention a fellow association member as an alter in response to any of the questions regarding support, have developed personal attachments to one another beyond the mere fact of joint membership.

The function of associations is to facilitate contacts with people of similar backgrounds, interests, or attitudes. Many of the professional associations bring together potential business partners, such as investors and beneficiaries. Other associations function as representatives of special interests. They also enable members to become more publicly visible, through involvement in community projects. A few associations, such as alumni associations and senior citizen groups, see their main purpose as a forum for socializing. Nevertheless, they also facilitate the emergence of business relationships and joint political activism. The effects of membership in more than one organization are discussed in the analysis of support relationships and transnational ties below. The contribution of organizations to the structure of the ethnic community is a topic of chapter 8.

An examination of variation in personal network structures reveals the relationship between membership in associations and proportion of non-ethnic alters in a network ( $F(3, 56) = 5.336$ ,

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<sup>36</sup> For a more detailed account of the types of associations and their missions see chapter 8.

p<0.01). Immigrants who are actively involved in four or more associations more are likely to have a higher percentage of non-ethnic members in their networks than immigrants who attend only one association (Tukey HSD p<0.01). The effect is weaker, though still significant, when comparing immigrants with four or more affiliations to immigrants with two affiliations (Tukey HSD p<0.05). However, the higher likelihood of association members to have members of other ethnic groups in their personal networks is not based on membership in ethnically mixed associations. Almost all the associations in this study are ethnically exclusive organizations containing mainly ethnic Chinese and Taiwanese members.

### **Kinship relations**

Relationships with parents, siblings, as well agnates and affines, are also potential sources of emotional, social and instrumental support.<sup>37</sup> Parents and siblings play an important role in providing emotional support. However, even those kin who live within driving distance from informants are usually not sought on a regular basis for either instrumental or social support.<sup>38</sup> As outlined in chapter 6, siblings and cousins already living in North America assist many immigrants in their initial steps of obtaining greencards and getting accustomed to live in the United States. Relatives who live geographically close are often seen as potential sources of obligation which translate into extensive involvement in joint activities. Over time most extended family members attempt to go about their every day lives on their own. Most of them only get together with geographically proxemic kin during the major holidays.

*"We have relatives in California - yet we only meet for Thanksgiving or so, only when there is something going on. The others live far away in Hacienda Heights." (informant #66)<sup>39</sup>*

This scenario holds true for middle-class and upper middle-class immigrants (see also Wong and Salaff 1998). On the other hand, immigrants from lower middle class backgrounds who cannot rely on close relationships with former classmates favor relatives for their instrumental relationships. Though immigrants without a university degree from either Taiwan and/or the United States have over time acquired substantial earnings in the hotel, restaurant or real estate

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<sup>37</sup> Spouses and children are not included in the category "kin." Most informants mentioned their spouse as the person with whom they discuss personal matters first. For the purpose of this study this role was left out of the analysis.

<sup>38</sup> The extent to which immediate and distant relatives who live in Taiwan or in a state other than Southern California serve these functions for informants is outlined in the section on the spatial distribution of ties below.

<sup>39</sup> The notion of Hacienda Heights being "far away" is interesting here. It is only a 50 minute drive from Irvine or Mission Viejo. The following section discusses the concept of distance and relationships which are nurtured over distance in more detail.

business, especially for those living in South Orange County, they initially relied heavily on kin for financial assistance and help with language problems. These early dependencies on assistance from kin formed the basis for further patterns of interactions.

*"...with my older sister, with my own folks, my people - I give them a call or they come over to see me. Most all of them are relatives. I contact friends only if they are really close, but not common friends" (informant #34)<sup>40</sup>*

Yet, it is very common among all immigrants that kinship relations create linkages between non-kin related families. Close relatives function as a bridge to two people who live in the same region and the discovery of a joint relative reinforces the link between new acquaintances.

*"The lady who introduced me to the choir, I knew her already in Taiwan. She is a relative of my sister, sort of her "ganmei".<sup>41</sup> My sister is now in Illinois. When my sister left her good friend back in Taiwan to go to Illinois, that good friend became my friend once we both found ourselves in Orange County" (informant #37)*

*"We met, well, actually Dr. X., his wife Mrs. X., - the family knows my husband's family very well. So, when they are moving from ...(Y state) they called me "hey, can you help them find a house?" So, through the families, my father in law, and after we are talking "oh, my mother knows your father" - this and that - so we got even closer. And yeah, since then we have been together for very long" (informant #58)*

Relationship of this nature can not be labeled "kinship relations" in the true sense of the word. However, according to the Chinese tradition of establishing close relationships, they quickly are awarded fictive kinship titles and get incorporated into the extended family. This takes place only if the parties involved develop feelings of sympathy for each other (ganqing) in addition to the initial obligation for assistance (renqing) which arises from the introduction of a relative.<sup>42</sup> Many of these relationships set up through kin subsequently become sources of instrumental and especially social support.

### **Relationships with Members of Other Ethnic Groups**

As introduced in the description of social roles, the main arenas for establishing relationships of moderate strength with members of other ethnic groups are the workplace, school related events

<sup>40</sup> 一般的朋友 (yiban de pengyou) = common friends, friends in general (ordinary friends).

<sup>41</sup> 干妹 (gan mei) = adopted sister, close friend. A label that expresses fictive kinship. See similar reference in Chapter 6.

<sup>42</sup> 感情 (ganqing) = feelings and emotions. 人情 (renqing) = human feelings and sympathy. The latter is an important ingredient for the establishment of 关系 (guanxi) = binding relationships. The former, 感情 (ganqing) is a more personalized notion of feelings for somebody, which goes beyond the abstract notion of having feelings for other humans (emphasizes the existence of a close relationship, possibly based on an actual choice of another person as a close relation).

and meetings, and the immediate neighborhood. Recreational activities, fellow alumni meetings, and family gatherings are usually good venues for meeting of other ethnic groups. Memberships in civil associations and religious congregations offer some chances for interaction with non-Chinese people. Yet, these contacts are primarily weak ones. Most amount to nothing more than greeting relationships. As demonstrated in other work, interethnic ties become plentiful at the weak tie level (Deng and Bonacich 1991, Schweizer et al. 1998). They occasionally enter personal networks as providers of instrumental support but rarely for social and emotional support.

In the personal networks of moderately strong ties the average proportion of people from other ethnic groups is only 7% ( $sd=7.8$ ). Among all informants, 65% have personal networks in which less than 10% of its members are of a different ethnic origin. Only 15% of all informants have percentages of non-ethnics in their networks greater than 13%. Men have significantly higher rates of contact with non-Chinese ( $t(58)=2.715$ ,  $p<0.01$ ) than women. In addition, anyone who is in the workforce ( $t(58)=3.137$ ,  $p<0.005$ ), especially a professional, and those informants who are parents to an American born child have larger a number of alters from other ethnic groups (see statistics presented above). Nevertheless, even men who are employed as professionals and have children in grade school have only an average of 13% ( $sd=11.63$ ) non-Chinese or Taiwanese people in their personal networks.

This is not to say that immigrants avoid relationships with people of a different ethnic background. The presentation of informants' emic views of alters who are not ethnic Chinese or ethnic Taiwanese provides additional information on the composition of personal networks. Almost all informants expressed their interest to get to know other Americans better. They stated this without being asked for an evaluation of the degree of ethnic diversity in their network composition. In any event, the desire to communicate with others refers almost exclusively to Whites (i.e., European Americans). Most informants do not talk about Hispanics or other Asians living in South Orange County as potential acquaintances. Only the younger generation seek out ethnic Vietnamese or ethnic Koreans in addition to fellow Taiwanese and European Americans.

In reflections on the rather homogenous character of their personal networks informants provide three types of explanation. The first reason mentioned refers to the social order in Chinese culture that traditionally promotes interaction with people of similar background (see above table on informants' definitions of 'friend'). It is considered difficult to become closely involved with people who do not share similar cultural values. This also extends to interactions with Chinese people who are born in China and raised under Communism. Someone who has contacts with both

other Chinese immigrants who arrived from Taiwan and Chinese who arrived from mainland China is regarded an exception to the general patterns of co-ethnic interactions. Though informants are aware of their patterns of interaction, they repeatedly stress that it is very difficult to change, and especially difficult if there are a large number of fellow ethnic Taiwanese and Chinese living in the same geographic region.

*"Well, we em, well, originally you study in college or school, or graduate school. Well, we - it's something we don't really do, we Chinese. So we can't go - they (the Chinese) only get together with their own people - which is not healthy. Well, you don't know the white people, you don't associate with them, get together" (informant 36)*

Not surprisingly, the few informants who actually do have a substantial proportion of non-ethnic contacts in their networks see themselves as outliers. They attribute differences in network composition to their occupations which are not the typical immigrant occupations (computer technology, health care and research). However, in a twist on the often cited theme 'we are different than those other Taiwanese' introduced in chapter 6, these informants describe themselves as the "black sheep of the Chinese community".

The second reason for low involvement with other Americans is language ability. Some informants are not comfortable with their level of English.

*"I don't know if I mentioned it - but sometimes in other cases I am too shy - or I think they don't accept me and I am speaking English that sounds too strange. With other foreigners I am less hesitant to speak English - with Americans I am more hesitant. Yet it's the same English."(informant # 41)*

Others are very self-conscious about their heavy accents. They have made the experience that their white neighbors or co-workers have difficulty understanding them. The problems are usually not a question of correct use of grammar or vocabulary but more with pronunciation and emphasis. Since most non-immigrant Americans have never had to learn a foreign language themselves, let alone speak it, their ears are not attuned to a slightly different pronunciation of an otherwise familiar word.

*"...because if you come into a room, it's more comfortable if people understand your language and have the same background. Because even now as I (am able to) speak English, a lot of other people do not understand my words. It's difficult for them, and it's very embarrassing. So you try not to talk too much. Language and your cultural background, the way you think, the way you talk, the way you try to be more careful - Asians are so much more different. Europeans are different too. Sometimes we feel discriminated." (informant #31)*



The different levels of English speaking ability, fluent with no accent, fluent with very noticeable accent, and not fluent in English, actually correspond with the proportion of other ethnic group members in the personal networks of informants ( $F(2,27)=17.796$ ,  $p<0.0001$ ). The main difference is certainly between immigrants with very good English skills and those who are still in the process of learning (Tukey HSD  $p<0.0001$ ). However, a significant difference also exists between those who are fluent with no accent and those who speak with a very audible accent (Tukey HSD  $p<0.01$ ). Nevertheless, even those who display high confidence in their English speaking abilities, many of them members of the professional workforce, have only a relatively small proportion of 13% ( $sd=7.7$ ) non-Chinese or Taiwanese in their personal networks.

The fear of potential embarrassment is the third reason given for the small number of close contacts with other members of the larger society. Immigrants think their cultural values, family structure, personal goals and history are distinctly different from other people living in North America. Even those informants who are confident about their English skills feel that their topics of conversation may not resonate with those who are a part of the general American culture. An encounter without a proper flow of thought might get awkward and make them "lose face." It is indeed, a very important goal for all immigrants to keep up appearances in conversations with others, including people with similar cultural background.

*"Our lifestyle and our educational background is different from that of the other Americans - so we don't dare to talk all that much on and on. It can get embarrassing. After a while the subject matter will be missing - the things we could possibly talk about. And they might feel the same - they might not know what to talk about with us and be in fear we won't understand. So we just greet each other and that's it." (informant #62)<sup>43</sup>*

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<sup>43</sup> 我们的生活不一样。还有语言的困难。所以有时候不太，那么，敢跟外国人在一直聊一直聊。因为聊你碰到没有甚么话讲就在那觉得好刚尬。不知道讲甚么东西好，对不对？也不知道跟我们讲甚么好。生活背景不同也许多的讲话讲得一怕我们不懂甚么的我干甚么所以就是礼帽上的打个招呼，就算了。(Women de shenghuo beijing shang bu yiyang. Hai you yuyan de kunnan. Suoyi you shihou bu tai, name, gan gen waiguoren zai yizhi liao yizhi liao. Yinwei liao ni pengdao meiyou shenme hua jiang jiu zai na jue de hao ganga. Bu zhidao jiang shenme dongxi hao, dui bu dui? Ye bu zhidao gen women jiang shenme hao. Shenghuo beijing bu tong ye xuduo de jianghua jiang de yi pa women bu dong shenme de. Wo gan shenme de.... Suoyi jiu shi limao shang de da ge zhaohu - jiu suan le) = "Our respective backgrounds are not the same. Also, there are difficulties with language. Therefore sometimes, well, we don't dare to talk with foreigners (the Chinese term 'waiguoren' means: non-Chinese, Americans). Because when you chat, you run into situations where you don't know what to talk about and that feels rather embarrassing. You don't know what good or suitable things you should say, right? And they don't know what appropriate things to talk about with us either. Since the backgrounds (in terms of life experience) are different, so with a lot of topics they are afraid we might not understand what it is about. What we do (for a living, what we are up to). So we do the polite thing and exchange greetings. And that'll do." (informant #62).

Nonetheless, some also express feelings of discrimination by people they consider to represent mainstream white America. Some immigrants feel misunderstood and sometimes interpret that as a sign of not being wanted by other Americans for close relationships, such as those between friends. In many cases, however, these sentiments result from the transfer of their personal convictions about life onto others, which calls for finding companions among people of similar cultural and educational background.

*"I don't know - I have just that feeling - they don't really want to be close friends - we are different. They can - like we are foreigners - they are Americans, they have so many people they can make friends with - they don't need to make friends with us - they can make friends with their likes, with people who are like them, are the same." (informant #69)*

Of course, all the reasons mentioned by informants are interrelated. Socializing almost exclusively in ethnically homogeneous groups makes people feel self-conscious once they find themselves in an unfamiliar situation. Lack of practice of speaking English at social gatherings makes it that much more difficult to improve language abilities. The inability to express thoughts or opinions create further barriers to the potential discovery of joint values and ideals with people from different cultural backgrounds. On the other hand, the general approach to interaction and communication with people outside the extended family is radically different in mainstream American society than in Chinese society. It is no surprise that even immigrants who have lived and worked in the United States for several decades still marvel about the way social relationships are established and maintained in North America in general. Relationships emerge and disappear with startling regularity.

*"Also, I think there is not much of a social life, there is no mix with the white society.<sup>44</sup> I don't have a social life, a social life like the white people have. That is only possible in Taiwan. Social relations in America: people know each other for a short time and then split again. Everyone has their own thing to keep them busy.<sup>45</sup> America is pretty amazing that way. You loose touch - just once in a while a phone call - that's the most. Contacts are very rare." (informant #19)*

However, it needs to be stressed that over time immigrants themselves no longer adhere to the same roles for conducting relationships as they did in Taiwan either. Their patterns of interaction have been subject to change ever since arriving in North America. Many, especially women, welcome the opportunities for casual chats and frequent shifts in affiliations among and between various groups and organizations.

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<sup>48</sup> 白人社会 (bairren shehui) = white people's society.

<sup>45</sup> 他们都忙他们的 (tamen dou mang tamen de) = "they all are busy with their own things".

## General Characteristics of Support Networks

### Variations in network size

The average size of networks with strong to moderately strong ties is 14 people, including ego and his or her ties to 13 alters ( $sd=4.0$ ). This is true for all 60 informants interviewed in structured interviews.<sup>46</sup> The lowest number of alters is 7 and the highest 23. When looking at weak ties mentioned by informants the values have a much greater range. Asked to list contacts with alters whom they have only a single link to and do not speak to on a regular basis, informants reported anywhere between 1 and 46 additional alters. The average number of weakly related alters in a personal network is 14 ( $sd=9.99$ ). Informants with comparatively larger networks of strong and moderately strong ties to alters also have larger networks of weakly related alters. Only a few exceptions exist among people with moderately sized networks, who have more weakly related than strongly related contacts.

The analysis presented in the following text and tables is based on data from 48 informants and their alters. Unfortunately, in the other cases the information on the background of alters was incomplete and thus only complete datasets are used in the analysis. However, the 48 data points are representative of the larger dataset of 60 interviews in terms of gender, age and occupation. The 48 informants reported a total of 587 ties.

The personal networks of moderately strong ties are not significantly different in size for male or female informants. However, although the average number of alters are similar for both genders, men display a bimodal distribution. Some men in the sample have very small networks and some men have comparatively large networks. This reflects the choices some people make to actively control the size of their networks, since no other explanatory factor but the number of organizations a person is involved in could be detected.<sup>47</sup> Among women a difference in size is apparent between those who work as professionals and those who are homemakers, who tend to have smaller networks. The personal networks of women are also characterized by higher proportion of multiplex relationships ( $t(58) = -2.141, p < 0.05$ ), which means that a higher number

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<sup>46</sup> 74 of a total of 127 interviews are based on the same structured interview questions. 60 of them are conducted with first generation informants, 14 with members of the second and 1.5 generation. Only 48 of the 60 structured interviews with first generation informants produced datasets of complete personal networks.

<sup>47</sup> The extent of involvement in organizations is discussed in more detail in chapter 8. Men are involved in a larger number of professional and political associations than women, but do not take part in more recreational activities.

of their alters are linked to ego in more than one way (i.e., they each fulfill more than one social role).

The length of time an immigrant spends in the United States has an influence on the network size. Members of earlier cohorts are more likely to have larger networks than members of later cohorts ( $F(3, 56) = 5.089, p < 0.005$ ). The main difference is between the fourth and second cohort (Tukey HSD  $p < 0.001$ ). Yet even the comparison of the latest arrivals with members of the third cohort reveals a significant difference (Tukey HSD  $p < 0.05$ ). With the exception of immigrants of the fourth cohort, there is no distinction in network size between women whose spouse resides with them in South Orange County and women whose spouses live in East Asia.

Not surprisingly given the above introductions, informants who are part of the workforce have significantly larger networks than homemakers and retirees ( $t(58) = 3.006, p < 0.005$ ). Yet, those among them who are self-employed are not necessarily involved in larger networks. The level of education an immigrant has achieved makes no difference in network size. Intuitively we might predict that informants who have attended an American university might have larger networks due to their long stay in the United States, exposure to a greater diversity of people, and more confidence in their English speaking abilities. The latter has an influence on the number of people from other ethnic groups in a person's network (see discussion above). The level of English among informants explains differences in network size to some extent ( $F(2, 57) = 3.421, p < 0.05$ ). However, the main difference lies between immigrants who speak fluent English with a noticeable accent and immigrants, mostly women, who are not very experienced in the English (Tukey HSD  $p < 0.0001$ ). Immigrants who speak fluent English with little accent, including both men and women, have below average network sizes in comparison to those whose English is fluent but rich in accent. Such statistics provide further support for findings from the in-depth interviews in which some immigrants describe that they consciously decide to keep their networks small.

### **Network homophily**

A study of sociodemographic similarities between informants and their network members shows that women are more likely to interact with other women than with men. For the subgroup of female informants 69.1% of the alters are female and 30.1% are male. Men do not display the same distribution in their personal networks. Though they have on average slightly more contact (54.5%) with other men, 45.5% of their alters are women. This reflects the fact that the study was focused more on the interaction patterns of immigrants in public places, an environment which is

frequented by a higher number of women. In addition, of all the immigrants from Taiwan who settled in South Orange County, the number of men is smaller than the number of women since many men have returned to East Asia for better career opportunities or have never spent an entire year in California. The average age of alters is 48.23 years ( $sd=7.98$ ), compared to an average age of 48.33 ( $sd=7.57$ ) for informants (egos). Though women and men are relatively similar in age on average, the range of ages among women is higher, for both ego and alters.

The tendency for interaction with alters of similar age is to some extent also evident in the pairing of occupations among informants and their alters. Table 7.4 presents the raw count of interaction between members of the four occupational groups identified in chapter 6. The comparison with the expected count listed in brackets reveals the strong tendencies of preferences for interaction with others who share the same social standing and have similar time budgets due to their responsibilities in the workplace, in a business, or in the household.

**Table 7.4 Interaction patterns of informants by alters for occupations**

n=587	homemaker	service jobs	professionals	business owners
homemakers	45 (29)	29 (25)	37 (53)	10 (14)
Service jobs	15 (16)	14 (14)	21 (28)	15 (7)
professionals	26 (36)	26 (32)	84 (66)	15 (17)
business owners	2 (7)	8 (7)	18 (31)	4 (4)

Note: Numbers reflect the raw counts of ties. The expected number of ties, listed in brackets, is rounded.

The table shows that informants are more likely to have more ties with people who share the same socioeconomic background. Homemakers seek other homemakers more often and professionals interact more frequently with other professionals (significant at  $p<0.0001$ ). All other interactions between members of different occupational groups are lower than would be expected by chance. The only exception is the exchange taking place between business owners and people who work in service related occupations. The two groups are often linked by reasons of job-task overlap. Some of them are in the same religious organizations, while others meet at the Chinese-American Chamber of Commerce.

These sociodemographic dimensions shape the relationships between individuals. According to the principle of homophily (Blau 1977) people who are similar to one another based on these criteria are more likely to interact than those who are dissimilar (see also Marsden 1988, McPherson et al. 1992). Social organizations which are based on such homophilous relationships are usually an indicator for a low level of integration into larger society (Popielarz and McPherson

1995). Because relationships are not reaching out to create diverse social groups, they also fail to link the individual to the larger society, which in the case of Southern California is made up of a diverse body of people.

### **Frequency of interaction**

Differentiations among informants becomes clearer through an examination of the frequency of meetings between informants and their alters. Data was collected on the frequency of meetings and phone calls. The resulting categories are 'meeting more than once a week,' 'meeting once a week,' 'meeting twice a month,' 'meeting once a month,' 'meeting twice a year,' and 'meeting once a year.' These frequency counts include the exchange of additional phone calls. However, many informants call a person more often than they may meet with them. Therefore, additional categories are needed to better understand the frequency of phone calls. Meetings take place but happen with much less frequency than phone calls. The phone is the main medium of a given. Occurrence is sorted by 'daily calls,' 'weekly calls,' 'monthly calls,' and 'calling once a year'. A separate analysis of the frequency of phone calls and face-to-face interaction with alters living overseas is presented in the section on spatial distribution of ties.

Informants are most likely to meet fellow sports mates or music mates they share a joint recreational activity with at least once a week, 50% of all interactions occur on a weekly basis. High incidents are also reported for meeting twice a week, twice a month and monthly. In these cases, phone calls are no more a dominant form of interaction than are meetings. People who meet at the same adult school or a training course are also meeting on a weekly basis (41%), and even more often than that during the week (21%). Neighbors on the other hand generally run into each other less frequently. They talk with each other about twice a month on average (64%). Not surprisingly though, members of a joint religious organization meet once a week (54%), with some meeting even more often than that.

Contrary to these patterns, yet confirming the nature of the relationship, members of joint associations meet either twice a year or once a year, with communication by of phone in between times (30% in each category). Fellow parents are most likely to either meet each other once a month (22%) or call at least once a month and see each other less often in person (18%). There is an exception to the pattern, however. A separate group of parents involved in their children's Chinese Language School meet each other once a week on the weekend (26%).

Co-workers and business partners are the only ones who are linked to each other by daily phone calls. Not surprisingly, meetings take place more than once a week at the workplace (21% of all co-worker interactions). Phone calls on a monthly or yearly basis are also found among business partners.

Contacts with former classmates are less clearly defined. Approximately 21.3% and 10.6% of all classmate relations are physically activated on a weekly and bimonthly basis respectively. This reflects situations in which former classmates live within driving distance to one another. With respect to interactions between former classmates, 27% take place over the telephone on a monthly basis. But there are also substantial proportions of informants who only meet their fellow schoolmates on a biannual or annual basis (26% for both categories). These patterns represent contacts between alumni more generally and not necessarily between classmates who were already friends back in Taiwan. Those in the role category 'other friends' which refers mostly to 'friends of friends who have become one's own friends' tend to meet on a monthly basis (32%).

Interactions with members of the extended family for 30% of all informants take place on a bimonthly or monthly basis. However, the predominant pattern (46%) among kin group members is to see each other less often, but call once a week or once a month. Most usual is a call on a weekly basis in order to check in on one another. Of all reported weekly calls, 70% are made to reach a close relative.

*"In former times we saw each other (the relatives in the area) more often - but nowadays - we got more relatives here - so not that much anymore. It used to be in Orange County - only my husband and his cousin. So we kind of see each other more often. Later on- he have his brothers and sisters come - and his cousin has his brothers and sisters come. And we all are busy - we probably see each other two or three times a year - and besides the kids are not living with us anymore" (informant #38)*

Some of the frequencies of interactions can be collapsed into one of two categories, 'meetings on a weekly basis' or 'meetings on a monthly/quarterly basis.' Recreational contacts, training related contacts and faith related contacts belong to the group of people who have weekly encounters with each other. Members of political, cultural, and professional associations, as well as parents involved in parent teacher organizations, meet less often on either a monthly or quarterly basis.

### **Length of relationships**

Another aspect of interest is the length of time relationships have existed between informants and alters. The average length of time two people have known each other is 12 years ( $sd=13.57$ ), while the median is 6 years. The time periods range from 6 months to 57 years. The latter reflects the fact that those who have a cousin or sibling living in California have obviously known that person for their entire life. More than 20% of all relationships are less than two years old (10% of relationships have been in place for only a year or less). Half of all the ties mentioned are described as having been around for less than 6 years in duration. Another 20% of relationships have been established for between 6 and 11 years. The distribution becomes highly variable beyond the 11-year mark. Only 20% of all relationships have been around for longer than 20 years and 10% of all for more than 35 years.

Relationships having long durations are without exception with extended family members and former classmates. The bulk of relationships are shorter than 6 years in length and reflect the links to members of associations, recreational activities, training courses and even religious organizations. Indeed, the circles immigrants belong to at any given time are fluid and have fluctuating membership. Though many report that they met the largest number of new people in the very early years of their arrival in a new city or neighborhood, there is also substantial turnover and replacement among the members of personal networks. Many respondents have experienced various changes in network compositions over time, depending on the type and volume of their involvement in community organizations and their stage in life. For example, parents of children in high school are exposed to different opportunities for interaction than retirees. As much as the informant in the following quote considers his situation exceptional, this is relatively common for many immigrants as comparisons of the biographical accounts of other informants will show.

*"If you belong to a church - your life unfolds in different patterns. Members anticipate thing, you have dinner parties and friends through church. 10 years we have been in the church. Before we went to the church, the kids went to church. Then she (the wife) found out she didn't believe anymore - and so all of a sudden we didn't go to church anymore - and have no more friends. They didn't associate with us. It's an interesting adjustment - because, there you are in your middle age and suddenly you have to find new friends. And so, em, that time she found some friends and I found some friends. So eventually, because I found some friends at work or some place, we lost family friends (friends of the family). It's kind of interesting, kind of unusual." (informant #112)*



### **Patterns of Social and Emotional Support**

The following two sections look at the relationship between types of support and social roles. The goal is to determine which specific types of support are most likely to be associated with a given role. The patterns for instrumental support and social roles are presented separately from the patterns for social and emotional support since instrumental support, in the form of the provision of information, is a special case apart from these other forms of social activities. These support types have an added dimension as demonstrated further below.

For the study of social and emotional support table 5.5 and figure 5.1 show two alternative ways for understanding the connection between roles and support types. The first approach simply looks at bivariate correlations between the various roles and types of support. The other, multivariate approach examines the relationships between roles and types of support with the use of a two-dimensional space by way of correspondence analysis.

Table 7.5 displays results from bivariate correlations of dichotomous variables. The provision of support was recorded as either given or not and dummy variables were created for some of the role relations, such as 'being a classmate' (yes/no). Recreational activities enjoyed with others and training related groups, such as adult schools are summarized into a single dummy variable 'joint hobby.' Membership in associations, religious organizations and parent-teacher organizations are combined as the variable 'joint organization' (the rationale for this grouping procedure is introduced above).

**Table 7.5 Correlation of types of social and emotional support with social roles**

Type of social and emotional support	Gender Female/Male	Kin/non-Kin	Classmate yes/no	Co-Worker yes/no	Neighbor yes/no	Joint hobby group yes/no	Joint assoc. yes/no
neighborhood issues	0.064	-0.016	-0.103*	-0.10	0.517****	-0.016	-0.127*
work issues	-0.105*	-0.026	-0.138**	0.592****	-0.063	-0.024	0.068
child issues	0.191****	-0.038	-0.146***	-0.079	0.228****	0.007	-0.106*
invite to dine out	-0.018	-0.058	0.148***	0.074	-0.091	0.100	0.055
invite home	-.0.031	0.309****	0.070	-0.141**	0.035	-0.014	0.035
join shopping	0.207****	0.096	0.045	0.002	-0.062	0.054	-0.010
join new recreat. activity	0.157***	-0.050	0.001	0.015	-0.73	0.458****	-0.026
join new social organization	0.016	-0.038	0.001	-0.130*	-0.072	-0.001	0.430** **
seek personal advice from	0.069	0.387****	0.291****	-0.119*	-0.068	0.051	-0.047
provide personal advice to	0.075	0.338****	0.154***	-0.060	-0.005	-0.004	-0.025

Pearsons product moment correlation. \* p<0.05, \*\* p<0.01, \*\*\* p<0.005, \*\*\*\* p< 0.001.

In a perusal of the above table, a difference between the gender roles is visible. Women fulfill more traditional role expectations and are the most likely providers of information about childcare and education, they join each other for leisurely shopping sprees and invite each other to join a new recreational group. This observation is in line with findings of Wellman and Wortley on *"different strokes for different folks"* (1990: 583). Not surprisingly, neighbors are sought to discuss topics relating to that are of community interest. Yet, neighbors also share an interest in childcare-related issues. This hints at the fact that subdivisions are often very homogenous in terms of socioeconomic status and the age groupings of inhabitants. People buy houses in areas where their neighbors have similar family profiles. The children go to schools assigned to their neighborhood. Therefore neighbors often have children in the same age group. Co-workers and business partners are the only social roles associated with the discussion of work-related issues. It is noteworthy that work related issues are not relevant among people who have joint hobbies or meet each other at association meetings or in religious settings.

Fellow members of a hobby related group or an adult school class who are already involved in sports or music activities are more likely to be invited to join in a new recreational activity. The same holds true for those people engaged in social, cultural, political, or professional organizations. They are approached if a new cause calls for members. Yet, the two types of groupings seem to overlap little. People who are members of joint recreational groups do not ask each other to join a new social organization and, conversely, fellow association members are not

asked to join in recreational activities. The two types of involvement are negatively correlated ( $r = -0.220^{**}$ ). Indeed it is helpful to look at variables which are negatively related. Co-workers are hardly invited home and not likely to be invited to join in a new organization. There is no automatic recruitment of co-workers for professional associations. Members of organizations such as associations do not talk about child-related issues or the neighborhood. Apparently informants strongly compartmentalize their relationships. Someone related in terms of recreational activities is not necessarily approached for other activities. Associations, especially church groups, do not mix with sports or music activities. Immigrants keep their various social circles separate from one another. It is important to point out that this is managed from the point of view of the individual and his or her personal network. A look at the degree of interrelatedness at the group level produces a slightly different picture as evident in chapter 8.

Former classmates are more likely to join an informant for dining out in restaurants. However, those most likely to be invited into an informant's house are kin group members. Classmates and extended family members are equally important in their role of providing advice in personal matters for those who seek it. They are also both recipients of advice. No other role relationship is significant in giving or seeking personal guidance. The fact that, in some instances, neighbors or fellow recreational group members seek out an established resident of the area for assistance is not an important influence. It might also come as a surprise that gender is not significantly correlated with emotional support. The members of extended families who are asked for advice are often brothers and male cousins. In many cases there are more male classmates from a particular school living in Southern California than female classmates. The relationship between advice seekers and givers is quite reciprocal in nature and are significantly correlated ( $r=0.433$ ,  $p<0.001$ ).

Yet, one difference between classmates and extended family members is not evident from the analysis. In the overall sample of ties, classmates play a much more important role (13.5%) than kin group members (9%). Overall, the importance of extended family members is much lower than reported in the study of Orange County neighborhoods conducted by Schweizer, Schnegg and Berzborn (1998). There are several reasons for this. The questions posed by this study were different in nature and were less focused on help in the household or with illness and were aimed at understanding social activities outside the house. Both, the Anglo and the Hispanic sample in the Schweizer et al. study reported a larger number of kin group member living in the region. For example, many Hispanic immigrants have larger families on average and the geographic closeness of the border encourages a larger number of kin to immigrate as well.

In this Taiwanese sample, the influence of classmates was expected to be even stronger, given that in Taiwan itself classmates are sought for emotional support concerning personal problems while kin group members are sought for financial help, such as with money or housing issues (Freeman and Ruan 1997: 111). The fact that some family members are indeed contacted for emotional support is a product of the immigrant situation. Several informants have no classmates living in the United States to talk with about personal issues. The few extended kin group members who are around therefore become more important due to the shared experience of immigration. However, in all cases where informants have both actual former classmates and extended family members living in the region, they reported the classmates to be more important in providing help for solving personal problems.

*"How did I learn about that bible school? Ah, interesting, one of my high school friends - who lives in Mission Viejo got me to go there. She also wanted us to live right next to her in Mission Viejo - and then later that other highschool friend introduced us to Rancho San Margarita. Well, after all, everything is a function of connections (guanxi) and see, most of the times, it's the old friend whom you do most with - old friendships are very strong."(informant #49)<sup>48</sup>*

Figure 7.1 provides a different angle for showing the relationships between social roles and types of support through the use of correspondence analysis (Weller and Romney 1990, Romney et al. 1997) that allows for a visual display of the row and column relationships in an  $n \times m$  matrix. It is based on the analysis of a role by support matrix recording the aggregated number of times a classmate or a coworker are mentioned by all informants as providers of a certain role, e.g., either to seek advice in personal matters or to come along to a new recreational activity. The goal was to detect the patterns among informants' responses with respect to the extent to which types of social and emotional support are associated with specific roles in the social arena of immigrants, how the various types of support are related to each other and how the various roles are associated with each other (Freeman and Ruan 1997: 95). A social role and a type of support are related to one another to the degree that the behavior of providing a specific kind of support is performed by the holder of a specific social role. Two roles are linked to each other if they are consistently involved

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<sup>48</sup> 很多事情是因为 有人的关系 (hen duo shiqing shi yinwei you ren de guanxi) = a lot of things happen because you have special relationships 关系 (guanxi) with a person. 而且你看常常都是你的 old friend 友的时候好象是 old friend 的 relationship 还帮你很强 (erqie ni kan changchang dou shi ni de old friend you de shihou haoxiang shi old friend de relationship hai bang ni hen qiang) = what's more, see often it is your old friend. Seems like sometimes it is the relationship with the old friend that provides the strongest assistance.

with the same types of support. Two types of support are associated with one another if they are consistently involved with the same role relationships.

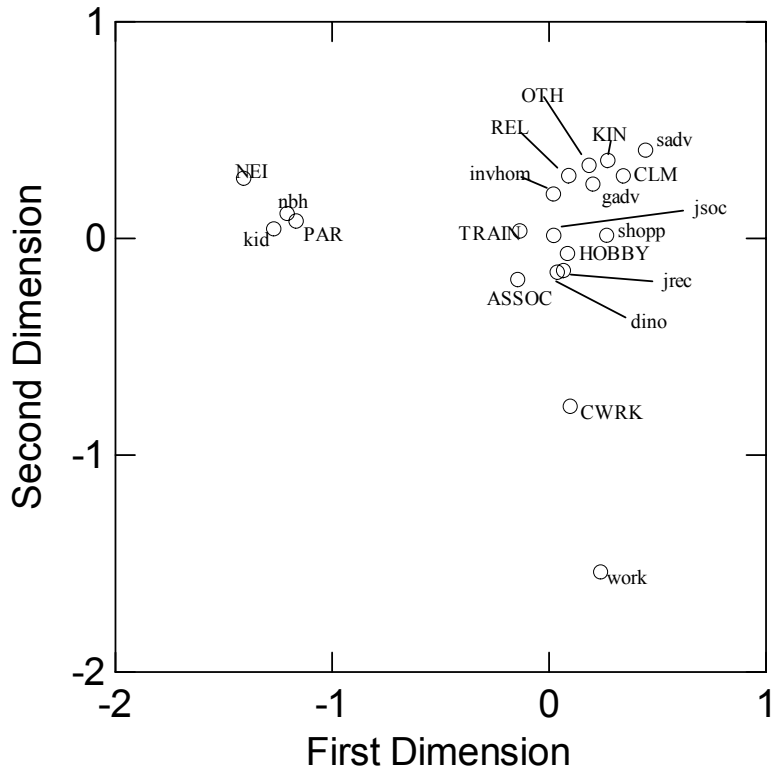
The metric scaling procedure of correspondence analysis can then be used to look at all three relationships simultaneously. This part of the correspondence analysis is the process of 'singular value decomposition' which identifies the basic structure of a matrix (Weller and Romney 1990). It transforms the observed variables into a new set of variables. These new variables are ordered such that the first dimension is associated with the most variance in the original data and the following dimensions are displaying successively decreasing levels of variance. The variation in rows and columns is therefore reproduced and reorganized. This simplification allows for the visualization of the relationship among roles and support types as well as between them.

In the figure below, roles are labeled with abbreviated upper case letters and the various types of support relationships as well as emotional relationship are labeled with small letters. The two dimensions together explain 52.9% of the variance; the first dimension accounts for 28.2% and the second dimension for 24.8% of the variance.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> Calculations for the correspondence analysis were done in UCINET V (Borgatti, Everett and Freeman 1999). The scatter plot graph was produced using the software program SYSDAT 10.0.

**Figure 7.1 Correspondence analysis of social roles and their provision of social and emotional support**



Legend

CLM	classmate, alumni	jrec	join new recreat.activity
REL	faith related	jsoc	join new organization
HOBBY	recreational contact	nbh	talk about neighborhood
ASSOC	association member	kid	talk about child issues
TRAIN	training, learning related	dino	dine out together
KIN	extended family member	ivhom	invite home
CWRK	co-worker	shopp	go shopping together
OTH	other friend	work	talk about work issues
PAR	fellow parent	sadv	seek advice from
NEI	neighbor	gadv	give advice to

Clusters depict roles and relations which have a lot in common with each other. The distance between the clusters informs about the likelihood of relatedness between clusters. At first sight three clusters and a loosely connected pair are evident. Most central are immigrants who share a recreational activity, attend adult school, or attend associations together, or are members of the same religious organization. They ask each other to join new organizations, new recreational activities (hidden under ASSOC and HOBBY in the graph) and dine out at restaurants together.

Closely related is the next cluster, which represents most sources of emotional support. Kin group members are in a similar position as classmates and other friends in respect to giving and seeking advice. They are also expected to invite each other to their homes. The alters which are captured in the social roles seen in both clusters are equally likely to be partners for shopping trips. The central location of the 'socializing cluster' can be explained by the frequency of interactions. Recreational activities, religious organizations and adult school classes all convene on the most regular and frequent basis. Former classmates and kin group members are very important when it comes to personal matters but they see each other less often or may only talk via telephone.

The loosely connected pair of the role 'co-worker' and the support type 'talking about work related issues' confirms findings from previous analysis. Co-workers hold a bridge position and supply several types of support. Though not strongly related to any other particular role, relationships with co-workers account after all for 16.5% of all ties. The types of support are spread among co-workers who go out to dinner with ego, talk about parenting issues, are asked to join a recreational activity or even approach an informant for advice. Though these forms of support are not significant, a few types of instrumental support given by co-workers are significant as discussed below.

Instead, the outlier position of work related communication topics in the graph shows clearly that hardly anyone but co-workers are conversation partners in this matter. This might seem unusual at first since it is often assumed that people from Taiwan are avid businesspeople who leave out no networking opportunity to develop new business enterprises (Wong 1988, Gold 1994, Weidenbaum 1996, Forschauer 1998). However, the particular sample in this study had few business owners and a majority of employed and self-employed professionals who have no need to rely on social events to find new clients. The predominance of professionals is also one of the main characteristics of immigrant settlement in southern Orange County. In contrast, the San Gabriel Valley in Los Angeles County has a somewhat different profile in this respect (Tseng 1994, Fong 1994, Fong 1996).

Nevertheless, immigrants do not avoid talking about business opportunities at social get-togethers. They might not talk about their actual work situation, but exchange insights about financial opportunities in general (such as good investment opportunities or stock options), as evident in the introduction to patterns of instrumental support. At any rate, work related issues are

simply not the focal point of affiliations among immigrants.<sup>50</sup> Although business partners and co-workers of various ethnic backgrounds are in easy reach at the workplace where informants who work spend most of their time, on average up to 60-70% of their waking hours, the lack of opportunity to interact with "people from the same background", i.e., fellow ethnic Chinese and Taiwanese, at the workplace, prompts informants to join recreational groups and social organizations.

Neighbors and fellow parents are quite removed from the two other clusters but related amongst themselves when it comes to discussing the neighborhood environment and the raising of children. It seems questionable at first that fellow parents are not closely related to joint recreational activities and that joint members of religious organizations are not more likely to discuss child related topics. The reason for the separation lies in the fact that religious congregations have members of various age groups, whereas face-blocks along a few residential streets are often age group homogenous. Since South Orange County offers a wide range of housing options, people with school-age children would not choose to move to areas where people with no children or grown children live. Most important, though, is the influence of ethnicity. The probability that a neighbor or fellow parent is a member of a different ethnic group is much higher than for religious organizations, social associations or recreational groups. Most sports or music activities immigrants pursue as well as most social organizations they are engaged in are ethnically exclusive and only include ethnic Chinese and Taiwanese participants.

### **Patterns of Instrumental Support**

The relationship between social roles and types of instrumental support are computed in the same manner introduced for finding patterns in emotional and social support.

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<sup>50</sup> An exception is arguably the Orange County Chinese-American Chamber of Commerce which aims to be a forum for both Chinese and Taiwanese business owners.



**Table 7.6 Correlation between types of instrumental support and social roles**

Types of instrumental support	Gender Female/ Male	Kin/non-Kin	Classmate yes/no	Co-Worker yes/no	Neighbor yes/no	Joint hobby group yes/no	Joint assoc. yes/no
find a house	-0.182****	0.213****	0.016	0.148***	-0.042	0.067	-0.061
find a job	-0.049	0.069	-0.029	0.239****	-0.061	-0.120*	-0.019
find financial information	-0.138**	0.231****	0.191****	0.038	-0.060	-0.035	0.016
find health care, insurance information	0.085	0.009	0.023	-0.018	-0.010	0.025	0.051
find help to buy a car	-0.014	0.093	-0.053	0.043	-0.025	-0.064	-0.013
find info. on cultural events	0.131**	-0.152***	-0.145***	-0.046	0.012	0.046	0.082

Pearsons product moment correlation. \* p<0.05, \*\* p<0.01, \*\*\* p<0.005, \*\*\*\* p< 0.001

An interesting gender effect can be seen among the providers of various types of information. With the exception of introducing others to information on cultural and social events in the region, almost all other information is supplied by men. Given that members of the extended family often do not live in the immediate vicinity of each other it is noteworthy that they are significantly related to assistance in finding a house. This type of instrumental support was originally expected to be least associated with the role of kin group members based on the assumption that people find a house through word-of-mouth, which is considered to be based more on weak ties (Granovetter 1973, Henning 1996). The significance of the correlation is due to the fact that many informants either have a real estate agent among their kin group or their relatives are close friends with a broker. The ethnographic account shows several incidents in which classmates fulfill a similar function.

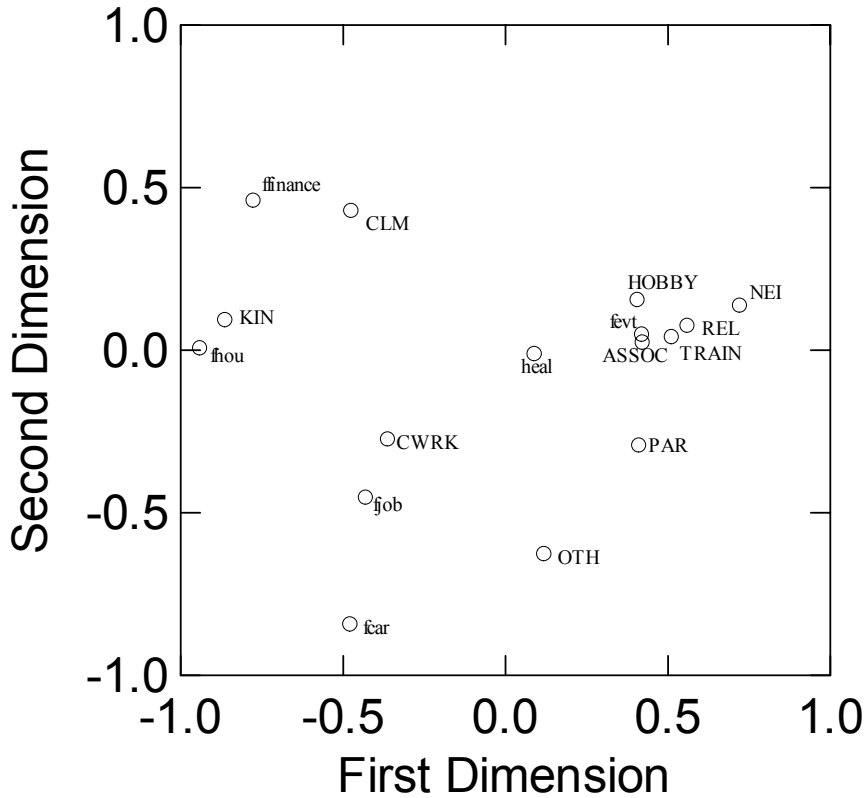
However, relationships with former classmates only are significant for the assistance with information on investment opportunities and the organization of financial affairs. A similar correlation is evident for extended family members, which once again confirms the similar importance of former classmates and kin group members in an immigrant's life.

Co-workers are important sources of information as well. They introduce informants to real estate agents in their own personal networks. Most importantly, they are sources of information on

other jobs in the area. Since people often switch jobs they either introduce former co-workers to better opportunities or refer them to their own former places of employment.

Figure 7.2 is a correspondence analysis showing the location in space of the complete set of roles and types of instrumental support and clarifies the relationships among and between them.

**Figure 7.2 Correspondence analysis of social roles and their provision of instrumental support**



Legend:

CLM	classmate, alumni	fhou	help finding a house
KIN	extended family	fjob	help finding a job
CWR	co-worker	fīn	help financial info
REL	faith related	heal	help with health info
HOBBY	recreational contact	fcar	help finding a car
ASSOC	association member	fevt	help finding information. on events
TRAIN	training related		
NEI	neighbor		
PAR	fellow parents		
OTH	other friends		

In Figure 7.2, the two dimensions together explain 64.4% of the variance, with the first dimension explaining 42.4% and the second 22.4%. Looking at the horizontal axis a clear split is

visible among the various types of support. The need for assistance in finding information on financial investments, houses and jobs forms one group and reflects actual problems that occur in the lives of immigrants. The right side along the axis of the first dimension shows a close relation with social roles only for 'information on social and cultural events in the region', a less pressing need. The support type 'finding a car' is an outlier. The resulting differences between support types are certainly an artifact of the questions posed. However, the distribution explains the occurrence of only one large cluster and three pairs of association in the picture created by the correspondence analysis. They also overlap with the types of support most likely to be provided by women (right side) and by men (left side).

The only large cluster is grouped around information on events. Fellow participants of recreational activities, adult class members, members of a joint religious congregation, association members, and all neighbors are sources of information on upcoming events in South Orange County. Noteworthy here is that neighbors are strongly related to this cluster. That might be a function of the topics fellow parents discuss with each other which are not likely to focus on many activities other than their children's' social calendars. At any rate, the nature of relationships between members of various groups is rather focused on questions of a social nature rather than the assistance involving financial transactions and related decisions. Those aspects are covered by former classmates, kin group members and co-workers.

The left side of the graph shows a much clearer distinction between the individual roles than the previous analysis. Though they are all more related to one another than to the cluster related to the organization of social or free time, three separate associations emerge. At the center are family members who are most likely to assist in house hunting. Classmates are the main suppliers of investment information, and co-workers, not surprisingly, support with information on potential job openings. The fact that classmates are most prominent as investment advisors seems to be an indication that some form of informal business talks takes place at social get-togethers, most specifically alumni association meetings.

The graph confirms that fellow parents are not playing a major role as suppliers of information. 'Other friends' are even less important. This is a bit unexpected since the correspondence analysis for social and emotional support placed 'other friends' in close relation to the activities in which classmates are involved. However, the finding verifies the exceptional role of classmates as confidants, not only in matters of personal advice, but also with regard to financial decisions.

Two more types of instrumental support need further discussion, supply of information on health care providers and insurance, and assistance with buying a car. Though 'health care information' is related more to social roles than "help with finding a car," both are not as related to any single social role. In addition, as Table 7.6 shows, the two types of support are not significantly associated with any role relation. Arguably, the provision of information on health issues and insurance is somewhat related to the provision of information on social events and all the social roles associated with it. Yet, this only confirms its low importance. Finding health care information is closely related to topics of casual conversations at social gatherings, such as upcoming cultural events. It is not an issue informants set out to solve with a close associate or expert.

Indeed, informants mention very few alters who actually are sources of either information on cars or health care. Some types of support were mentioned so infrequently they possibly warranted exclusion from the questions asked. However, already during data collection the realization of the low numbers prompted further investigation. Instead of phrasing the question "Whom do you ask for help in buying a car?" the words are changed to "How do you decide which car dealer to go to?" Subsequently all questions aiming to elicit instrumental support are posed in two ways, one asking about people who might supply information and the other one asking about information sources in general, e.g., "How do you find out about social activities and cultural events in Orange County?" This procedure revealed that a very large proportion of information comes from sources other than acquaintances.

Before looking more closely at these additional sources of information, one aspect of the correspondence analysis should be mentioned. The computation of all three types of support, social, emotional and instrumental support, the relationship among them and their relationships with social roles, in one two-dimensional space results in only a slightly varied picture than figure 7.1 above. The central space is occupied by the two clusters of social and emotional support, with additional types of instrumental support interspersed. Similar to figure 7.1 neighbors, parents and their issues stay apart, as well as the support type 'work'. Coworkers continue to act as a bridge linking the 'finding a job' and to some extent 'finding a house' to the large cluster in the center.

The biggest insight revealed by the correspondence analysis is the dominance of opportunities for casual socializing in the social networks of informants and the confirmation that the role of family members is indeed equal to and interchangeable with the role of former classmates.

### **Additional Sources of Information: Mainstream and Ethnic Media**

All informants report that they regularly resort to resources other than friends, family, and acquaintances to find information to assist them in those aspects of daily life elicited by the questions on instrumental support. These resources are newspapers, TV programs, Yellow Pages, message boards (billboards) in central locations and various other handbooks and brochures. Some of these media sources immigrants rely on are used by the general public as well, but the majority of sources are ethnic group specific, published in the native language and hence called 'ethnic media' (Riggins 1992).

#### **The role of ethnic media**

The character and scope of ethnic media has changed with the development of technology. Ethnic media, such as native language newspapers and radio stations, changed from being rather marginalized forums for first generation immigrants to becoming a serious contender in attracting clientele to mainstream media outlets and their advertisers. Ethnic media outlets no longer simply recite news from the homeland or the local ethnic community. Most ethnic media sources today present news, business and entertainment information from all over the world. Wireless services, computerized printing and digital broadcasting technologies enable ethnic media providers to present comprehensive information with little time delay, making ethnic media an integral part of the global ethnic economy. Especially in regions like Southern California, where all minority populations combined account for a larger population share than white residents, marketers have taken note and here started to advise companies to consider including ethnic media publications and broadcasting stations in their advertising strategies (Karim 1998). Various subgroups of Asian Americans which have above average levels of affluence have become a preferred target audience.<sup>51</sup>

According to the literature, the main role of ethnic media is to keep the ethnic community alive, to contribute to ethnic cohesion and cultural maintenance but also, somewhat contradictory, to assist members of their audience in their integration into the larger society (Riggins 1992:4, Lee

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<sup>51</sup> Among many other branches, marketers have realized the large earning potential in the telecommunications market by reaching the growing minority populations in the United States. All large phone companies, including AT & T and Sprint, have special Chinese speaking marketing sections. Chinese speaking solicitors make cold calls to individual household across the United States who are listed with a Chinese last name. The sales pitched is conducted in Chinese without a verification of the recipients ability to understand Chinese (note: not all people with a Chinese last name are necessarily capable of speaking Chinese). Similar interests in entering the market of the increasingly affluent Turkish population in Germany have been addressed by White (1997).

and Tse 1994, Neckerman et al. 1999). Looking at the special characteristics of electronic media technology which enables ethnic media sources to become transnational actors, Appadurai (1996) goes further and predicts that the links across national boundaries between producers and their audiences will create "*a growing number of diasporic public spheres*" (Appadurai 1996: 22) and might eventually lead to "*the end of the nation-state*" (Appadurai 1996: 16). Ethnic media operating through modern technology have certainly increased the frequency and intensity of contact between ethnic communities across the globe and their respective homelands. It has also made the individual diasporas more visible to each other and to the outside world. However, currently the political influence of these ethnic communities is not always reinforced or increased by technologically improved ethnic media.

While ethnic media may strengthen a sense of community and cultural identity it is often not used for community empowerment. Most ethnic media outlets are used to generate income for owners and producers, but are not used as a tool to support cultural integrity, educate immigrants about their rights, or unify immigrants to protect them against discrimination and lack of representation (Downing 1992: 272). Ethnic communities often sell out to commercial advertisers in their struggle for commercial success. As more and more global conglomerates become interested in buying into regional ethnic markets taking over television and radio stations, there will be less local content available in the station programming.<sup>52</sup> The loss of local content and messages of empowerment may even go undetected since the main function of many ethnic stations is to provide entertainment and not community activism. In this respect, Appadurai's assumptions remain to be tested by future developments and future realities (and further research).

However, the role of ethnic media in community formation, empowerment, and cultural maintenance was not the main focus of this research. Many interesting questions in regard to ethnic media can only be addressed in passing, such as why some people use more ethnic media sources than others, what role ethnic media plays in the assimilation process, as well as in cultural preservation and identification; and what effect ethnic media has on issues of citizenship and social cohesion? A content analysis of Chinese newspapers and magazines read by immigrants from Taiwan could provide insights for the design of future research. For the present study, the focus with respect to ethnic media is on the extent to which informants rely on media as opposed to friends, family members and acquaintances for information.

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<sup>52</sup> Of course, this applies for the mainstream media market as well. Many radio stations in the United States are owned by a few production company producing streamlined content.

Of all 835 links recounted by the 48 informants to sources of information for various needs and occasions 54.4% are to media sources and 45.6% to other people.<sup>53</sup> In fact, informants get anywhere between 24% to 81% of their information on real estate, jobs, finances, health care, cars, and cultural events from the media ( $X=54.4\%$ ,  $sd=14.45$ ). The high proportions of dependence on sources other than people is made possible by the availability of large numbers of various print and visual media on the market, especially the Chinese language market in California.

*"TV, entertainment, news - anything is always available in California in Chinese. It's just like living in Taiwan" (informant #24)*

Contrary to assumptions in earlier literature that immigrants mainly rely on family and friends to obtain important information needed for life in America (Breton 1964, Wilmott 1964, Siu 1987, Loewen 1988, Wong 1988), the vast landscape of ethnic media in Southern California eliminates many of the barriers to information acquisition for informants. This environment enables informants to be more independent from other people. It encourages them to check out information on their own before getting second opinions or verifications from friends and family.

*"As for health problems I see a Chinese doctor, because of language problems, I want to be sure. I look them up in the Yellow Pages and go for last names. I always look into the Yellow Pages first, then ask friends" (informant #18)*

Even new immigrants to South Orange County go straight to media sources, such as newspapers and Yellow Pages, to find information on potential real estate agents, car dealers or other services prior to arrival or upon arrival. The availability of information is well known to aspiring immigrants outside of California as well as in the United States. Therefore, poor English reading skills are not an obstacle to using media sources for one's various information needs.

Subsequently, settlement in North America has encouraged many informants to get recommendations on the purchase of services from sources other than the 'word-of mouth' channels. Variations between the use of referral sources in different cultures and especially the switch of channels according to the location of operation have been studied by Bruce Money (1995, 1998). Money compared the behavior regarding the purchase of services in Japan and the United States. A preliminary finding was that Japanese companies use more word-of-mouth referrals to purchase services and American companies are more likely to rely on media sources (Money et al 1998: 81). He then studied the adaptations of American firms in Japan and Japanese

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<sup>53</sup> This refers to the total numbers of ties and incidents in which information was needed. Individual alters and specific media sources are often named several times as sources for different types of instrumental support, representing high degrees of multiplexity.

firms operating in the United States in their approach to obtaining information on and gaining access to industrial services. Out of sheer necessity American firms doing business in Japan have to establish personal relations providing word-of-mouth referrals in order to get access to services such as financial and legal services. However, although Japanese firms operating long-term from a location in the United States usually continue their practice of cultivating personal relationships, they also adopt the American practice of using the general Yellow Pages and 'Business to Business Yellow Pages' when they need to find additional services (Money et al. 1998: 84-85).<sup>54</sup>

Immigrants from Taiwan to Southern California show comparable behavior patterns. As a result, the convenience of using media sources allows a modification in interaction patterns. Informants can choose to not bother friends and family for trivial information needs. In return they accrue less obligations that must be paid back sometime in the future (see notion of 'guanxi').<sup>55</sup> The bond between individuals is more likely based on shared experiences and recreational activities than on the provision of mutual assistance.

### **Media Sources in South Orange County**

#### **Print media**

Immigrants from Taiwan have a wide array of newspaper and magazines at their fingertips. With the exception of newly arrived immigrants with poor English skills who turn exclusively to Chinese language sources, most people use both English language and Chinese language media to find the information they need. However, two-thirds of all publications are in Chinese.

There are numerous Chinese newspapers available. Prior to 1980, Southern California had been a satellite to Chinese newspapers printed in the San Francisco area. Then, many new Chinese language presses are started in the San Gabriel Valley and have not only become independent from San Francisco publishing houses, but have also become influential as opinion makers and advertising magnets in and around Los Angeles (Fong 1996: 69). The largest daily newspapers are the Chinese Daily News (shijie ribao), the International Daily News (guoji ribao), and the Sing Tao Daily (xindao ribao, preferred by the Cantonese speaking audiences).

The Chinese Daily News, which has local offices in San Francisco, Los Angeles, and New York, and the Sing Tao Daily are transnational newspapers which means that large parts of their

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<sup>54</sup> Additional findings are reported in Money's dissertation, submitted in 1995 (UC Irvine, Department of Business Administration)

<sup>55</sup> See discussion of 'guanxi' ties and their implications in the section on networks in Taiwan in chapter 2.



content are directly fed from Taiwan and Hong Kong. Some local Chinese newspapers are published daily while others are distributed on a weekly basis, e.g., the United Times (lianhe shibao). A few newspapers are advertising vehicles, provided free of charge for the reader. Magazines (e.g., the Asia Info Magazine) are also printed in Monterey Park, Alhambra and San Gabriel City, some of which are in English and designed for the market of second generation immigrant readers (Fong 1996: 68-70).<sup>56</sup> In addition, many religious organizations publish weekly or monthly newspapers in Chinese as well (e.g., the Chinese Christian Herald and the Tzu-chi World Journal).

Most informants of this study have a subscription to the Chinese Daily News. This newspaper is on average 40 pages long and covers world news, local/regional news, entertainment, and business news. Informants who work as professionals usually also get the Los Angeles Times or Orange County Register on a daily basis. Among English language newspaper a preference is visible for the Los Angeles Times, which has an international reputation and is less conservative in its reporting than the regional paper, the O.C. Register. However, a Chinese language newspaper is always the first choice for information and communication for all informants.<sup>57</sup> People search for advertisements on special offers and also place their own ads for service jobs, babysitting, fengshui analysis, and investment advice, etc. in the Chinese papers.

*"Most information I get from the Los Angeles Times, Chinese newspapers, the World News (shijie ribao)<sup>58</sup>, and the TV. I found an agent for my house in the Chinese newspaper - yet forgot the name (of the agent) by now." (informant #19)*

### **Yellow Pages**

Immigrants can turn to several different 'Yellow Pages' publications to find businesses that may provide the services they need. The regular English language Yellow Pages of interest are the Yellow Pages for Orange County and Los Angeles County. Both carry ads by Chinese-run

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<sup>56</sup> For a more complete list of Chinese newspapers printed in the San Gabriel Valley see Joe Chung Fong 1996.

<sup>57</sup> The large Chinese newspapers aim to be all-inclusive sources of information for their customers. Readers do not need to consult an additional English newspaper. In fact, recently (2002) the China Daily News published in New York adopted a new outfit and display for their newspaper. To make the incorporation of English language words in Chinese texts easier, they now print texts horizontally instead of vertically and from 'left to right' instead of 'right to left'. This approach has become necessary since many important news items introduce special events in the United States and specific English terms. This gives immigrants, especially newly arrived immigrants, an opportunity to familiarize themselves with these notions (NPR, March 2002).

<sup>58</sup> 世界日报 (shijie ribao) = China Daily News. The English translation is often listed as "World News" by informants, since 世界 (shijie) means "world" and 日报 (ribao) stands for "newspaper." Another translation seen in the literature is "World Journal".

businesses among their listings. The most frequently used references, though, are the Chinese language Yellow Pages.

*"We have no specific insurance or bank we wanted to work with (prior to settlement). Whatever we need in terms of service and information, we look up in the Yellow Pages" (informant #34)*

Indeed there are several Chinese Yellow Pages at hand. At the time of the data collection two competing publications of regional Yellow Pages covering business across Southern California are available free of charge at Chinese supermarkets and other business venues. They are the 'Chinese Yellow Pages' (hua shang nianjian) published by Asia Systems Media and 'Chinese Consumer Yellow Pages' (hua ren gong shang) published by the Chinese Overseas Marketing Service Corporation.<sup>59</sup>

Both books are almost 2000 pages long and include listings by industry branches as well as separate advertisements by individual companies. All ads are in Chinese. However, these phonebooks also feature a number of non-Chinese owned businesses that advertise in Chinese or a combination of Chinese and English. Most prominent among them are law firms who advertise that their staff includes Chinese attorneys or Chinese legal assistance which promises to take good care of their Chinese speaking clientele. This certainly reflects the need of legal advice in questions regarding immigration procedures. Nevertheless, it is also testimony to the importance of litigation in the U.S. economy, the big market for legal services<sup>60</sup>, and the adoption of this approach in conducting business in North America by Chinese speaking immigrants. In addition to the comprehensive regional Yellow Pages, immigrants living in Orange County can also rely on the much thinner 'Orange County Chinese Business Directory' published by an association, the Orange County Chinese-American Chamber of Commerce (about 120 pages).<sup>61</sup> This 'Who is Who' of businesses and services is almost exclusively used by Chinese and Taiwanese businesses within the borders of Orange County and South Orange County in particular.

Ethnic Yellow Pages are not that unusual. Laguerre (2000) reports that most areas of the United States with a large number of immigrants from a specific sending area offer Yellow Pages in the

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<sup>59</sup> 華商年鑒 (hua shang nianjian) = Chinese Yellow Pages (Chinese Business Almanac); 華人工商 (hua ren gong shang) = Chinese Consumer Yellow Pages (Chinese people's industry and commerce).

<sup>60</sup> For example the practices of suing physicians for malpractice, suing against discrimination at the work place, and protection from legal prosecution in case of a car accident (in Taiwan car accidents are dealt with differently).

<sup>61</sup> 橙縣華商名錄 (chengxian hua shang minglu) = Orange County Chinese Business "who is who's." 橙縣 (chengxian) is the Chinese word for "orange" and "county."

respective native languages. The most striking feature of Chinese language Yellow Pages, though, is the large amount of additional information and advice provided for readers. In the large phonebooks these sections take up the first 150-200 pages. For example, these segments include suggestions for recreational activities in the region, from trips to Disneyland or old Hispanic cemeteries and information on how to install electronic device to enable Internet service. They give a list of public offices in each city in the region and teach people how to use them. The information sections also tell readers how to call emergency services, specifically what the appropriate English phrases are. Other listings give information on how to fill out tax forms, how to study for and obtain a drivers license and how to study for the citizenship test. In fact, the complete citizenship test is printed both in English and Chinese to aid people in their test preparation efforts. Obviously, Chinese language Yellow Pages are much more comprehensive reference manuals than regular English language Yellow Pages.

Photograph 7.1 Advertisement in the Chinese Yellow Pages

<p><b>COLLEGE FUND</b>            "Have you prepared a \$100,000            College Degree for your child."  <b>大學基金</b>            “您孩子的成功取於            良好的教育”            “您有否準備100,000元            作為學位的基金”            “沒有的話，可以考慮每月            低至100元作為定期的投資”  <b>Ada Ngai</b>  <b>倪思婷</b>            Vice-President, Investments            Providential Securities, Inc.            17011 Beach Blvd., Suite 1230            Huntington Beach, CA 92647  <b>(800) 938-5023 Ext. 6088</b>  <b>Direct (714) 843-6088</b></p>	<p><b>M R</b>            MICHAEL            AND            RENA WEISSHAAR-            VIOLINMAKERS</p> <p><b>手工精製</b></p> <p>小提琴 • 中音提琴 • 大提琴            樂弓及附件</p> <p>訂製 • 銷售 • 修護 • 鑑定</p> <p>領有德國樂器工藝師資格            22年豐富的提琴製作經驗</p> <p>Michael and Rena Weishaar  <b>714 548-1287</b>            167 Cabrillo Street Costa Mesa, California 92627            週二至週六 1:00至5:30PM</p>
<p><b>捷 信 印 刷</b></p> <p><b>特價優待</b>            家長及其贊助公司</p> <p>※ 專門承印 ※</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· 商務表格、信籤、信封各式電腦表格</li> <li>· 彩色目錄、廣告、價目表</li> <li>· 產品操作手冊、包裝盒套</li> <li>· 通訊、書籍、紀念刊物</li> <li>· 中文學校學生習作簿之供應</li> <li>· 教材及教具之設計製作</li> <li>· 中英文排版、表格設計...</li> </ul> <p><b>Q&amp;Q Graphic Printing</b> 12128 Beach Blvd., Stanton, CA 90680  <b>(714) 898-9702</b> 41522/11425 FWY • Fax: (714) 891-9078</p>	<p><b>鋼琴教授</b>  <b>TIFFANY T. HSU</b>  <b>(714)653-8899</b>  <b>Irvine CA</b></p> 

### TV stations

Immigrants watch both English language and Chinese language TV Stations. In recent years the number of TV Stations catering exclusively to Chinese immigrants has increased dramatically. In addition, to a few established TV stations around San Francisco, digital broadcasting technology (DBS technology) have made a lot more programs available to Chinese speaking audiences. The digital technology allows direct access to programs produced and distributed in Taiwan and elsewhere in East Asia. Customers in California can sign up for services with Direct TV and DISH Network in the United States and receive these programs via the pizza-size dishes installed outside in front of or on top of their houses (Karim 1998). In addition to packages of programs from Taiwan, the California based Space TV company provides several Chinese Video and audio channels. There are also offers by Rupert Murdoch's Star TV (beimei weixing dianshi gongsi), which is airing all along the Pacific Rim and by Hong Kong Television Broadcast International.<sup>62</sup>

Watching these programs presents immigrants with the opportunity to stay current on developments in Taiwan in real time.<sup>63</sup> Events unfolding in their city of origin are broadcast right into informants' bedrooms. Immigrants to California also benefit from the availability of local Chinese language stations which produce some of their own programs or are compiling packages of programs produced in East Asia and act as feeding stations. There is no need for them to be limited to the dominant media networks of the U.S. market. Instead they can create their own links to their cultural focal points of choice, such as Honk Kong or Taipei. Chinese language entertainment, such as movies and TV shows, is also offered by the numerous Chinese language video stores located throughout Southern California, most of them inside or nearby a Chinese supermarket. All these amenities are not available in all regions of the United States, which again makes areas of higher ethnic concentration more attractive for immigrants.

An interesting side effect of this wide range of available TV programming is that immigrants from various cultural subgroups, such as mainland Chinese, Hong Kong Chinese, and Chinese and

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<sup>62</sup> There are six Chinese television stations at the time: 联邦广播电台 (lianbang guangbo diantai), 联合华语电视 (lianhe huayu dianshi), 世华电视台 (shihua dianshi tai), 洛城华语电视台 (luocheng huayu dianshi tai), 北美卫星电视公司 (beimei weixing dianshi gongsi) = North American branch of Star TV, 翡翠台 (feicui tai) = private TV station run by the Fei family.

There are also two Chinese radio stations: 侨声广播公司 (qiao sheng guangbo gongsi) = Overseas voice radio company, and 中华之声 (zhonghua zhi sheng) = Voice of China.

<sup>63</sup> Many interviews with informants are interrupted because important news broke on the Taiwan news channel running in the background of people's homes. Informants can watch high speed car chases of criminals in Taipei or Tainan as they happen.

Taiwanese from Taiwan, have access to the same TV channels. Though news is often preferred in line with one's country of origin, viewing habits of entertainment programs unite members of all subgroups. In some instances this extends even to second generation viewers who prefer a mix of U.S. and English programs (MTV, CNN and Space TV). Since mainstream programming of U.S. channels is often void of any Asian characters they consider some of the Chinese TV programs as a better representation of themselves. In this respect, television promotes the mix of cultures.

However, digital broadcasting technology is not accessible for everyone. Though geographic restrictions hardly exist for consumers in Southern California, the viewing rights for Chinese language programs are considerably more expensive than basic cable prices. Though most immigrants to South Orange County are affluent and can afford the purchase of a dish and the monthly subscription fees to the various TV program packages, it is important to point out that not all income classes have equal opportunities to stay closely involved with events and entertainment in East Asia.

### **Public message boards (billboards) and information fairs**

Message boards at central locations of informal gatherings of ethnic Chinese throughout Orange County are important sources of information as well. These public message boards can be found at Chinese schools and in designated sections of Chinese supermarkets, a practice also common in regular chain supermarkets throughout North America. Postings include fliers on training courses, recreational courses, rooms and houses for rent, small services, and larger consumer goods for sale. People see the information as they pass by these message boards and may or may not respond.

Chinese schools are particularly supportive environments for this most inexpensive form of casual information exchange. They bring together a large number of affluent ethnic Chinese and Taiwanese in a single location. In addition, parents often spend their time at the schools waiting for their children to return, chatting with other parents and exchanging information as they wait. This opportunity for more organized forms of information exchange have not remained unexplored. The largest Chinese school (more than 1000 students in 1998) in the area, the Irvine Chinese School, now hosts an annual fair, the "Irvine Chinese School Spring Fair" which brings

together community organizations and local Chinese businesses.<sup>64</sup> Community associations use the fair as a fund-raising event as well as an opportunity to reach out to future members. Chinese real estate agents, bankers, insurance agents and sales representatives for health care products establish a booth at the fair and introduce their services to the Chinese and Taiwanese parents and their friends.



Photograph 7.2 Irvine Chinese School Spring Fair at the University Highschool, March 1998

The student handbooks of Chinese schools which list classes, classrooms and the addresses of students is also a much favored advertising vehicle.<sup>65</sup> Many service providers, including a large number of physicians, post announcements in these booklets. They are another source of information for Chinese families in the area.

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<sup>64</sup> 爾灣中文學校春季園遊會 (erwan zhongwen xuexiao chunli yuanyou hui) = Irvine Chinese School Spring Garden Party. 爾灣 (erwan) is the Chinese term for Irvine. Interestingly, the second character 灣 (wan) is similar to the second character of the word 台灣 (taiwan) for Taiwan. 園遊會 (yuanyou hui) correctly translated stands for "garden party", but is often used to depict the notion of a "fair" or exhibition.

<sup>65</sup> The same is true for the yearbooks of any Chinese and Taiwanese association in the region as discussed in chapter 8.

**Other sources of information**

Other sources of information include the various printed media immigrants have access to on a regular basis. They include insurance booklets published by their insurance companies which direct patients to specific doctors eligible under a specific coverage plan.

*"For a special doctor? I check out my insurance policy and I look up what my insurance booklet recommends or see the family doctor" (informant # 44)*

Other sources also consist of brochures provided by real estate agents which list important phone numbers and services for newly arrived residents to the area, much like the information section of the regional Yellow Pages.<sup>66</sup> Informants also report that they sometimes take a more active and systematic approach to finding information on their own. To get unbiased information they turn to the local library and compare statistics and rankings offered in reference books on a subject matter of interest.

*"Before relocating within the United States, I went to the library. I compared the schools in the listings. All the 3 schools in Irvine are recommended" (informant #52)*

It is safe to assume that the function of library catalogues and reference books has by now largely been replaced by resources available on the Internet. At the time of data collection, in 1997/1998, about half of all informants have access to the Internet at home. However, the Internet was mostly used by their children. First generation immigrants did not yet rely on the world wide web and its search engines for any substantial portion of their information needs. Therefore, the use of online technology is not included in the list of media sources which are important providers of information for immigrants as shown in Table 7.7.

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<sup>66</sup> See also reference to the role of real estate agents in the sections on "first contacts" and 'advice relationships" at the beginning of this chapter.

**Table 7.7 Proportion of various media sources used by informants**

Type of Media	in % (N = 234) <sup>67</sup>
Chinese language newspapers	22
English language newspapers	12
Chinese language Yellow Pages	19
English language Yellow Pages	6
Chinese language TV stations	16
English language TV stations	12
Public message boards (Chinese)	9
Other media sources*	4

\* e.g., insurance booklets, real estate brochures, library sources, etc.

### Patterns of Media Use

Though informants more often turn to Chinese language sources than English language sources, especially when in search of entertainment news and programs, they frequent the same type of media for the same topic of information. Both English and Chinese newspapers are consulted for information on jobs openings, especially temporary jobs, reports on financial markets cultural events in the region, for real estates advertisements and information on car prices and car repair. The only difference is the frequency of use. Message Boards at Chinese schools and supermarkets give hints for cultural events and an occasional job. Yellow Pages are used to find real estate agents, car dealers, physicians as well as other service needs. Special TV programs and, to some extent, TV advertisements are most likely to inform people about financial investments opportunities and stock market tendencies. Informants also learn about research findings on new health care treatments from special news features broadcast on TV.<sup>68</sup>

Further analysis on the comparison of the two types of information providers, human contacts and media sources, reveals that informants use both strategies of information retrieval in their daily lives. They often get information from both friends and media sources which amounts to

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<sup>67</sup> N=234 reflects the aggregate number of media sources mentioned by the 48 informants. Here the individual source, e.g., Chinese newspapers, was counted as a single substitute for an "alter." The number does not indicate how often the specific media was actually used as a provider of information (the total number of incidents in which informants used a media source is 454). The maximum number of media sources informants could have listed is 384, the equivalent of 48 informants x 8 media sources (corresponding with the categories listed above) per informant.

<sup>68</sup> Analysis is based on correspondence analysis of media sources and types of information needed (scatter plot omitted from display).



53.4% of all situations with need for instrumental support. The proportion of circumstances in which informants never rely on other people but exclusively on media sources is 27.5%.<sup>69</sup>

A look at the frequencies among informants for turning to either a media source or a person shows that immigrants who are more likely to consult one type of provider on a particular issue, are also more likely to do so for other situations. For example, a strong correlation exists between getting financial information and health care information from media sources (Pearson's  $r = 0.607$ ,  $p < 0.0001$ ). People who look for advertisements on cars in the media are also likely to check the media for physician and general health care information ( $r = 0.441$ ,  $p < 0.005$ ) and ads by real estate agents ( $r = 0.4423$ ,  $p < 0.005$ ). The reverse applies as well. Those who prefer to ask friends and family for assistance in finding a new car also tend to ask acquaintances for suggestions on doctors and dentists ( $r = 0.338$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). Yet, two relationships are exceptions to their pattern. Informants who seek job information in the media are just as likely to ask acquaintances ( $r = 0.445$ ,  $p < 0.005$ ). But, there is a negative association between those who find their real estate agent through the media and those who are introduced to an agent by friends and family ( $r = -0.336$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). The two approaches are mutually exclusive. Apparently, the ties to co-workers which might give pointers in a job search are weaker and less binding in comparison to the ties to classmates and family members who introduce a real estate agent.

Interestingly, the comparison of frequency data for each source and question does not register any gender or cohort effects, or any influences by level of education. Only the likelihood of relying on media sources for financial investments shows a greater tendency to occur among both male and female informants whose spouse resides with them in the United States ( $t(46) = 2.757$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ).

At any rate, it is the proportion of media sources in each search for assistance which is the most important issue here. Despite a combination of sources, over 69% of all informants get 50% or more of their information from media sources. In fact, everybody obtains some amount of information from media sources, the lowest proportion is 23% and the highest 81% of all sources of information ( $X = 54.5\%$ ,  $sd = 14.45$ ).

In this respect a few differences are of interest. There is a significant difference between the habits of information-driven decision making between men and women; in general men rely more

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<sup>69</sup> This calculation is based on 48 informants and 6 questions on instrumental support (288 occasions for support). In 53.4% of all incidents informants named both people and media as sources of information; in 27.5% only media, and in 11% of situations only other people (another 8% occasions presented no need to obtain any information).

on media sources than women ( $t(46) = 2.823, p < 0.005$ ). In addition, married couples who live together in the United States are more self-sufficient and turn more often to printed and broadcast information than those in which the spouse spends more time abroad ( $t(46) = 2.230, p < 0.05$ ). Apparently, women with a husband generating the family income in East Asia are more likely to use a combined strategy of gathering recommendations on services from the media and verifying findings with acquaintances before making any decisions.

A comparison of the proportions of media use among the four different cohorts yields no major insights. However, there is a moderate tendency among informants who are parents to American born children to depend more on media sources than parents with Taiwan born children ( $t(46) = 2.673, p < 0.01$ ). Though there are a few informants of the earlier two cohorts who have Taiwan born children, most informants with Taiwan born children have arrived in the United States more recently than the majority of immigrants with American born children. This speaks to the fact that it takes several years to get into the habit of using mostly media sources and fewer social relations to solve the daily problems of the household. On the other hand, even the immigrants who arrived in the mid to late 1990's turn to media sources in 34% of all cases in which they are in need for information; parents of Taiwan born children register an average of 41% media use.

Not surprisingly, the type of educational degree and the level of English proficiency an immigrant has makes a difference in the likelihood of resorting to media sources instead of people. There is a significant difference between informants with different levels of education ( $F(3,44) = 4.221, p < 0.01$ ) with a post hoc test revealing that the main distinction being between those who have university degrees from U.S. universities and those who have highschool diplomas (Tukey HSD,  $p < 0.01$ ). The same holds for a comparison of English speaking abilities ( $F(2, 45) = 5.126, p < 0.01$ ) according to which the main difference is between informants who have very good English skills and informants who have yet to master the language (Tukey HSD,  $p < 0.01$ ). It is safe to assume that immigrants who have college and university degrees are more familiar with the process of researching information using media sources and spending a more time reading material. Ethnographic data shows that higher levels of English skills are also associated with higher levels of confidence in one's ability to find the right solutions for any problem that might come up independent of other people. Informants often state that those who read English well have the option to cross check information. They do not have to make do with a limited number of information sources, or worse, have to rely on a broker or agent introduced by a friend or family member, whose knowledge and credibility is difficult to assess.

A closer look at the behavior regarding information collection reveals a few more interesting, albeit not statistically significant, insights. Immigrants with higher visibility in the community due to their engagement in a large number of organizations and activities get more information from other people than from the media, despite the fact that they have high levels of education and English skills, and have lived in the United States for a long period. The sheer amount of time they spend with other people in various contexts most likely leads to more informal conversations about services available in the region and fewer hours spent with any media. Another observation is that almost all professionals show large proportions of media use, while the data for homemakers displays a bimodal distribution of media use - some rely to a large extent on media and others make much more use of their relationships in this respect. Comparing media use by ethnicity shows slightly larger proportions of media use among ethnic Chinese than ethnic Taiwanese. This is of course a function of the later arrival and the higher level of interconnectedness among ethnic Taiwanese who settle in South Orange County in larger numbers.

### Summary

The increasing reliance on media sources in the conduct of daily activities shows that immigrants have adapted to the particular conveniences of an American lifestyle. The infrastructure and availability of media sources in North America opens up the possibility of leaving personal relationships out of the search process for information. At the same time, these very conditions can make life more unbearable when contact with other people is desired since others often live far away or are rather busy. The nature of the "conveniences" (fangbian) informants associate with life in Taiwan refers to solutions for the need for assistance and information exchange as well. Alas, in Taiwan any need of help and any interest in acquisition of further knowledge is "conveniently" fulfilled by meeting other people in crowded market places and neighborhoods.<sup>70</sup> What is considered to make life easier (i.e., convenient) in one social and cultural environment is not associated with the same benefits in the other environment and vice versa. Living in Southern California can be "convenient" in situations which can be handled without the help of other

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<sup>70</sup> See conclusion in chapter 6 for further reference on the topic of "convenience." 方便 (fangbian) = convenient in this case means 'feeling comfortable, having easy access to everything', and 'having the flexibility and freedom to do what one pleases'.

people. The accessibility of media sources lowers the number of potential obligations and responsibilities one has toward others.

On the other hand the high proportion of media utilization are also testimony to the degree of ethnic group self-sufficiency and the influence of advanced technology in the life of immigrants. Ethnic Media covers almost all the needs any immigrant to Southern California might have. A quick browse of Yellow Page listings and advertisements in newspapers reveals that all service branches and all industries are represented. The ethnic economy, consisting of companies run by ethnic Chinese or Taiwanese, provides all-inclusive assistance, and other business owners who advertise in Chinese and offer Chinese language service are available as well. Furthermore, Chinese language newspaper articles and TV program reports are not limited to reports about the country of origin or the local ethnic community. Immigrants have sufficient resources and references at hand, even when they turn exclusively to ethnic media.

As a result, the various ethnic media make the ethnic community more visible for its members. With the exception of the chain of shopping malls in the San Gabriel Valley, ethnic Chinese and Taiwanese share no particular location in Southern California which demonstrates the existence of a cohesive community to either themselves or to others. Technology is the ingredient that creates connections between people and promotes a sense of community. Even more importantly, modern technology facilitates frequent and profound contact with individual people, as well as stories and events unfolding in the homeland. These modern technologies do not only include wireless services, the internet, and digital broadcasting which influence the content of media, but also communication and transportation technology that enable the individual immigrant to stay in touch with distant others through a given medium and in person (both mentally and physically).

### **Spatial Distribution of Network Ties**

Since media sources and space- and time-compressing technology are easily available for informants, it is assumed that there is less need to keep strong relationships with people living within close proximity. The new urban structures which dominate Southern California require residents to reach almost all destinations by car and include few central places which might function as meeting points for nearby residents.<sup>71</sup> Therefore, it is expected that the personal network ties of immigrants do reach beyond the space surrounding their immediate residence.

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<sup>71</sup> See introduction to the related literature on urban studies and urban planning in Chapter 2.3.

Analysis of the distribution of relationships in space provides insights on the extent to which informants are socially independent from their local neighborhoods. It can also be used to assess the actual level of transnationalism among immigrants from Taiwan to South Orange County, defined by the frequency and scope of using technology that facilitates interaction between residents of the United States and Taiwan (Portes et al. 1999: 224).

Hypotheses about local and regional distribution of ties are tested with the dataset of moderately strong support relationships (N=48). The presence and nature of transnational activities are evaluated by comparing any relationships mentioned with the sample of all first generation informants (N=113), which are mainly maintained with the aid of telecommunication and long-distance transportation technologies.

### **Local and Regional Ties**

The distribution of personal network ties in space is measured by comparing the approximate distances between the settlement area of an informant and the settlement area of each alter he or she listed as providers of emotional, social and instrumental support. The unit of analysis here is not the individual neighborhood or section within a municipality, but a larger area defined as the space between two or more highways. For example in the case of Irvine, the unit is not an individual 'village', as the Irvine Company calls their rather larger subsections (with up to 17,000 people each) of the city proper, such as Woodbridge or West Park. However, the whole city of Irvine is not considered to be a single entity either. Instead, in this analysis Irvine consists of three parts created by highways 5 and 405, which cut through the city and separate a southern part, a middle section, and a northern part. The latter includes neighborhoods of the adjacent city of Tustin in addition to Irvine-Northwood, since no highway cuts off these various subdivision from one another.

The aggregation of these areas is feasible for several reasons. First, Southern California is one large continuous settlement area which makes any cut off points for identification of specific regions arbitrary. Second, the real difference between any two or more places a person needs to reach is not the actual geographic distance from a point of origin to a destination, but the time and effort it takes to get to there. The necessity to use a highway to go to certain places increases the likelihood of delays and accidents due to frequent congestion. The more highways one needs to switch to in order to reach a location, the more stressful a journey can become, especially for female immigrants who learn how to drive only after their arrival to California. In the case of

Irvine, although the different parts are connected by bridges over the respective highways, the on and off-ramp traffic on these thoroughfares create a different driving experience than the ride between highways.

The emphasis on the layout of streets for travel and the hierarchy between highways, major streets, feeding streets and residential streets, instead of looking at actual distances in space, has been introduced by Grannis (1998). He demonstrated the importance of studying actual travel routes by predicting which people living in any given area have potential for neighborly interaction. Since the typical Southern California building pattern of houses includes an array of discontinuous residential streets linked to major thoroughfares, it takes almost the same amount of time to reach a home in a different subdivision across a major artery as getting to a home which is spatially adjacent and in the same subdivision, but not connected through a residential street (Grannis 1998: 1533).

In this study, attention is given only to regional distributions of ties, considering Irvine as the focal point location since it is home to the highest absolute number of immigrants from Taiwan in South Orange County. In chapter 5, map 5.2 shows some of the settlement areas of informants and their alters throughout Orange County. The major highways that criss-cross Southern California create distinct settlement areas even within a municipality. Irvine, for example is divided into three parts, Irvine Northwood and parts of Tustin; Irvine midsection including West Park, Woodbridge, Deer and College Park; and Irvine University Park, Turtle Rock and Newport Coast Drive.

Based on this division of settlement areas, the distribution of informants and their alters in space was computed.<sup>72</sup> Locations of alters include not only areas of South Orange County, but also places in North Orange County and beyond. Three clusters are located in the eastern part of Los Angeles County, mostly in areas with a relatively high density of ethnic Chinese and Taiwanese settlement, such as the cities of the San Gabriel Valley (Monterey Park, Alhambra, Arcadia, San Marino, San Gabriel and El Monte), Hacienda Heights and Rowland Heights, and Diamond Bar and Pomona even further east. However, more distant places in other states throughout North America and even locations in Taiwan are included as well. The rationale is that even though a separate section of interviews are devoted to long-distance relationships and their upkeep, many

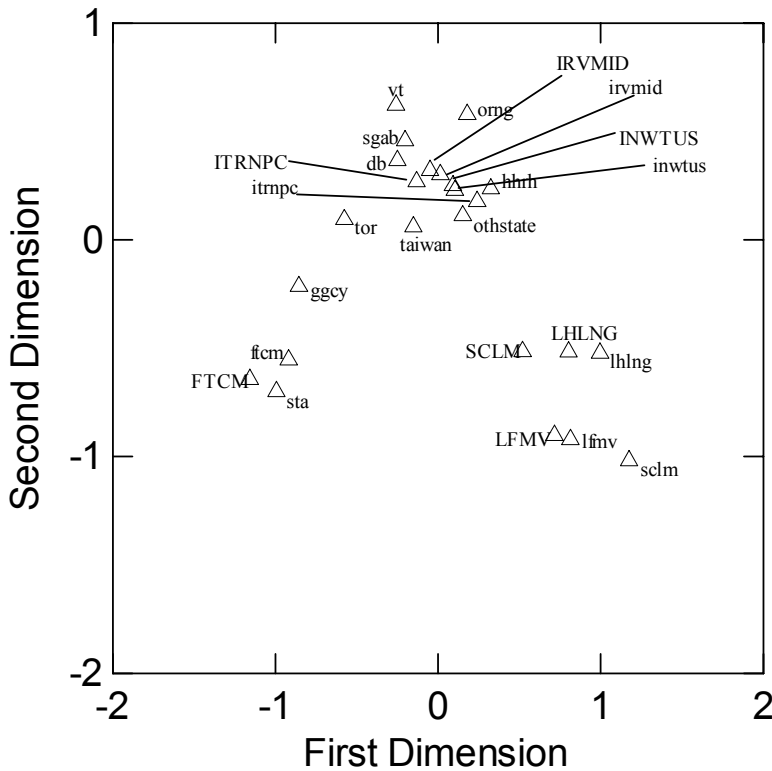
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<sup>72</sup> Ideally, the exact location of informants' and alters' residences in space should be computed with the use of GIS (global identification systems) technology. However, this is planned to be the subject of a separate study, analysis, and report.

informants consistently mentioned alters living beyond driving distance as their main sources of advice and emotional support.

The result of the correspondence analysis of all these locations is presented in figure 7.3. Capital letters represent the place of residence for informants, small letters refer to the locations of alters. The first dimension of the scatter plot explains 25.7% of the variance and the second accounts for 21.8% of the variance.

**Figure 7.3 Correspondence analysis of residential locations of informants and their alters**



Legend:

big letters: informant's (ego's) location of residence

small letters: alters' location of residence

places are listed in order of increasing distance from the focal point Irvine midsection

irvmid	Irvine midsection: West Park, Woodbridge, Deer Park, College Park	orng	Orange
itrnpc	Irvine south section: Turtle Rock, University, Newport Coast	ggcy	Garden Grove, Cypress, Cerritos
inwtus	Irvine Northwood, Tustin	db	Diamond Bar (West L.A. County)
npber	Newport Beach, Corona del Mar	hhrrh	Hacienda Heights, Rowland Heights
ftcm	Fountain Valley, Costa Mesa	sgab	cities of the San Gabriel Valley
sta	Santa Ana, Westminster	tor	Torrance, Palos Verdes
lfmv	Lake Forest, Mission Viejo, R.S. Margarita	vt	Ventura, Westlake
lhlng	Laguna Hill, Laguna Niguel	othstate	other states in the United States
sclm	San Clemente	taiwan	Taiwan

Along the first dimension the graph actually reflects the geography of South Orange County in a northeast to southwest direction. Informants living in Fountain Valley are located to the left, the middle section is dominated by people from around Irvine, and the right side of the graph spots residences in and between Laguna Hills, Mission Viejo, and San Clemente. Apparently there is a strong tendency for informants to interact with people in the same or the adjacent settlement area. However it is noteworthy that with the exception of the middle section of Irvine no other locations exhibit an exact overlap of informants' and alters' residences.

People from the different parts of Irvine are somewhat more likely than others to engage in relationships with people in the larger Los Angeles County area. Indeed, it is more convenient for Irvine residents to reach places in northeast Los Angeles county than it is for Fountain Valley/Costa Mesa or Laguna Niguel/Mission Viejo residents. For informants with few connections to places in northeast Los Angeles, all three settlement areas identified in the above charts are considered to be part of the larger San Gabriel Valley area since they are located along the same stretch of parallel eastbound highways 10 and 60. Others make a distinction between the places and report that they frequently go to events in Diamond Bar, but avoid attending gatherings around Monterey Park, which requires a much longer driving time. Of course, how far away is considered "too far away" depends on the subjective evaluation of the individual immigrant.<sup>73</sup>

Ties to anyone outside South Orange County only extend to kin groups members and former classmates, as well as alumni at large who meet at annual alumni association meetings. A few informants who have formerly lived elsewhere in Southern California keep in touch with friends and visit them on occasion.<sup>74</sup> Knowing their way around these other settlement areas of the Southland also makes them more likely to drive to these sites to enjoy nearby entertainment facilities.

*"I read the shijie ribao (China Daily News) - if they have a good concert over there (in Monterey Park), I go. And then my university reunion. I go once a year to that (there)."*  
(informant #19)

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<sup>73</sup> Some state they do not see extended family members often, because they live in Hacienda Heights. Others explain they do have a lot of contact with kin group members, because they live so close, only along the highway "up in" Hacienda Heights.

<sup>74</sup> This accounts especially for ties to other places in and around Los Angeles which are not part of the extended San Gabriel Valley area, e.g., Torrance and Palos Verdes Estates along the Pacific Coast in southwest Los Angeles, and Ventura, Westlake, and Encino to the northwest of Los Angeles in Ventura County.



Ever since Irvine and the surrounding areas have become home to a Chinese supermarket and other ethnic stores, opportunities for shopping no longer attract informants to the San Gabriel Valley.

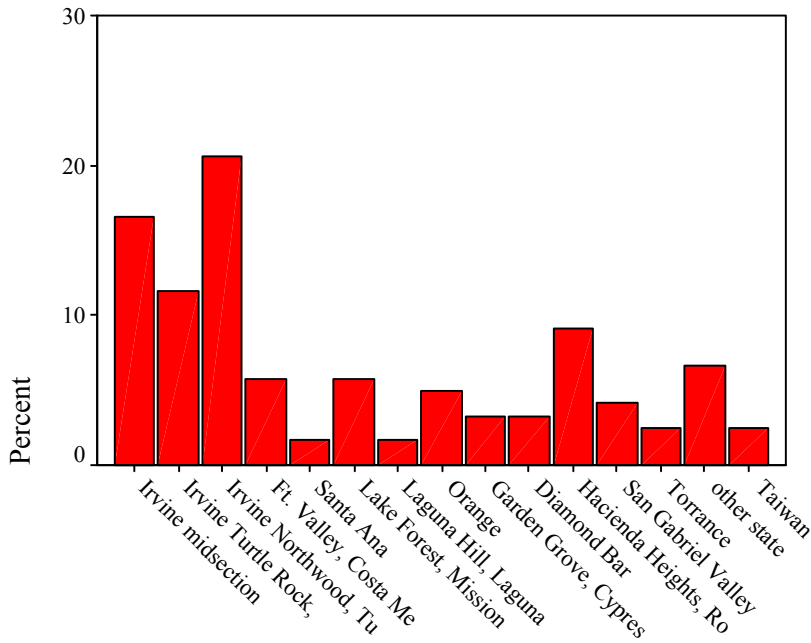
The distribution of ties in space according to social roles was analyzed in a separate correspondence analysis (not shown) reveals that alters who are either fellow parents, neighbors, co-workers, training buddies, joint recreational group members, or joint association members are all living in South Orange County. Acquaintances from joint religious organizations are scattered both in South and North Orange County. The occasional 'other friend' is found in the Diamond Bar area. Yet, it is only classmates and family members who are situated in the San Gabriel Valley, as well as other states of the United States, and in Taiwan. In fact, locations in Taiwan are almost exclusively associated with a member of the extended family, while former classmates who play important roles in an informant's life are more likely to live elsewhere in the United States than in Taiwan.

Since classmates and kin group member are often listed as the main providers of emotional support, it is not surprising that the locations of alters living in Taiwan or another state in the United States are placed almost in the center of the above graph. They are mentioned by a many informants and are not associated with any particular settlement area. Data on the frequency of interactions presented elsewhere confirms the geographically distant yet emotionally close position of kin and schoolmates who are more likely to be reached by phone than other types of social roles in the sample.

The observation that ties for social and instrumental support cluster around a smaller radius in space than those for emotional support and the spatial dominance of Irvine's three settlement areas warrants a closer look. To illustrate the importance of Irvine as a central reference point among informants living throughout all cities of South Orange County, the two charts in figure 7.4 each show a representative groups. They exemplify two of the total of eight settlement areas in which informants of this study live.

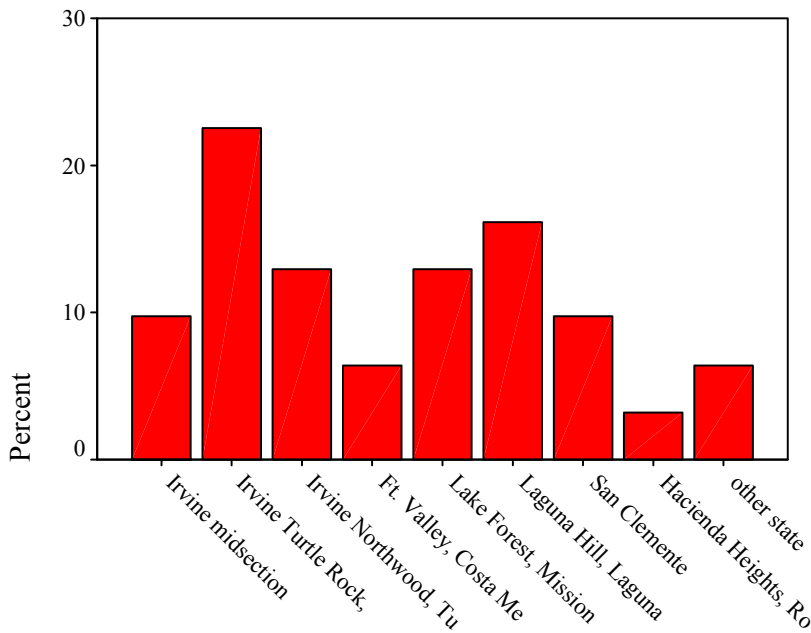
**Figure 7.4** Two examples of distribution of residential locations of alters in reference to the focal point Irvine

a) Typical distribution of alters for informants living in the I. Northwood/ Tustin area



Location of alters listed in increasing distance from Irvine

b) Typical distribution of alters for informants living in the Laguna Hill/ Laguna Niguel area



Location of alters listed in increasing distance from Irvine

Each of the charts, including those not shown, confirms the findings of the correspondence analysis that a lot of interaction takes place within settlement areas, and between areas which are spatially most closely associated with one another.<sup>75</sup> The figure for the more southern settlement area of Laguna Hill and Laguna Niguel, which resembles figures for San Clemente and Lake Forest/Mission Viejo as well as Fountain Valley/Costa Mesa, also demonstrates that a substantial proportion of interaction unfolds between residents of other areas and alters living in Irvine. This points to a less exclusive focus of activities and interactions in the immediate neighborhood.

In fact, the clustering of settlement areas in the graphs distracts from the reality of life in Southern California's urban sprawl; even people who live in the same subdivision are that reachable, with the exception of the few residential streets which link a home to the next major street, and most streets end in cul-de-sacs, making them not conducive to pedestrian use. Acquaintances have to travel five minutes or more by car and pass several major intersections when they want to visit others or to just simply run errands within the same neighborhood.

*"Ok, why does everybody say they are 'busy'? Being busy means usually 'cleaning up the house' - here, whatever you do takes time. You have to drive your car very far. So they are always running out of time. If the time seems to be not enough, that's when people say 'they are busy.' For example if you need to buy a certain item or get a repair for something, you never know how long it's gonna take you - everything needs driving. Time is very hard to manage. Few chances to get a lot done- there is not much you can do on a single day." (informant #66)<sup>76</sup>*

Due to these space and time constraints there are not many ties in this sample which are local in the sense of connecting two people who live within walking distance of one another.<sup>77</sup> An analysis of the subset of informants living in the three settlement areas of Irvine and the distribution of their ties at the level of actual neighborhoods (i.e., subdivisions) shows that while on average 58% of their ties link them to alters who live within the larger area of Irvine, only 17% of them connect

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<sup>75</sup> The eight settlement areas which cover the residence locations of all informants include Irvine midsection, Irvine Northwood and Tustin, Irvine Turtle Rock/ University /Newport Coast Drive, Fountain Valley and Costa Mesa, Newport Beach and Corona Del Mar, Laguna Hills and Laguna Niguel, Lake Forest/ Mission Viejo/Rancho San Margarita, and San Clemente/Dana Point.

<sup>76</sup> 所以时间呢，就没办法控制好。没办法做很多事情。所以一天办不了很多事情。(suoyi shijian ne, jiu mei banfa kongzhi de hen hao. mei banfa zuo hen duo shiqing. suoyi yitian ban bu liao hen duo shiqing) = Time is not easy to control, there is not much of a chance to get a lot of things done. You can't get much accomplished on a single day.

<sup>77</sup> It is certainly ironic to label the living conditions in the residential environment of South Orange County as creating "space and time constraints" when arguing elsewhere that immigrants are able to make good use of space-and time-compressing technology which enables them to stay in close contact with their homeland. However, it is the perspective of the informants which is represented here. Many experience their dependency on the car as constraining.

people within the same neighborhood.<sup>78</sup> The highest rate of relationships within the same neighborhood is 25%, for example one quarter of all relationships among Deer Park residents in the sample link them to other residents in Irvine-Deer Park. Even those ties are not necessarily ties between neighbors since not all streets within a subdivision are part of the same subset of connected residential streets (Grannis 1998: 1530). As introduced above, the low proportion of neighbors among the social roles alters may reflect the fact that, due to the dependency on the use of cars and the mandatory orientation beyond the immediate residential area to accomplish any task, residents have not much opportunity or need to interact with their neighbors.

Indeed, each occurrence in the sample in which an informant shares the same neighborhood address (i.e., Irvine Northwood) with his or her alters means simply that they both live in the same subdivision at large and meet each other at social and recreational gatherings more or less by chance. They share an equal distance to any social event and the fact that as Irvine residents they live in the part of Orange County with the highest overall density of ethnic Chinese and Taiwanese immigrants compared to municipalities such as Lake Forest, Mission Viejo, or Costa Mesa. The basis of any relationships is the joint activity or situation that brings people together, which is further illustrated by the locations of meeting places in space as discussed in Chapter 8. Other than back in their homeland Taiwan, immigrants do not experience living in the same subdivision as binding grounds for relationships.

As much as informants love their spacious homes and the modern layout of the region's municipalities, they are disappointed about the lack of opportunities to meet others in this environment. They often attribute the smaller network sizes and the less intense levels of involvement with others, compared to their former social circles in Taiwan, to the impediments caused by vast distances and extensive infrastructure in Orange County.

*"Well, I think it has a lot to do with the space, this place being so big. Between people, to be with someone else, a lot of time is spend on transportation, right? And when you come home you are just tired. Also, each and every home is separated by a long distance, the market also is a far distance away. Wherever you plan to go, it needs some running (passing*

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<sup>78</sup> Irvine have eight neighborhoods (subdivisions) , often called "villages" by the builder, the Irvine Company. They are each up to 17,000 people strong and include Northwood, Deer Park, College Park, West Park (north and south section), Woodbridge, University Park, Turtle Rock and Newport Coast Drive. The latter was not yet incorporated to any city at the time of research. However, residents oriented themselves towards Irvine rather than Newport Beach in their social activities. Mission Viejo, Laguna Hills, Costa Mesa, etc. have separate neighborhood distinctions as well.

*distance), right? And on top of that, Americans watch out for their privacy. We Chinese don't pay much attention to that." (informant #19)<sup>79</sup>*

From a Chinese point of view the huge amount of space between individual places seems to be an essential ingredient of American culture, but is not a desirable component for the establishment and maintenance of relationships.

The spatial analysis of local and regional ties shows that geographic proximity plays a role in the search for contact and activities, yet is not the only or the most decisive factor. Informants prefer closer distances over more distant ones. Most importantly, they would rather avoid using highways, especially changing between several highways, on their regular trips to friends and social gatherings. Nevertheless, within the space between highways, and even within subdivisions, people are still separated by distances that require driving. In other words, informants are just as likely or more likely to meet others from the larger geographic area as they are from their immediate neighborhoods as long as they can be easily reached without too many time delays (e.g., traffic hassles).

On the other hand, the people who are often the most important contacts for emotional assistance and financial advice, relatives and former classmates, are in general not living in close vicinity to informants. The fact that immigrants from Taiwan to South Orange County do not opt to settle close to relatives is an indicator of their financial independence. A comparison with network studies of financially less well-to-do people in urban areas shows that they are more likely to live in close proximity with relatives. Extended family members provide emotional, social and financial support in very close-knit networks of strong ties (Espinoza 1999). As a result, the high level of density in their networks inhibits them from branching out to the larger society and taking advantage of better economic opportunities. In contrast, networks of the affluent informants in this study have a wider variety of relationships and contain a combination of strong, moderately strong, and weak ties. Furthermore, the strong ties in the networks of Taiwanese

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<sup>79</sup> 我想是因为地方太大.人于人与人之间化很多时间在 transportation 上面,对不对?你一回到家都累死了.然後每一家每一家距离都很远.market 距离也很远.你算去那里该泡,对不对?而且美国人比较注意 privacy 我们中国人不太注意这些.(wo xiang shi yinwei difang tai da. ren yu ren zhijian hua hen duo shijian zai transportation shangmian, dui bu dui? ni hui dao jia dou lei si le. ranhou mei yi jia mei yi jia juli dou hen yuan. market juli ye hen yuan. ni suan qu nali dou gai pao, dui bu dui. erqie meiguo ren bjiao zhuyi privacy. women zhongguo ren bu tai zhuyi zhi xie) = I think its because this place is so big. You waste a lot of time with transportation between people, right? The moment you get home you are very tired. What's more, the distance between one house and another is very far. The distance to the market is far (as well). Wherever you have to go, to have to cover a distance (get running), right? And, the people in America value their privacy. We Chinese don't pay much attention to that.

immigrants, especially those to kin and classmates, are characterized by low frequencies of interaction. However, this does not necessarily lead to alienation between network members. Informants keep in touch with the people they have known and trusted for a very long time.

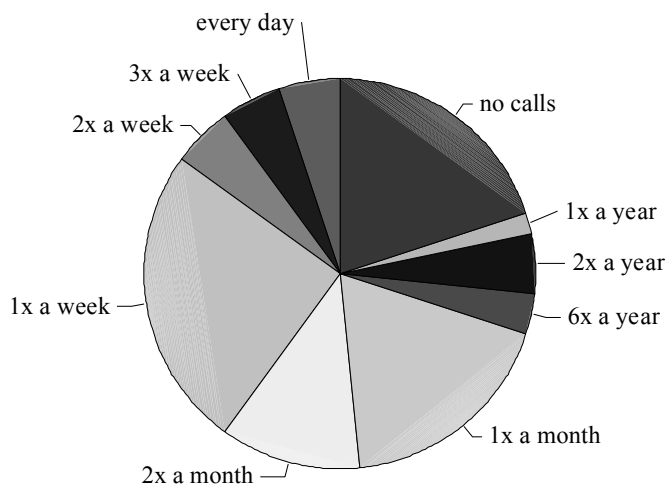
### **Transnational Ties: Communication and Travel Across the Pacific**

The main means of maintaining relationships with others who live in geographically distant places are phone calls and visits by airplanes. Relationships with others who are not in driving distance includes both people living throughout North America and people living across the Pacific in Taiwan and East Asia in general. In this study the main interest in long-distance relationships is on transnational relations between Taiwan and California. Since the analysis of support ties provided insights on who the most important social roles in personal networks are in close and far away places, the focus is now on the scope and extent of transnational activities due to modern communication and transportation technologies. In addition, explanations for the presence and absence of transnational relationships among immigrants from Taiwan are also of interest.

#### ***Communication technology: phone calls to Taiwan***

Figure 7.5 gives an overview of the distribution of phone call frequencies among informants.

**Figure 7.5** Frequency of phone calls to Taiwan



The different behavior patterns can be summarized into four groups in addition to those informants (13%) who never call anyone in Taiwan, because all their kin group members are either living in the United States as well or are deceased. There are informants who have infrequent phone contact ranging from once to six times a year, often people whose immediate family members live in North America with only distant family members left in Taiwan. They account for another 11% of the sample of 113 informants.

*"My cousin just called me from Taiwan. But (he calls) not regularly every month, only when he have some business to talk about." (informant #22)*

Another, rather large, subgroup (22%) consists of those who call siblings and parents on a monthly basis. Many of them are informants who immigrated early in the 1960s and 70s, especially men, and who established their habits of calling in times when phone calls are considered rather expensive. The majority of informants however, 39%, keep in touch quite regularly and call every other week or every week. In many cases, at least half of the family members, and especially their parents, live in Taiwan. The group of the most frequent callers, altogether 15% of the sample, calls more than once a week. Some of them stay in close touch with parents, a spouse living and working in Taiwan, and others who have business activities in East Asia that they need stay informed about.

Yet the assignment of group characteristics is only tentative. A detailed analysis of the factors that influence increased frequencies of phone calls is needed.<sup>80</sup> Theoretically we might expect several factors to have an effect on phone call behavior. To test the applicability of different sets of expectations several multiple regressions of selected combinations of variables are conducted. Three types of variables are thought to have an impact on the frequency of phone calls.

The first type refers to basic demographic variables such as gender, ethnicity, length of stay in the United States, birthplace of children, level of education and occupation. A pretest of correlations ruled out several variables as ingredients for the overall models due to potential problems with multicollinearity. Length of stay, birthplace and age of children and level of education are highly intercorrelated and can be represented by using the variable 'cohort.' Informants of later cohorts have on average lower levels of education and are parents to children born in Taiwan. The influence of different occupations is partly covered by the cohort effect as

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<sup>80</sup> Email messages are exchanged as well. However at the time of the research, 1997-1998, the use of email between close friends and family members was much lower than the frequency of phone calls. Data for present day usage patterns is not available.

well and partly by the variable introduced in the next set, the engagement in transnational business activities.<sup>81</sup> Furthermore, the consistently high incomes for all types of occupations rule out that the costs of international phone calls having an impact on their frequency of usage.

In addition to the set of basic demographic variables, a second set of specific demographic variables which inform about the practice of transnationalism among certain informants is also important. It is expected that that the location of parents, the location of the spouse, and the existence of a business in the household that engages in transnational activities increase the number of phone calls made.<sup>82</sup> The third type of variables are network variables, in addition to the dependent variable. The prediction is that the extent to which informants are involved in social and recreational activities in their new environment have an influence on their calling patterns. The proportion of media sources as opposed to other people used as information providers is assumed to indicate that an informant has fewer local and more geographically distant relationships.

Four models with different combinations of the three sets of variables are tested for their goodness of fitness. They are displayed in table 7.8. Model 1 features the basic demographic variables along with the specific demographic variables linked to transnational activities. Model 2 includes the basic demographic variables and the network variables. A comparison of the two models gives an initial overview of which assumptions about the behavior of informants represents accounts for more of the variance. It juxtaposes the orientation towards Taiwan due to a spouse, parent or business there with the orientation towards California, as exemplified by extensive involvement in social circles indicated by the number of organization a person joins and a reduced reliance on media. Model 3 tests the explanatory value of all three sets of variables together. Finally, model 4 represents the inclusion of specific demographic variables and the network variables with the exclusion of the basic demographic variables. Each model helps inform us of the extent to which the respective variables are an essential part of the explanation.

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<sup>81</sup> The variable "transnational business" activities includes only those informants who have engage in business activities in both places, Taiwan and the United States. Families who run a business in Taiwan without any connections to the United States, as well as families who run a business in the United States without any international activities, such as a restaurant, are excluded. Included are housewives who do run occasional errands for their husband's import-export business or help out in the American branch of the business if need arises.

<sup>82</sup> The variable "parents living in Taiwan" also includes siblings who still live in Taiwan. However, former classmates still living in Taiwan did not factor into the analysis, since most informants only keep in close and moderately frequent touch with classmates who live in the United States but loose intensive contact with friends in Taiwan as time progresses.



**Table 7.8 Models explaining the frequency of phone calls to Taiwan**

Dependent variable: frequency of informants' phone calls to Taiwan (network variable)

independent variables	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
constant	11.658	202.059	115.967	84.980
Gender	-11.605	-56.511*	-37.047	
ethnicity	-17.098	1.726	- 1.004	
Cohort	5.831	13.529	1.935	
parents live in Taiwan	57.210***		81.342***	89.729****
spouse lives in Taiwan	8.521		5.402	-11.879
transnational business activities	107.000++++		86.787***	94.910****
number of organizations		-16.408*	-21.178***	-22.868***
percent of media use		- 1.740**	- 0.937	- 0.681
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup> <sup>83</sup>	0.292	0.168	0.385	0.407
F-Value	5.055++++	2.894**	4.683++++	7.446++++

\* p&lt;0.1, \*\*p&lt;0.05, \*\*\* p&lt;0.01, \*\*\*\* p&lt;0.001, +++++ p&lt;0.00001

The comparison of the four models shows that the basic demographic variables have no significant influence on the frequency of phone calls to Taiwan. Most immigrants use the phone at similar rates independent of their gender, ethnic affiliation and time of arrival in North America. Instead, both specific demographic variables about transnational activities and additional network variables have the most explanatory power. However, the indicators of orientation towards Taiwan explain a larger portion of the variance than those which represent a lack of orientation towards California. The combination of the two sets of variables, as evidenced in model 4, result in the best fit among the four explanatory models, accounting for 40% of the variance in phone calls dialed to reach someone in Taiwan.

There are surprises though. A few of the hypotheses which guided the choice of variables to build the models have to be rejected. Even though 40% of the informants in the sample are married to spouses living in East Asia, this does not have a significant influence on the frequency of phone calls. Parents and siblings, however, do register as important receivers and senders of phone calls. The reason for the low explanatory value of the location of spouses is that many couples have grown apart over the years. With the exception of members of the fourth cohort, husband and wives are often estranged as a result of separation and the rather common custom in

<sup>83</sup> Only the adjusted R<sup>2</sup> is reported because the regular R<sup>2</sup> statistic does not take into account the changes created by the inclusion of large numbers of independent variables.

Taiwan that an affluent man may take a mistress, also called a "xiao tai tai" (small wife).<sup>84</sup> This state of many marriages is subject to much debate among immigrants from Taiwan. As one woman whose husband actually is not living apart from her observed:

*"When I was living in Oregon I didn't hear those kind of stories (separation, abandonment). But now that we are here in Orange County you hear a lot (of stories about) - husbands being away, going astray, wives are sad. Also in the dancing class. I am not very nosy but you can't help but hear those things, even in church." (informant #49)*

Several religious organizations, of Christian and Buddhist faith, write about the phenomenon in their publications and address questions of tolerance and grief management. Though women in Taiwan who have to face their husbands having a mistress are not delighted, the exposure to different values after moving to the United States makes women reflect on their situation more critically and more openly in the expression of anger and disgust.<sup>85</sup> Nevertheless, actual divorce is rare. Most first generation immigrants stay married while both husband and wife live separate lives in North America and Taiwan. On the other hand, not all women of the earlier cohorts are virtually separated from their husbands. Several informants have been successful in keeping the relationship alive, especially due to frequent visits by both partners.

Another hypothesis to be abandoned is the role of media reliance as a major indicator for transnational involvement rather than local integration. Informants are not necessarily resorting to more media sources for information if they engage in a high number of phone calls linking them to family in Taiwan. In fact, the proposition was weak to begin with given the previous findings on media use patterns that showed that high media use is equally associated with local, regional and transnational interests.

The variables in model 4 with the most explanatory value are 'transnational business activities', 'parents living in Taiwan' and 'number of organizations'. The high significance of engagement in transnational activities is an obvious predictor but at the same time demonstrates the narrow range of transnational activities among non-business owners. Households who run a business which

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<sup>84</sup> 小太太 (xiao taitai) = small wife, or: second wife, mistress. The legally wedded wife is the 大太太 (da taitai). Though polygyny is not allowed in Taiwan (or elsewhere in East Asia) anymore, having a mistress and paying for her lifestyle, including an apartment and living expenses is not a secret in Taiwan. It is a symbol of financial success. In many cases the official wife accepts the situation and even allows joint attendance for important celebrations such as Chinese New Year festivals.

<sup>85</sup> The topic of unfaithful and neglecting husbands was one of the most involved aspects of fieldwork. Many women took the opportunity of an interview with an outsider (the ethnographer) to express their anger and frustration. They repeatedly stressed their dilemma of being trapped into the traditional role expectations for women which forbids them to seek personal satisfaction, let alone sexual satisfaction. At the meantime their husband are thought of having no hardships and are not requested to make any sacrifices.

conducts transactions both in Taiwan and North America make up only 17% of the overall sample of informants, but they account for a large share in the combined levels of phone call frequencies. This means that the majority of informants are not making extensive use of the space- and time-compressing technologies available to them. They are not participating in a transnational world which would involve them in the social, political, and financial circles of two nation states as predicted by many scholars of migration and global development (Appadurai 1991, Glick Schiller et al. 1992, Basch 1994, Ong and Nonini 1997, Faist 2000).

Instead, the extent of transnational activities among immigrants who have lived in California for more than five years and have no need to make phone calls for income generating business purposes, is at the most only a matter of weekly phone calls to parents. The residential location of parents is a dominant factor for the explanation of calling patterns. As introduced in chapter 6, 67% of informants have parents still living in Taiwan, most of them are of ethnic Taiwanese descent. The parents of other informants are either living in the United States as well (20%) or are deceased (13%). The traditional values of piety towards one's parents in Chinese culture are upheld by most informants. Children consider it their duty to look after their parents and stay informed about their well-being.

*"Every month I have about a bill of \$ 500-600 in phone calls. I give my parents a call, 2 or 3 times a week. Sometimes an hour long. Since I can't go there all that often, if I talk to them, it saves the trip." (informant #29)*

Not all informants call their parents as often as the above quote suggests. Though both genders call on average equally often, the actual health status of parents, the birth order of informants in their nuclear families, and the residential locations of other siblings have an influence on the frequency of phone calls to parents. Informants who are an only child or one of two or three children call more often. The same is true for the rare cases in which almost all siblings live abroad and the parents are the only family members who continue to live in Taiwan. In most incidents however, it is the younger siblings who immigrate while the older siblings reside with parents in Taiwan. Informants with that family structure call their parents rather infrequent. At any rate, it is only the presence of parents and siblings in Taiwan which motivates long-term immigrants to call often. Informants do not make phone calls to former classmates, neighbors and co-workers on a regular basis.

The last factor of interest in the model is the number of organizations an informant is engaged in. Indeed, the extent of involvement in local and regional circles in Southern California have an

effect on the frequency of phone calls conducted. The more organizations and group meetings a person is connected with, the less often her or she makes international phone calls. This indicates that some immigrants are rather occupied with the social life in their new environment and have less time to schedule calls. It also shows that they do not rely exclusively on family members in Taiwan to get advice and emotional support.

However, a separate analysis reveals that informants who are only members of groups which meet on a weekly basis, such as recreational activities, register lower levels of this effect than those who are participating in groups which meet on a quarterly basis, such as associations which promote social and cultural engagement in the larger ethnic community. In fact, informants whose parents are still living in Taiwan have a stronger tendency to engage in weekly recreational activities and not in other organizations ( $t(58) = 2.969, p < 0.01$ ). Since for many the focus of their personal and cultural orientation continues to be towards Taiwan, they refrain from commitments to local political and cultural ethnic institutions. Not having to take care of parents living in the same house or within driving distance provides more free time and allows them to take advantage of opportunities to engage in leisure activities and personal improvement in Orange County.

#### ***Transportation technology: travel to Taiwan***

Another indication of the scope of transnational activities among immigrants is the frequency of their trips back to Taiwan. There are various reasons and occasions for travel to Taiwan. The Chinese New Year Festival in early February is the busiest travel season for immigrants from Taiwan. Christmas time is another peak time, not only because some are believers of Christian faith, but mostly because some American owned companies close for the holidays providing their employees with additional vacation days. For parents with school age children the summer months are another period with high likelihood of travel. Yet, informants may also travel at other times during the year, simply to visit their spouse, their parents and siblings, and their friends left behind in Taiwan. Business travel, both by business owners and employees on behalf of their company, is expected to be an important incentive for hopping on an airplane to Taiwan as well.

Travel expenses have little influence in the decision-making process to take yet another trip to the homeland. Just as the cost of phone calls is not seen as an obstacle, affordable airline prices and high incomes make frequent travel financially possible for the average middle class immigrant. Other restrictions apply, and immigrants who are employed in the service industry or work as professionals have a limited amount of vacation time. American companies usually grant

their employees a maximum of two weeks away from their jobs.<sup>86</sup> The many activities of school children keep parents, especially homemaking mothers, from going on frequent trips. Immigrant parents often encourage their youngsters to sign up for summer school programs both in high school and while attending universities. Some of the voluntary summer school courses focus on preparation for standardized tests, others provide students with additional skills and the option to graduate earlier. Another hurdle for the execution of travel plans are related to the greencard application process. Immigrants who arrived on a spousal or family reunion visas and wait for their adjustment of status as permanent residents (aka greencard) while already living in the United States are not allowed to leave the country unless they have filed special paperwork.

The following analysis investigates the travel pattern among all informants of this study. Travel data are also elicited for spouses, children and parents. The average frequencies of travel among spouses resembles the distribution of ego's travel frequencies. In some instances the spouse is traveling more often than an informant, but in other cases they may travel less. It is quite common in the sample that one spouse has parents still living in Taiwan and the other spouse's parents are deceased while almost all siblings live in the United States as well. As a result, the informant might report low levels of travel for him or herself and high frequencies for the respective spouse.

The travel habits of immigrant children depend on them being Taiwan born or American born and their ability to speak Chinese and/or Taiwanese. Once they are older and no longer have to accompany their parents on visits to Taiwan, Taiwan born children are much more likely to travel on an annual basis or at least every 2 to 3 years to Taiwan ( $t(58) = 3.601, p < 0.001$ ) than American born children. Some parents try to encourage their older American born children to visit Taiwan in search of their roots, yet are often rather unsuccessful in establishing a lasting interest for Taiwan among them.<sup>87</sup> Younger children, including the American born, are sometimes sent to Taiwan on their own to be pampered by a grandmother. The older children who actively choose to travel to Taiwan, go back in search of recreation and fun. For them the nightlife and pop music scene of Taiwan have a lot to offer. Since they have no communication problems they can sample the newest trends and find more bars and clubs clustered in a small space than in California.

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<sup>86</sup> However, a separate analysis revealed that no significant correlation exists between occupation and frequency of travel, with the exception of the few business owners and their homemaker spouses who engage in business activities in both Taiwan and the United States

<sup>87</sup> There are several youth programs for young second generation immigrants from Taiwan. Some of these arranged trips are mockingly called "Love Cruises" because they function as an opportunity to meet other teenagers and young adults from the same ethnic group with the same experiences in navigating between two cultures.

Parents of informants display various travel patterns in coming to North America to see their children and grandchildren. Other than those parents who live in the United States or are deceased, a quarter of all elderly have never visited the United States, in many cases because their children have only recently immigrated. Another 15% of parents have visited in the earlier years of their children's immigration but are now too sick to travel the distance to California. Among the remaining subset of parents, some visit about every five years (10%), some every three or four years (6%), and a few come every other year (4%) or even every year (7%). Those who show larger intervals between their visits are known to come for up to a year at the time. Informants whose parents used to come in previous decades also report that their elders often spent six months or more with them, often to help out with child care.

**Figure 7.6** Frequency of travel to Taiwan

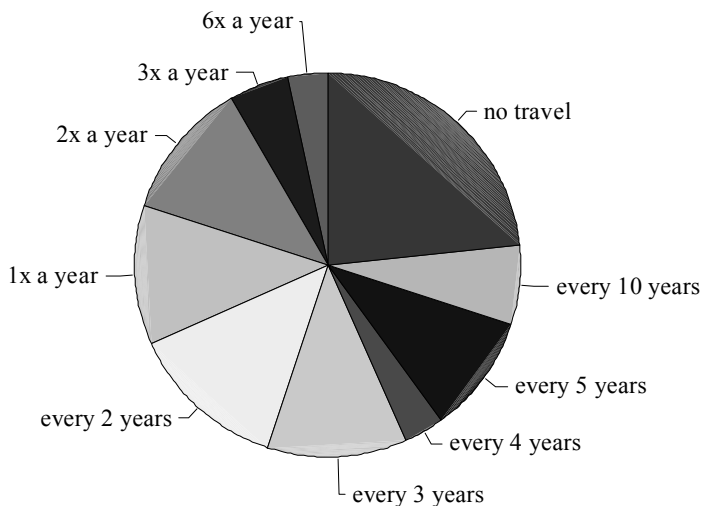


Figure 7.6 shows the distribution of frequencies for informants' travel trips. Again, an aggregation of different behavioral patterns reveals four groups in addition to those informants who hardly ever travel overseas. Those who are no longer taking trips are a rather large portion of the sample (23%). Most of them are informants of the very early cohorts whose parents are deceased or live in the United States and all, or most, of their siblings reside in North America. Many of them make hardly any or, at the most, a few phone calls to anyone in Taiwan. Another group of people have last visited Taiwan ten years ago (7%). They are not included in the group of non-travelers, because they all stated that a new trip is in the planning, these were often informants who are at the brink of retirement or whose children just graduated from college. A quarter of all

informants travels every three, four, or five years to Taiwan. They try to make it a regular habit, yet are somehow kept away due to job constraints or a family emergency in California. The next set of informants, however, another quarter of the sample, does make sure they travel annually or, at the very least, every other year. Most of them visit Taiwan at the same time every year, making travel to the home country an integral part of their life. The last group of people, another 20%, consistently have traveled between twice to three times a year and even up to six times a year.

A closer look at factors which may explain increasing frequencies of trips to Taiwan is based on the same hypotheses which guided the investigation of phone call behavior. To test the validity of assumptions four multiple regression models are generated using the identical sets of basic demographic variables, specific demographic variables indicating transnational activities, and network variables. A separate analysis of the relationship between the frequency of phone calls and the frequency of travel trip reveals that they are directly correlated ( $p < 0.00001$ ). It seems obvious that those who call a lot also travel a lot. However, it could have been possible that some immigrants compensate infrequent travel with very frequent phone calls. At any rate, the comparison of the explanatory capacity of the four models produces slightly different results.

**Table 7.9 Models explaining the frequency of travel trips to Taiwan**

Dependent variable: frequency of informant's travel trips to Taiwan (network variable)

Independent variable	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Constant	2.036	6.171	2.489	4.760
Gender	-0.086	-0.719	-0.244	
Ethnicity	-1.718**	-2.099*	-1.872**	
Cohort	0.991*	2.481****	1.697***	
parents live in Taiwan	5.511++++		4.884++++	5.538++++
spouse lives in Taiwan	1.294		0.887	1.942*
transnational business activities	3.490***		2.699**	2.323*
number of organizations		0.423	0.046	-0.235
percent of media use		-0.045	-0.014	-0.040
adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0.564	0.321	0.568	0.462
F-Value	13.712++++	5.437****	8.725++++	9.070++++

\*  $p < 0.1$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*\*  $p < 0.001$ , +++++  $p < 0.00001$

The same set of variables actually generates a better fit for travel trips than for phone calls and can explain up to 57% of the variance. Network variables make no significant contribution to the explanations rejecting the hypotheses that informants who are more involved in local and regional

organizations choose to travel less often. Instead the basic demographic variables play an important role as predictors. Though gender is irrelevant, ethnicity and cohort have an effect on the amount of travel undertaken. Ethnic Taiwanese are more likely than ethnic Chinese to visit Taiwan often. This confirms the notion introduced in chapter 6, that many ethnic Chinese immigrate for political reasons as complete families whereas in many ethnic Taiwanese only a few siblings or only one member of the family settles in North America. The cohort effect is not surprising either. Since most members of the two latter cohorts, especially the fourth cohort, are mostly ethnic Taiwanese and essentially parachute families, they started their immigration experience with the expectation of frequent travel activities. That is also the reason why the location of the spouse has a somewhat significant, however weak, effect.

More recent immigrants are more likely to invest more energy in the attempt to stay in touch with friends and family in Taiwan than long-term residents. Some immigrants have reduced their number of travels as the their time of settlement extends and their establishment in the area progresses. However, some immigrants of the earlier cohorts have never had the habit of returning often in the first place. For economic reasons, as well as visa status related considerations, it took some of the students several years before they are able to return to Taiwan for visits. The alienation they often experienced while on their visit also contributed to their decision to travel less often thereafter and orient themselves even more towards life in North America.

*"The first time I went back was 6 years after I had left (1978), in 1984. So by that time I already didn't recognize some of the places."<sup>88</sup> We didn't quite fit in anymore - there is not much to do for me. But my family visits quite often, my mother, brother, sister." (informant #54)*

Furthermore, the variables recording transnational activities are the most influential set in the models. The most interesting aspect of the analysis is that although transnational business transaction explain the frequencies of travel to some extent, the effects are not as significant as in the model for calling patterns. Household members without any business involvement are just as likely to travel often as those which are conducting business transactions in and between both countries.

For the majority of immigrants in the sample, visiting their elderly parents is the most prominent motivation to fly to Taiwan. This factor of piety towards parents appears even more dominant if taking into account that there is also substantial number of parents who visit the

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<sup>88</sup> 已經不認得 (yijing bu ren de) = already do not recognize.



United States to see their grown children and grandchildren. Several immigrants of earlier cohorts, especially ethnic Chinese, are able to get their parents to move to the United States permanently. Yet the majority with living parents do not have such prospects. Since the economy and standard of living have improved tremendously in Taiwan, this is not expected to change. Most parents do not want to be uprooted and leave their social worlds in Taiwan behind in exchange for a quieter and cleaner, yet uneventful life that is poor in opportunities for contact with like-minded people in Orange County.<sup>89</sup>

*"My mother is there- so I go and visit her. But she isn't going to come to the States anymore- she doesn't feel well - she is quite sick, and the costs of health care would be outrageous in the United States - she wouldn't be able to afford it - and the lifestyle would be boring in the United States not like in Taiwan - here there is nothing to do - nobody to enjoy. she also doesn't want to be a burden for us." (informant #62)*

Once parents die, especially if no parent of either spouse is around any longer, the incentive to fly to Taiwan is reduced dramatically. Even those who have many siblings living in Taiwan do not keep up the same level of frequency in their visits. Their brothers and sisters come to visit them in California or send their children over for vacation time or extended stays including attendance at nearby high schools.

*"I used to go back when I was in college - I went back every two years - because my mother was alive - and I promised her that I would go back every two years. But since my mother passed away, I am busy and I don't go that often. Only on business trips. I was there last year, we went to China and then we went to Taiwan." (informant #30)*

An interesting subplot is related to the proceedings in case of a parent's death. Their children have to decide where to bury the parent. The question occurs often enough that even South Orange County has its own Chinese operated funeral service. A few informants who come from families in which all siblings live in North America and only the parents remained in Taiwan report that they brought their father's or mother's ashes over to the United States to be kept either at home or in an American cemetery. Other families whose parents actually have settled in the United States decide upon their death to return the body or the ashes of their loved ones to Taiwan, to be buried next to a spouse in the family grave. The latter is the more traditional approach based on the

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<sup>89</sup> An established builder of subdivisions in Orange County (informant #40) actually tested prospects and profitability of newly build subdivisions geared specifically to the market of first time immigrant retirees from Taiwan. The proposition seemed feasible since many retirees have the financial means to buy their own residence. Also, many immigrant families do not want to shoulder the burden of having their parents live with them in the same residence. Yet the market research on interest for small, individual, one-garage houses for elderly parents came back negative. Apparently there was not enough demand and the project did not materialize (informant #40).

cultural ideal that a Chinese person should always return to the homeland, dead or alive (Hsu 1971, Siu 1987, Fong-Torres 1994, Chow 1998). It is most common among immigrants who continue to remember their ancestors with shrines and family altars in their homes.<sup>90</sup> Though the decision to bring even the dead over to the United States versus return family members to their place of origin is not clearly associated with ethnic Chinese immigrants for one approach and ethnic Taiwanese immigrants for the other. However, the individual choices inform us about the cultural orientation of a family towards either Taiwan and China or North America.

Another transnational activity, traveling to see one's spouse, does not account for a major portion of the trips to Taiwan. The reasons for the low significance of spousal relations in the overall model of explanations are similar to those introduced for phone call behavior. Many couples are estranged from one another. That goes so far that a woman might return to Taiwan to see her parents but not meet her husband while she is there. Also, in some cases of separation, the husband is the one who comes and visits California, mainly to stay in touch with his children. The fact, that the variable 'spouse living in Taiwan' have a bit more influence on the model for travel trips than for phone calls can be explained by its relation to the cohort effect (see model 4). The most recent immigrants are those most likely to engage in more than one trip a year to see their husbands. They say they miss them terribly in the new environment and are quite afraid their partner might stray from the relationships. Mothers with younger children return to Taiwan for about ten days at the time, mothers of college age children may stay away for as long as three months. These behavioral patterns are often predecessors of the eventual decision to let the children live by themselves in California and become what the ethnic community calls "parachute kids."<sup>91</sup>

In sum, the main reason for travel to Taiwan is to fulfill one's duties of paying respect and taking care of parents. The analysis confirms that the actual scope of transnational activities is rather limited among the immigrants in this study despite their easy access to space- and time-compressing technology. As the time of settlement progresses and informants grow older, they have less and less contact with other people in Taiwan such as former classmates, neighbors, co-

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<sup>90</sup> For a while it was fashionable for ethnic Chinese to buy tiny spots of land in mainland China. These 10 cm by 10 cm plots are considered to be a symbol for a continuous stake in the homeland, a continuous ownership relationship with the land of one's ancestors.

<sup>91</sup> As interviews with members of the 1.5 generation revealed, many children have difficulty coping emotionally whenever their parents leave them by themselves. This holds true even for families where it is only the father who stays away. In cases of both parents being repeatedly overseas, many youngsters actually resort to rebellion, emotional and academic withdrawal, and even crime by way of joining a youth gang (see additional information in chapter 6).

workers and even members of their larger kin group. As the following two quotes exemplify the interactions in Taiwan do indeed become reduced to the interaction with parents. Once parents are gone, visits to Taiwan can become downright awkward or nothing more than a holiday to a formerly familiar place.

*"As for contact with my Taipei neighbors - well, I sold the house in Taipei - I have some contacts with people from that time, but not that much - with most relatives and friends in Taipei I don't have that strong a contact anymore. I have been here for too long.<sup>92</sup> When I go back in the summers, I have to take care of my mother in Hsinchu (Xinzhu). There is not much time to keep up with friends, neighbors and relatives. Mother is 76, so I have to help her a lot. And I only go for 2, 3 weeks." (informant #20)*

*"It doesn't really make sense to go back to Taiwan, because we don't have a house there and no job opportunity, nobody to offer us a job. Most of my daily friends are here. In Taiwan I only have siblings - no friends, no activities. If I go back to Taiwan, I live at my husband's relative's homes. but it's not very convenient. I can't just pick up and go and hang out in Taiwan. Those people who are in business they have a lot of money - yet those who are office workers - they kind of don't want you around for too long (she laughs) - it's not that easy.<sup>93</sup> Going back and forth is not that easy." (informant #34)*

So, immigrants do not call, fly, or email just because they can. Time takes its toll. However, the fact that most informants are not keeping in close contact with friends and members of their larger kin group in Taiwan does not necessarily mean that they have become assimilated to U.S. culture and society. As some of the findings presented so far have demonstrated, the personal orientation of immigrants often continues to be geared towards political and cultural developments in Taiwan. Furthermore, the social circles of immigrants are almost exclusively based on joint country of origin.

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<sup>92</sup> 有来往但是不太多. 跟台湾的亲戚朋友都没什麼来往. 在这边的时间太久. (You laiwang danshi bu tai duo. Gen taiwan de qinqi pengyou mei shenme laiwang. Zai zhebian de shijian tai jiu) = I have some contact, but not much. With the relatives and friends in Taiwan there is not much contact to report. I have been here for too long.

<sup>93</sup> 人家也不要你 (renjia ye bu yao ni) = Other people do not (necessarily) want you (around).

## Chapter 8

### The Network of Community Organizations

*"Chinese people cluster together, its their nature."(informant #26)<sup>1</sup>*

#### Introduction

Finding answers to the central questions of this study regarding interaction patterns of immigrants from Taiwan requires an investigation of the structure of personal networks, but also of the nature of the ethnic community. The guiding questions of this chapter concern the existence of a distinct ethnic Chinese and Taiwanese community in South Orange County. Is the ethnic community merely a loose conglomeration of personal community networks independent of a well defined spatial location? Or do the ties which connect individual immigrants amount to a cohesive community, recognized by both members and non-members, in the space of South Orange County? What are the building blocks and boundaries of such an ethnic community? How does the nature of any type of ethnic community among Chinese and Taiwanese immigrants influence their incorporation into the larger society?

The typology of immigrant communities in the United States presented in table 3.1 gives an overview of research findings on the different ethnic groups. Ethnic groups and their extent of community cohesion differ by the time of arrival in the United States, the location of settlement, and the clustered or dispersed nature of group settlement patterns. Scholars of ethnic communities have struggled with the community concept in recent years. Many have looked for signs of community in the traditional sense, such as the existence of formal organizations and the physical manifestation of community in certain places. Those who were unable to detect these key components of community, declared ethnic community as lacking a sense of community, or nonexistent (Markowitz 1993, Margolis 1998, and others).

In her search for community among Russian Jews, Markowitz observed that despite clustered settlement structures these recent immigrants lacked formal organizations. Her conclusion was that community existed only on an informal basis *"in spite of itself"* (Markowitz 1993: 225). A study of Brazilian immigrants in New York revealed that Brazilians have few local institutions with the exception of churches. The ethnographer was surprised to find no distinct Brazilian

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<sup>1</sup> 中国人会比较在一起 (zhongguo ren hui bijiao zai yiqi) = Chinese people have the tendency (literally: the ability) to stick together (hang out together).

neighborhoods, no special meeting places for people and no mutual aid societies (Margolis 1998: 85). As a result, she assumed that Brazilians had no sense of a unified community.

Indeed, conditions for interaction between people, either of the same or diverse ethnic backgrounds, have changed due to urbanization and industrialization. However, Wellman's approach to defining community as egocentric personal communities of individuals and the people they assist and socialize with is more informative than looking for community in any traditional sense (Wellman 1999). Similar to the findings by Purkayastha (2000) it is assumed that "*ethnic community exists without propinquity*" (Purkayastha 2000: 1). It is the membership in ethnic organizations, and not simply proximity, which binds individuals together.

Undeniably, community is visible in public spaces. However, public arenas in the sense of actual places are hard to find in the deconcentrated urban spaces of Southern California. Instead, public spaces manifest themselves in the numerous individual groups and organizations, both formal and informal, in which people participate. The following chapter looks at the variety of social gatherings of immigrants, which are the potential building blocks of an ethnic Chinese and Taiwanese community. The degree of community cohesion is measured by mapping the overlap among the various groups created by joint memberships. The assumption is that the extent of overlap has an influence on immigrants' opportunities for interaction with members of other ethnic groups and their integration into the larger society (Popielarz and McPherson 1995). The more ethnically exclusive groups a person is involved in, the more connections between members of those organizations are created, resulting in the reduced likelihood of interaction with people from outside the ethnic community. Although group membership by itself does not constrain a person from engagement in other venues, limited time budgets and lack of opportunities to meet people outside one's social circle are expected to construct self-imposed barriers to integration.

Further hypotheses on the social space of immigrants from Taiwan include the notion that despite the financial and human resources that might enable immigrants to engage in ethnically diverse community organizations throughout their ethnically mixed neighborhoods, it is expected that the short settlement history of South Orange County, and its lack of public spaces and distinct boundaries, is not conducive for providing opportunities to meet people of different ethnic backgrounds. In addition, the number of co-ethnics who live in the region is likely to be large enough to facilitate the emergence of a large number and variety of ethnic groups and services.

## Types and Functions of Community Organizations

The study of community organizations immigrants from Taiwan are involved in requires a definition of the term. The literature often uses the terms 'organization', 'groups', and 'voluntary associations' interchangeably, a practice continued in this study. In fact, although much has been written about the role of community organizations *"there is no comprehensive theory on associations"* as noted in an earlier review by Knoke (1986:1). Little has changed since then, and this particular field of study is still considered to be lacking in integration (Rotolo 2000). Therefore, the definition of groups used in this study is rather broad and comprehensive.

*"At a minimal level an association is a formally organized named group, most of whose members- whether persons or organizations - are not financially recompensed for their participation. (...) Within this broad compass, associations span the range of functionally specialized societal subsystems: labor unions, churches, sects, social movement organizations, political parties, professional societies, business and trade associations, fraternal and sororal organizations. recreational clubs, civic service associations, philanthropies, social welfare councils, communes, cooperatives, and neighborhood associations"* (Knoke 1986:2). According to this understanding, social groups can take on various forms and missions, but are neither primary groups, such as families, nor bureaucratic groups, such as private sector firms and government agencies.

The first studies on common-interest associations assumed that they came into existence to fill the void left by a lack of kinship organizations as societies grew bigger, became more complex and developed more widespread urbanization (Ember and Ember 1999: 371). The formation of associations was also associated with migration to a new environment. Self-help groups often emerged in a response to the need for organizing economic and group interests in an alien social space. Most of these organizations were considered to be task oriented service institutions for immigrants. From a social network perspective the study of group formations and community associations is of great interest as well, because *"organizations create opportunity structures for social interaction"* (McPherson and Smith-Lovin 1982: 884). Social groups are specific social arenas for the establishment of weak ties, which introduce members to a wider set of social contacts and resources (Granovetter 1973, 1985).

In addition, membership in a community association is also a source of identity. A sense of self or a personal identity is not only derived from the mechanisms of socialization and cultural

acquisition, but according to the personalistic theorists such as Erik H. Erikson is also located deep in the unconscious as a persistent sense of sameness of the self (Bryon 1996). According to the interpretation of identity as a "*sense of sameness*", the notion refers to commonalties associated with groups or categories. Since any society is composed of segments, individuals must define themselves in terms of membership or be defined in that fashion by others. The emerging categories have evaluative and emotional characteristics from which the individual derives self-esteem, or a sense of knowing or belonging. As a result, identities of individuals are to some extent linked to their memberships in specific social groups (Bryon 1996: 292).

Ever since the famous observer of early American life, Tocqueville, propagated in 1835 that America is a 'nation of joiners', it has been assumed that large proportions of Americans are engaged in various social groups. However, a comparison of 'joining behavior' in fifteen western nations has shown that while the United States still has a large proportion of the society as being involved in at least one organization, they are not the nation most likely to have its members belong to a large number of groups, once church membership and inactive memberships are controlled for (Curtis et al. 1992). Another study conducted by Putnam (1995) created quite a controversy with his thesis that Americans, over time, have reduced their group participation rates due to increased mobility, the influence of TV, other entertainment media, and the large number of women in the workforce. In this respect it is of interest to see the extent of 'joining' among immigrants who move from Taiwan to Southern California.

As introduced in chapter 2, throughout the history of outmigration from China, immigrants of Chinese cultural origin have engaged in the formation of community associations in their new places of settlement (Skinner 1957, Topley 1961, Freedman 1961, Wilmot 1964, 1970, Kuo 1977, Lim 1980, Thompson 1980, Lyman 1986). During the times of settlement in distinct Chinatowns all over the world prior to the 1950's, most community associations formed on the basis of ascribed characteristics such as, places of origin, family names, age, and gender. Their main function was to serve as a mutual-aid organization. In general, they were connected to each other through an umbrella organization, the local 'Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association,' which included representatives from all other associations.

Taiwan, the country of origin for the informants of this study, is home to community associations as well. Although the authoritarian government of the then Guomintang party had drafted strict rules for registration procedures and membership numbers for the foundation of associations as civic representations until they lifted martial law in 1987 (Weller and Huang 1998:

392, McBreath 1998: 307), many different types of organizations, other than the traditional surname associations and rotating credit associations, emerged and multiplied. Today, after the passing of the Civic Organization Law in 1988, Taiwan has developed a civic society almost comparable to that of other industrialized nations, which includes economic organizations (Skoggard 1996, McBeath 1998), socio-political associations (Gold 1996), religious associations (Jordan and Overmeyer 1986, Rubinstein 1991, Bosco 1994, Clart 1995, Laliberte 2001, Huang 2002), as well as recreational organizations (Ahern 1981, Gates 1992, Thornton and Lin 1994), both at the regional and local level. Alumni organizations from high schools and universities flourish in Taiwan as well (Gates 1987, informants of this study).

Membership in any of these organizations is considered to be a primary opportunity for the establishment of 'guanxi' relationships.<sup>2</sup> At the local level the ties that connect individuals who share affiliations with a specific organization are instrumental for the maintenance of community cohesion and therefore solidarity between the members during times of hardship (Jacobs 1982, Greenblatt 1982: 20).

Prior to a discussion of the implications of membership duration and group composition for community cohesion based on findings in the literature and this study, the following section introduces the various types and functions of social groups frequented by ethnic Taiwanese and ethnic Chinese immigrants in South Orange County. Though the list of organizations does not claim to be exhaustive, it represents all groups and organizations mentioned by any of the 112 informants, a large subset of whom were selected based on a snowball sample. All of these organizations are included in the discussion of community group overlap due to joint membership. The various ethnic associations are grouped into five categories. The criteria for distribution is both function and mission of any respective organization, but also the absolute number of specific types of organizations. The latter explains why 'alumni associations' are introduced separately from the category 'cultural, political, and professional associations.' Further categories include 'religious congregations,' 'child-related organizations,' and 'recreational associations.'

### **Cultural, Political and Professional Associations**

Cultural, political, and professional associations are the social groups with the biggest differences in active and passive memberships among all ethnic organizations founded and attended by ethnic

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<sup>2</sup> For introduction to 'guanxi' as a particular type of social relationships see section on networks in Taiwan in chapter 2.



Chinese and Taiwanese immigrants to Southern California. Each association has several levels of engagement among its members. By definition, membership in an association does not require active participation. As mentioned briefly in chapter 7, many affiliates are listed on the association roster and pay their fees but do not join any get-togethers, not even the annual main assembly. Among those who attend meetings, some are involved in special activity groups, are members of the board, or hold other leadership positions. Others only take part in the recreational events initiated by the respective association, such as picnics in the park, sightseeing tours, fund-raising events, or Chinese New Year festivals. Active membership does provide an individual with more access to information and more binding contacts. Yet, passive membership entitles a person to approach any other member listed on the roster of the association's annually published booklet for information exchange or business propositions according to the traditional Chinese rule of joint membership.<sup>3</sup>

Some of the associations to which informants in this study belong are specific to South Orange County, such as the 'South Coast Chinese Cultural Association' (nan hai an zhong hua wenhua xiehui).<sup>4</sup> Others are the Orange County chapter of a nationwide organization, for example the Orange County Branch of the 'Chinese Lions Club.' Yet another set of associations, among them the 'Chinese American Real Estate Professional Association of Southern California,' has a regional orientation and includes members from all over Southern California. Many of these latter associations have their seat in the larger Los Angeles County area. In fact, the 1998 edition of the 'Chinese Yellow Pages' (hua shang nianjian) has 72 listed for Los Angeles County under the category 'association' and only five for 'Orange County,' three of which were North Orange County organizations. Although in no way representative, since Chinese Yellow Pages publish mostly for clients in Los Angeles County and the entry of associations is self-selective, the large difference reflects the smaller numbers of Chinese immigrants in Orange County and diminished needs for creating specific associations in Orange County.

There is a significant difference in the number of associations an informant is involved with in respect to the level of education he or she has achieved ( $F(3, 56) = 4.546, p < 0.01$ ). The primary

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<sup>3</sup> Chapter 7 elaborates on Chinese viewpoints regarding 'joint membership' and the related obligations. A section on networks in Taiwan in chapter 2 introduces the notion of 'guanxi' ties which can be established in reference to a joint background or experience.

<sup>4</sup> 南海岸中华文化协会 (nanhai an zhonghua wenhua xiehui) = South Coast Chinese Cultural Association. There is also a 'North Orange County Chinese Cultural Associations' with seat in Anaheim. However, informants of this study do not overlap with their members.

difference is between immigrants with a degree from an American university or a Taiwanese university compared to immigrants who hold high school or secondary vocational school diplomas as their highest degree (Tukey HSD  $p < 0.01$ ). The latter are often members of no more than one association. Not surprisingly, this corresponds with a higher rate of memberships ( $F(3, 56) = 3.183, p < 0.05$ ) among first and second cohort immigrants compared to fourth cohort immigrants (Tukey HSD  $p < 0.05$ ).

### **Cultural Associations**

Among the cultural associations of interest for informants in this study, the South Coast Chinese Cultural Association stands out. This non-profit organization founded in 1977 is the largest ethnic Chinese organization in South Orange County. It is essentially an umbrella organization for both the 'Irvine Chinese School' and several recreational groups for adults and children associated with the Chinese school, such as the 'Golf Club of the Chinese School.'

*"We have a lot of groups underneath the SCCCA, the choir, golf classes, Tai Chi, Tennis, all for adults. Chinese school is under it too. The aim of the SCCCA is to help the Chinese Community and get a good relationship with lots of other groups in Irvine and try to help Chinese newcomers who come from other states and from Mainland China and Taiwan, overseas. I am a SCCCA board member. You have 2 terms, lasting 1 year each. And I do get elected by the members. We have to meet once a month. And we have the following activities. In October we usually participate in the Irvine Harvest Festival - and we also had participated in the Dialectical Meet Olympics, for all Southern California Chinese, in Los Angeles. And we do scholarships for Chinese students, and we usually have an annual party, the New Years party." (informant #47)*

The association itself is a fund raising organization which also sponsors cultural exchange with other ethnic community organizations. In some instances it functions as a first contact for newcomers from Taiwan or other states in the United States as a source of information on social events and activities in the area. In this respect of its mission, the SCCCA is the closest thing to a mutual aid association in the traditional sense. In reality, it more similar to a public relations organization that represents Chinese immigrants in the larger society of Orange County. Board members of the association hold prestigious positions since they are listed in the program booklets of the Irvine Chinese School and the additional recreational courses offered. The annual New Year festival is a major event which brings active members and donors together for an evening of performances and dance. Advertising of sponsors and a list of organizers on the program handout give everyone an overview of "who is who" among the ethnic Chinese and Taiwanese of South Orange County.

There are not many other cultural associations of note in the area. Smaller, less visible associations such as the Chinese Cultural Association of the Irvine Valley College fall into this category. Specific ethnic associations, such as the 'Irvine Hakka Association' as well as associations for Chinese Seniors also qualify to some extent. However, the 'Irvine Hakka Association' (erwan kejia hui) was in its infant steps at the time of fieldwork.<sup>5</sup> The initiator of the organization had simply compiled a list of potential members in South Orange County based on their heritage information and traced their family relations back to Taiwan and further on to their origin in mainland China. He then contacted other ethnic Hakka and invited them for regular meetings at his house. Since this person was also of Christian faith, he used the gatherings as an opportunity to minister the bible and promote the founding of a Hakka Christian Fellowship (kejia tuanqie).<sup>6</sup> The linkage between Hakka identity and Christianity is part of a larger movement to revitalize Hakka identity in Hong Kong, Taiwan and abroad (Constable 1996: 100). It should be pointed out that this combination has been problematic for informants in this study. Attendance at these meetings was not very regular. Many informants preferred participating in more general organizations with fellow immigrants from Taiwan before committing more formally to a faith based organization. The Chinese Yellow Pages for Los Angeles County list several ethnic Hakka Organizations in the San Gabriel Valley. However, informants in this study did not join any of these groups.

The two senior citizen organizations for immigrants from Taiwan in the area are the 'Irvine Evergreen Chinese Senior Association' (IECSA) and the 'Asian American Senior Citizens Service Center' (AASCSC) based in Santa Ana.<sup>7</sup> They function as information and outreach centers for medical assistance and social services in general. Most importantly though, they have established liaisons with the Senior Citizen facilities in South Orange County, such as the Rancho Senior Center and the Lakeview Senior Center in Irvine and offer many recreational activities at each of these locations. In this respect they are essentially recreational associations.

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<sup>5</sup> 爾湾客家会 (erwan kejia hui) = Irvine Hakka Association

<sup>6</sup> 客家团契 (kejia tuanqie) = Hakka Fellowship

<sup>7</sup> 爾湾松柏 (erwan songbai hui) = Irvine Evergreen Association (evergreen = pine and cypress trees), and 亚美老人服务中心 (yamei laoren fuwu zhongxin) = Asian American Senior people's service center

### Professional Associations

Professional associations often represent economic interests or are a forum for occupational groups. Informants who reported to be members of either the 'North American Taiwanese Professors Association', the 'Chinese Lawyer Association,' the 'Chinese Computer Association,' the 'Taiwanese American Aeronautics and Space Association,' the 'Chinese Hotel and Motel Association,' or the 'Chinese American Real Estate Professional Association' stated that they were merely passive members who hardly attended any organizational meetings. People who are actively involved in one of these groups, however, often use their affiliations on advertisements in newspapers and on handouts for promotional purposes. Being listed on the roster of these associations serves as a reference source and supplies members' further access to information.

The Taiwanese government even sponsors the formation of joint organizations which link various professional associations to each other, such as the 'Science Division of the Coordination Council for North American Affairs.' Engineers, scientists, business owners and consultants list their contact addresses in a directory that is of great utility for each other and the representatives of the ROC (Republic of China) in the United States. These almanacs also provide some form of public visibility for people in search of more widespread recognition of their achievements. The lack of social recognition in Southern California, due to the ethnic diversity, the distance from other ethnic groups, and the scattered settlement patterns, is often mourned by male immigrants from Taiwan.

Important professional and economic associations in Orange County for informants in this study are the Chinese American Chamber of Commerce (OCCACC), the Taiwanese American Chamber of Commerce in Orange County (TCCOC), the Taiwanese Medical and Dental Association of Orange County (TMDAOC), and the Orange County Chinese Lions Club.<sup>8</sup> Both the OCCACC and the TCCOC provide their members with ample information on investment opportunities and business to business contacts. In addition, the OCCACC publishes the Chinese Yellow Pages for Orange County (see reference to ethnic media in chapter 7). Although the Taiwanese and Chinese groups do not prohibit their members from holding joint membership as

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<sup>8</sup> 橙县华人商会 (chenxian huaren shanghui) = Orange County Chinese Chamber of Commerce; 美国加州橙县台美商会 (meiguo jiazhou chenxian taimei shanghui) = (America- ) California, Orange County Taiwan- American Chamber of Commerce; 橙县台湾医师及牙医公会 (chenxian taiwan yishi ji yayi gonghui) = Orange County Taiwan Doctor and Dentist Association; 橙县狮子会 (chenxian shizi hui) = Orange County Lions Club.

several individuals in fact do, the majority of members in the OCCACC are ethnic Chinese (waishengren) and the majority of TCCOC members are ethnic Taiwanese. At the time of fieldwork, the membership rosters of the TCCOC and the Doctors and Dentist Association (TMDAOC) was so extensive that they published a joint yearbook for 1998, including membership rosters, reports on various social gatherings, and advice on business practices and medical innovations.<sup>9</sup> The Chinese Lions Club has a comparatively larger following of ethnic Taiwanese as well and is mostly frequented by self-employed people, which qualifies it to be listed under the "professional association" category.

In addition to their role as facilitators of business contacts and information exchange all of these associations also consider themselves to be guardians of Chinese and Taiwanese culture. They give out scholarships to support the education of the second generation and vow to improve the image of ethnic Chinese and Taiwanese in the larger society.<sup>10</sup>

### **Political Associations**

There are several socio-political associations in the larger Southern California region, some of which have been influential in the election of the long-time opposition party DPP in Taiwan.<sup>11</sup> However, for informants of this study the main organizations of interests are the 'Orange County Taiwanese Association' (OCTA) and the California Chapter of the 'Taiwanese American Citizen League' (TACL).<sup>12</sup> On the surface these organizations have similar missions as the professional associations introduced above, such as guardianship of culture and representation of culture in the larger society.

The OCTA is primarily supported by ethnic Taiwanese, or - in the words of the organization's constitution - anyone "who recognize themselves as Taiwanese and reside in Orange County." Many members are early immigrants of the first cohort. However, as the newsletter of the association reports, there is a regular flow of about two or three new members each month, many of them graduate students arriving from Taiwan. Overall, the organization is a preferred meeting

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<sup>9</sup> The organization has further subgroups, such as the 'Santa Ana Orthodontic Chinese Associations (AOC)'.  
<sup>10</sup> Objectives and plans are clearly stated in the introductory addresses written by the respective presidents in each organization's yearbooks and booklets. Fear of discrimination, such as Anti-Asian sentiment is often mentioned.

<sup>11</sup> There are several other political organizations in the larger Southern California area, such as for example 'Chinese Americans United For Self-Empowerment C.A.U.S.E' but informants do not mention them as being of interest to them.

<sup>12</sup> 橙县台湾同乡会 (chenxian taiwan tongxiang hui) = Orange County Taiwanese Association. 同乡 (tongxiang) = same country, same native place of origin.

forum for people who are employed as professionals, who are neither involved with any one of the two ethnic Chambers of Commerce nor are avid church members. Nevertheless, many doctors and business owners join as well. The organization is an offspring of other Taiwanese Associations (tongxiang hui) in Los Angeles County and elsewhere in the United States that promote political change and democratization in Taiwan (informant #14). The official objective of the organization is *"to enhance interaction, communication and cooperation among Taiwanese, to participate in community activities to advance the position of Taiwanese for better welfare, and to care for the present and future Taiwan"* (Article II. of the revised Constitution of the OCTA, May 1994). In this orientation towards Taiwan, the organization has something in common with the earlier native-place of origin association founded by Chinese sojourners in the Chinatowns of the 19th and early 20th century (Wong 1990, Honig 1992, Wickberg 1994).

Indeed, the group continues to take an interest in the political developments in Taiwan and, among other activities, sponsors banquets for visiting political delegations from Taiwan. However, most activities are family picnics and joint trips to selected locations. In addition to the bimonthly newsletter, the organization publishes a yearbook, similar to those of professional and alumni associations. It includes membership lists, reports on joint social events and trips, and serves as a medium for advertisements of Chinese and Taiwanese businesses in the region.

### **Alumni Associations**

Alumni associations for graduates of well-respected and famous universities and high schools in Taiwan have many things in common with ethnic professional and political associations. They stage Chinese New Year Festivals with dances and raffles. They also provide membership rosters, advice and advertisement in their yearbooks. Among all informants, 50% attended a high school and/ or university represented by an alumni association in Southern California. Most of them are immigrants of the two earlier cohorts who arrived in the United States to attend graduate school. For long-term residents it is not unusual to be involved in one of the associations introduced above and an additional alumni association. The importance of alumni associations for any community lies in the fact that each alumni association contains a cross-section of people from different occupational groups, political opinions, as well as religious faiths. Since the 1980's alumni associations have grown to have the largest number of organizations among all ethnic Chinese and Taiwanese modern social organizations across North America (Lary and Luk 1994).

Most of the alumni associations have their headquarters in the San Gabriel Valley, an area where people also convene for the annual meetings. A few organizations though, have so many members in Orange County that they started their own area chapters of the association. From some schools, especially high schools, so many actual classmates immigrated to the United States that they have their own private reunions on a yearly or five-year basis depending on the geographic distance between the members who might be spread all over North America.<sup>13</sup> Among the few high schools which hold reunions in the United States, the most prominent organization in profile and size is that of the alumnus from Taipei's First Girls' High School (Bei Yi Nu).<sup>14</sup> The school is an elite institution for female students which has produced many excellent graduates who were accepted into American colleges and graduate schools. The name 'Bei Yi Nu' provides instant recognition and status association in both Taiwan and the United States.<sup>15</sup>

*"We have a lot of high school friends here, because you know - my high school - in Taiwan was Taipei First Girls' High School. That is the best high school in Taiwan. And so a lot of them came here. We have a lot of alumni activities, in almost any major city we have alumni from Taipei First Girls' High School. In Southern California we have probably thousands of them. You know each class has 50 students and in my year (1958) we had 7 classes. And from my year, I say we have probably at least half of them in the United States or even more, because Taipei First Girls' High School - they have a high percentage of them going to University and then come over here. That's why we have alumni everywhere (...) We have a yearbook, alumni yearbook. Every year we have a local alumni meeting - and every 2, 3 years we have a reunion of all alumni in Taiwan." (informant #38)*

In fact, there are so many graduates of that school in the Southern California area, that the membership rosters are traded by relatives of alumni to aspiring businesses as address lists for solicitation. The effect of this is that interest in joining and maintaining close contact with other alumni has subsided for some alumni living in South Orange County. Several informants associated with the organization state that they do not attend the annual meetings anymore since the organization has become too large for comfort and there is too much emphasis on establishing new projects both in business and for charity (informants #38, #99, #104). In fact, as introduced in

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<sup>13</sup> Two informants reported that they used to have a rotating credit association among their group of classmates. At first the funds were used to help with eventual emergencies during graduate school years. In later years everyone put a certain amount in a joint fund. They then invested the money and then dissolved the fund allocating everyone an equal share of returns (informant #7 and #32).

<sup>14</sup> 北一女交友会 (bei yi nu jiaoyou hui) = North (Taipei = north of tai, taiwan) first girls alumni associations. The English Version is always written as "Taipei First Girls' High School". The school system in Taiwan labels some of its schools according to the level of academic difficulty. The "first" (number one) stands for the most difficult and demanding institution in the entire school system of Taipei City.

<sup>15</sup> Edward Yang, the director of the movie 'Yi Yi' says about one of his characters "This green uniform is very famous, the uniform of Bei Yi Nü Girls School. Its very traditional. There is a lot of pride in it".

chapter 7, informants who list very strong ties with a former classmate, do not necessarily attend any alumni meetings of their former school or university. These gatherings are not necessarily meant to facilitate strong ties between two close friends.

There are many Taiwanese universities which have alumni chapters in Southern California. Those mentioned by informants include National Taiwan University (Taiwan Daxue), Taiwan Normal University (Shifan Daxue), National Cheng Chi University (Zhengzhi Daxue), Tunghai University (Donghai Daxue), National Cheng Kung University (Cheng Gong Daxue), Fu Jen Catholic University (Furen Daxue), National Chiao Tung University (Jiaotong Daxue), and Taiwan Medical College (Taiwan Yixueyuan).<sup>16</sup> Membership in an alumni association provides access to a group of people which might be homogeneous at a socioeconomic level but heterogeneous in terms of other affiliations outside the organization, which are assets for planning and implementation of any future project someone might have in mind. The potential for "networking" is considered so vital that there is also an association which brings interested people from all colleges and universities in Taiwan together, the 'Joint Chinese University Alumni Association of Southern California'.<sup>17</sup> This organization, which celebrated its 20th anniversary in 1998, is also open to alumni of universities which do not have separate representation and therefore less ability to develop weak ties.

The following statement gives some insights to the allure and the benefits of membership in an alumni association.

*"Well, you know my husband, we are both from Chenggong Daxue. And what we - when we just moved to Irvine - people asked us "hey, why don't you join - its just like SCCCA. You get all sorts of connection, and different views. Maybe you try to change a job. And so maybe someone says "hey, I know my company has a job opening - you want to come and try?" So people help the newcomers. We have meetings, we have the roster. And people say to each other: "my name is on there - call me." Or we have people who call because they give parties or a seminar and we have a newsletter. Or people call and say "the principal of Chenggong is coming here- you want to have dinner with him?" So people have this kind of cultural exchange (wenhua jiaoliu).<sup>18</sup> Sometimes we call and pass it on to the next person, like chain information. You call these people - you call those. We don't expect everybody to come. Just if you have time. If not that is fine too." (informant #58)*

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<sup>16</sup> 台湾大学 Taiwan University, 师范大学 (Taiwan) Normal University, 政治大学 Zhengzhi (Political) University, 东海大学 Donghai University, 成功大学 Chenggong University, 辅仁大学 Furen University, 交通大学 Jiaotong University, 台湾医学院 Taiwan Medical College.

<sup>17</sup> 南加州中国大专院校联合校友会 (nan jiazhou zhongguo dazhuan yuanxiao lianhe xiaoyou hui) = Southern California Chinese colleges and universities joint alumni association

<sup>18</sup> 文化交流 (wenhua jiaoliu) = cultural exchange, communication



However, and as stated elsewhere, the production of weak ties, often equivalent to 'guanxi' ties, is considered both a blessing and a curse. Although even active members are not obliged to attend all meetings and activities, once a joint member of the alumni organization calls for a business or charity related favor, it is difficult to excuse oneself. Membership brings a set of binding responsibilities.

### **Religious Organizations**

Orange County is home to several different ethnic religious congregations of Christian, Daoist and Buddhist faith with varying sizes and spheres of influence as introduced in chapter 7. The religious groups often provide an ethnic forum for socializing as well as an arena for the display of status differences due to wealth and level of engagement. In that respect, religious activities often become more important markers of identity in the new environment of the United States than they were at home.

#### **Christian churches**

Many Chinese and Taiwanese churches in Orange County are part of an international network of churches, often with headquarters in Taiwan (see also Rubinstein 1991, 1994). Informants in this study mention membership in eight different Christian churches. The denomination with largest membership in the area is the 'Evangelical Formosan Church' (EFC). Some attend the church in Garden Grove, North Orange County while yet others are members of its Irvine branch. A further offspring is a rather new congregation, the 'Taiwanese Presbyterians.' This group formed after some members considered the Irvine branch of the EFC too big and not personal enough. Both churches have services in Taiwanese (minnan hua) though.

A different congregation is the 'Irvine First Chinese Baptist Church,' which caters mostly to ethnic Chinese (waishengren), including Cantonese speaking people. So does the 'Evangelical Church' and the 'Irvine Canaan Christian Church'. The later is also actively recruiting new members among students arriving from mainland China.<sup>19</sup> The 'Church of Irvine,' is a local church linked to a global congregation of local churches first founded in mainland China. It has both ethnic Chinese and ethnic Taiwanese members. All of these above mentioned churches, with

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<sup>19</sup> The inclusion or exclusion of mainland Chinese members in the individual churches is another subject matter altogether. Many Chinese churches have outreach programs going on missionary trips to mainland China. They are very attractive for newly arrived immigrants from mainland China to Southern California because they provide access to information and social contacts.

the exception of the EFC in Garden Grove, are located within the city limits of Irvine. However, a few other small churches have sprung up south and north of Irvine. Several informants, both ethnic Chinese and Taiwanese, attend the 'Peace Evangelical Church' in Laguna Hills.<sup>20</sup>

As time passes, new churches are founded and others merge together (the list provided by informants is by no means exhaustive). The ministers of several churches explained that once a congregation has reached 200 active members, separation movements develop and a new branch is often founded. In some cases, the new community breaks with the main church and the international organization altogether. In this respect, ethnic Chinese and Taiwanese churches are not much different from other Christian congregations in the larger society. New church groups form around a minister or are started by a group of elders who then search for a minister. Start-up churches recruit members from their former congregations, from alumni associations and the larger geographic neighborhood. They rent rooms for their congregational meetings from grade schools or other churches, often non-ethnic, in the area and convene on Sunday afternoons instead of mornings (see Chen 1992 for similar observations).

Not surprisingly, there is a fair amount of fluctuation in membership within the different church groups in addition to those active members of a church groups, whose involvement with church activities, such as language classes for children, summer camps and charity work, becomes so intense that it leaves little time for other activities (see chapter 7, as well as discussion below).

*"I changed 3 different churches - over time. The present church - I already have been going there for 4 years now - I didn't go to their start up church in Costa Mesa - that's my mother who went to the Costa Mesa church. That church my mother went to started in Fullerton."* (informant #37)

Although the ethnic churches share more visibility in South Orange County than other community organizations due to labeled buildings and participation in charity events, most informants, both of Christian and non-Christian faith, do not consider the Christian churches to play a very important role among the immigrants from Taiwan.

*"Not so many Chinese people are engaged in a church. People here basically - just as I see it - they are devoted to family. I look around. Not so many go to the church regularly. Like I have my believe but I don't go regularly.<sup>21</sup> So, I will say, "not that much". There are not that many churches compared to the whole population. Maybe there are 5 churches - and each*

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<sup>20</sup> There are many more Christian churches in North Orange County, but informants do not attend them (overall separation between South Orange County and North Orange County; see also separate cultural associations).

<sup>21</sup> The informant is of Buddhist faith, visiting a temple for prayers for special occasions.

*has maybe 50 members - so 250 people - so with all the population here about 20 or 30% at the most" (informant #54).*

Nevertheless, the literature estimates that up to 32% of Chinese-Americans have converted to the Christian faith, a much larger number than the number of Christians in their respective countries of origin (Yang 1998).

The allure of Christian churches that attract both permanent and volatile members is two-fold. Christian churches fulfill a double role of promoting Americanization through Christian teachings and preserving ethnic identity through joint gatherings of people of similar background (Park 1989: 290). Christian churches at first replaced the traditional voluntary associations outside of Chinatowns serving as facilitators of acculturation by providing English language classes and information on social service agencies (Palinkas 1988:124). Later on, Christian teachings have assisted many immigrants in times of identity crisis. Values such as attention to family and obedience to god are easy to reconcile with traditional Chinese worldviews. The emphasis on individual responsibility introduces immigrants to core directives of American culture (Hsu 1971: 64, Hurh and Kwong 1984).

*"The bible offers a "contract with yourself". Confucius teachings offer a "contract with the emperor, others make choices for you." (informant #6)*

The interaction with fellow ethnic group members also provides stability for immigrants in times of change and adaptation (Palinkas 1988, Yang 1998). Especially the churches with an emphasis on ethnic Taiwanese culture and Taiwanese language (minnanhua) instead of Mandarin Chinese attract members who want to support the perpetuation of Taiwanese culture, rather than the religious teachings. For them, many of them affluent donors, a church congregation is simply an alternative to the political and professional associations introduced above in their quest to promote Taiwanese culture among immigrants from Taiwan and their offspring.

*"There are a lot of donors to the E.F.C. Church. People there have the means to donate organs and pianos or the installation of the electric system. The brother of a supplier is a church member. So this comes into existence as a donation between brothers" (informant #35).*

### **Yiguan Dao temple organization**

The Yiguan Dao movement ("the way of pervasive unity") is considered to be a secretive sect, which first emerged in mainland China and arrived in Taiwan with the Guomindang, yet was

banned in Taiwan from 1950 until 1987.<sup>22</sup> Its teachings aim to unite and supersede Buddhism, Daoism, Confucianism, Islam and Christianity and introduce its followers to a set of rules that enforce morality as taught by the traditional Chinese philosophers (Bosco 1994). It allegedly has its predecessors in the White Lotus movement that evolved in the 14th century in mainland China to bring an end to the then Yuan Dynasty (Seiwert 2001). Religious activities have long been conducted in underground gatherings, such as temples located in private homes. Once it was cleared from allegations of political danger to the state, it was revealed that many businessmen and intellectuals were members in this organization in Taiwan and abroad. The Yiguan Dao movement is in fact seen as a promoter of entrepreneurship through its networks based on ceremonial circles (Skoggard 1996). The sect is also credited with helping the Taiwanese factions of the Guomintang to gain influence within the party and bring Li Denghui to power (Laliberte 2001: 101).

The Yiguan Dao temple in Irvine is a small offspring of the 'World I-Kuan Tao Headquarters' in El Monte, Los Angeles. Like a few Christian churches, it occupies a set office rooms in the Irvine industrial district. The majority of informants in this study were not aware of its existence in Irvine, despite the fact that the congregation promotes its courses on "classic Chinese scripture readings" for children at the annual fairs of the Irvine Chinese School. Many members of the temple group are ethnic Chinese (waishengren) and business owners of blue collar industries, such as plumbers and computer parts manufacturers. They stand in stark contrast to the many families of doctors, dentists and engineers who are involved in activities surrounding the Irvine Chinese School and the various professional associations. Nevertheless, there are important cross-memberships between the OCCACC (Orange County Chinese American Chamber of Commerce) and the Yiguan Dao temple in Irvine.

Active members of the Yiguan Dao group in Irvine immerse themselves in their organization as completely as active members of Christian churches. They have regular worship meetings on Saturday nights and come together for fellowship meetings and joint meals on Wednesday nights. In addition, each member has to sign up for a week at a time to perform the necessary rituals in front of the shrine on a daily basis. Since the organization is closely related to the Headquarters in the San Gabriel Valley, many members are requested to take part in monthly retreats in the city of

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<sup>22</sup> 一贯道 (yi guan dao) = single line way = united way (teachings), also listed as I-Kuan Tao (according to the Wade-Giles transcription system commonly used in Taiwan)

El Monte, which include daylong lectures and appearances of mediums.<sup>23</sup> More than even the Christian church groups, the Yiguan Dao movement binds its members to one another and provides them with guidance and a strong sense of belonging.



Photograph 8.1 Children of the Yiguan Dao school 'Zanhua shuyuan' perform at the Irvine Chinese School Spring Fair at University Highschool, March 1998

### Buddhist organizations

Buddhist prayer groups which have formed in the area are much less rigid and all-encompassing in their demand on members and services for members. There are several institutes for Buddhist teachings scattered throughout the southland, which offer classes in Buddhist teachings and retreats.<sup>24</sup> Many of them aim to inform interested people about the actual scriptures of Buddhism. For many immigrants, especially middle-class women (as opposed to very wealthy Taiwanese), coming to the United States might be the first occurrence of sufficient leisure time to study ancient texts. The religion most practiced by people in Taiwan and immigrants from Taiwan is what is

<sup>23</sup> The author was actually initiated into the Irvine Yiguan Dao. This is certainly one of the more ethically questionable actions of my fieldwork since fellow members were of the opinion that my interest was sincere. It also provided one of the most memorable experiences during fieldwork since I had to be part of long lecture series, up to 100 know-tows at a time and interactions with a medium speaking in tongues. Being expected to respond with exhilaration once the medium talked to me, was one of the more stressful moments of all encounters during fieldwork.

<sup>24</sup> For example the 佛乘宗世界弘法總會 (fo sheng zong shijie hong fa zonghui).

known as Chinese popular religion, a combination of Buddhism, Confucianism, Ancestor Worship and Daoism (Hsu 1971, Jordan and Overmeyer 1986).

The magnificent Hsi-lai Temple (Xilai si) in Hacienda Heights also conducts group mediation sessions and classes on a regular basis for its worshipping visitors. Some informants of this study attend these meetings but do not feel as committed to a specific organization as do members of the Yiguan Dao movement or Christian churches. Sometimes a few people get together, mostly women, and invite a young Buddhist teacher for a series of private lectures to their homes. Out of such a small gathering, a group of Buddhists who follow one of the Tibetan Buddhist teachings rented a house in one of the older sections of Irvine and installed a permanent shrine for regular prayers. All affiliated donors of funds to maintain this small temple have a key and visit on a flexible basis. In addition, they have weekly sessions to discuss scriptures and listen to instructions from a visiting scholar or monk.

At the time of fieldwork, several Buddhist prayer groups had joined together in fund-raising efforts to create a larger Buddhist temple in an empty building of the Irvine Industrial Park (corner of Jamboree and Beckman). As they got ready to obtain a permit from the Irvine City government, they faced some unlikely obstacles. The city requested the sponsors to build a beautiful curved roof in the style of traditional Chinese temples. They wanted to see a structure similar to those employed at the much larger Xilai Temple in Hacienda Heights. This interest in attracting tourists to the area put the project on hold. The planners have had to regroup and raise more money to afford such an elaborate structure. Understandably, many affiliates complained about the delay at the time.<sup>25</sup>

*"They want a beautiful roof in this temple, want a nice one. Like in Xilaisi. They want a curved a roof. That costs a lot of money. So Irvine wants to attract tourists. Irvine's mayor wants that. And all the money comes from us ourselves. So now we have to start from the beginning again, we have to submit the plans again, like starting from scratch, we have to give proposal again, we have to give a premium. We - that is the disciples. Most of them have money, they are typical Taiwanese, came here quite a while ago, made money as well as believers in Taiwan (taiwan de xintu)."(informant #29)<sup>26</sup>*

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<sup>25</sup> Unfortunately I have not yet received notification that the temple has been built in the meantime (since 1998). The sources I have kept contact with do not have direct ties to this group of investors.

<sup>26</sup> 台湾的信徒 (taiwan de xintu) = believers from Taiwan.

The Buddhist organization with the largest number of members and the most visibility, however, is the Tzu-Chi (Ciji) organization.<sup>27</sup> Tzu-Chi is the largest formal association in Taiwan and registered as a non-profit organization. It has five million members worldwide with branches in many different countries (Tzu-Chi quarterly 1997, Weller and Huang 1998, Huang 2002). The organization is basically a charity organization with a mission to practice "engaged Buddhism" (Huang 2002: 2). Other than traditional Buddhist organizations which focused mainly on mediation and prayer, members of this group are asked to give both their time for volunteer work and their money to alleviate other people's suffering.

Since its founding in 1966 by a Buddhist nun, five disciples, and thirty housewives, the organization has grown rapidly and is now giving away over U.S. \$ 40 million a year to disaster relief projects around the world. In addition, the association with its focus on medical assistance, runs a university, a TV channel and two hospitals and engages in extensive bone marrow donation drives. Although the scope of the organization is international in its places and outreach, the devotees are essentially ethnic Chinese and Taiwanese only. The 'Buddhist Compassionate Relief Merit Society' (Tzu-Chi/Ciji) has two divisions: the Tzu-Chi foundation which is a basically a fund raising organization and the volunteer system.

The Irvine branch of the Tzu-Chi organization, which includes both the fund raising arm and a volunteer station was founded in the mid 1990's as an offspring of the Monrovia branch north of the San Gabriel Valley. Like many other religious congregations it rents office space and meeting rooms in Irvine's Industrial Park near the John Wayne Airport. Many people involved with Tzu-Chi in South Orange County are ethnic Taiwanese, but not exclusively so. The majority of volunteers in the Irvine branch is female, which is not surprising given that the association was founded by women. Worldwide membership is up to 70% female (Huang 2002: 3). For many immigrant women participation in Tzu-Chi is a wonderful opportunity to give meaning to their lives while meeting others in a comforting environment.

*"Many joined only after coming to the United States. In Taiwan I wasn't a member. The focus is on the cause, not the individuals or individual relations<sup>28</sup> - not so much interest in gossip and intrigues. Meetings are once a month and then sometimes in-between. We go and*

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<sup>27</sup> 慈济橙县联络处 (ciji chenxian lianluo chu) = Buddhist Compassion Relief (Ciji=benevolent relief) Foundation, Orange County branch. The English transcription "Tzu-Chi" is based on the Wade-Giles transcription system commonly used in Taiwan. The foundation uses this version on all its letter heads and publications.

<sup>28</sup> 不是对人是对事情 (bu shi dui ren shi dui shiqing) = it is not geared towards an interest in people, it is geared towards doing things (a cause). This means that Ciji is not an organization for the formation of business relationships.

*eat together, or we do have little activities among ourselves. Whenever you have time you go. There is no rule when you have to go. They don't push you." (informant #23).*

Volunteers, who put on their dark blue and white uniforms when engaging in activities, visit Old People's Homes throughout South Orange County, run blood drives, and cook food at festivals. Their outreach efforts are not mainly geared towards ethnic Chinese or Taiwanese events. They help out at any social event they hear about.



Photograph 8.2 Volunteers of the Tzu-Chi group at the Irvine Chinese School Spring Fair, March 1998

In addition, in August of 1998 the Tzu-Chi branch of Irvine started their own Chinese language school called 'The Tzu-Chi Academy, Irvine' as an alternative to the Irvine Chinese School sponsored by the SCCCA. Organizers have teamed up with the Irvine High School at Walnut and Escobar to provide a similar structure as the Chinese school at Irvine, including the involvement of parents as volunteers and the recognition of class work as credit hours towards a high school degree. However, parents who enroll their children in the school automatically become members of the Tzu-Chi association and pledge support and trust in Tzu-Chi. In return, the school promises to not only teach children Chinese language skills, but to also learn about compassion, respect, and gratitude.



### Children's Organizations

Indeed, the ethnic organizations related to the education of children are important building blocks of community as well. Parents have to drive their children to various activities. Many wait until a music lesson or homework tutoring session is over instead of spending wasted time on the highways to return home. This provides plenty of opportunities for the establishment of weak ties with other parents, especially when the other attendees are ethnic Chinese and Taiwanese like themselves. However, most of the individual activities a child is engaged in do not include a large group of parents behind it.

The Chinese language schools for American born children are the main institutions that bring larger groups of parents together in an institutionalized setting. Most Chinese language schools request parents to take an active role in running the school. In addition to the payment of school fees, parents are requested to sign up for classroom duties such as assistance during activities in the classroom and maintenance of order and safety during breaks. They are asked to participate in school performances and celebrations and expected to monitor their children's learning progress. The acquisition and maintenance of Chinese language skills is usually a project dear to immigrant parents' hearts. As a result, all Chinese language schools are rather large in membership and stability. Most families attend the weekly sessions regularly.

Parents in South Orange County have several choices of schools. Almost all established Christian churches run their own Chinese language schools, generally meeting on Saturdays. So does the school run by the Yiguan Dao movement, which mainly focuses on the recitation of classic Chinese texts written by Confucius and other philosophers. The Yuling Chinese School in Fountain Valley is unattached to any religious association and meets on Saturdays as well. The largest school by far, however, is the often mentioned Irvine Chinese School (ICS) which runs classes on Sundays. Involvement with that school does to some extent exclude active involvement in a Christian church. Although all Chinese language schools have an additional curriculum which teaches arts, crafts, sports and music skills, the Irvine Chinese school offers the largest variety due to sheer size of its operation.

*"Both my sons started to go to Chinese school when they were in primary school. Because we feel its better to know two languages well. Why this school? Because that Chinese school they rent the classrooms from - eh- University high school. Its the largest one and it attracts all families. Even though there are some schools in churches, they are very small scale. And also the contents of the teachings is very limited. But Irvine Chinese school has all kind of sources of teachers. And also offers many sorts of classes. Two years ago they had already more than 700 students. Besides, Irvine high school has the most history, it was funded at*

*least 20 years ago. (...) It's one of the more joyful resources, the Chinese school. The children - Chinese its hard for them. They have to study foreign languages. But once they have been there for a year, they like to go there. Because they find so many other students with the same background, same education, same culture. And we parents, we are happy too. If they are happy, we are happy too." (informant #30)*

Further child-related organizations which involve parents are the 'Jin Jin Chinese Youth Orchestra of Southern California' and the 'North Orange County Children's Choir.'<sup>29</sup> Both attract almost exclusively ethnic Chinese and Taiwanese parents and their children. As with the Chinese language schools which are frequented by parents on behalf of their children to ensure that their offspring finds playmates of similar ethnic origin, attendance of these specific music groups are also very much supported by parents. The efforts to interest children in ethnic organizations do not always pay off. However, the growing number of ethnic Chinese and Taiwanese students at high schools in Irvine has influenced the selection process of friends and dates along ethnic lines.<sup>30</sup>

Parents also meet at Chinese Parent Teachers Associations of University High school and Woodbridge High School. Each organization has its own president, newsletter and membership roster. The main functions are to maintain the image of ethnic Chinese students in light of the growing complaints about youth gang formations and to assist in interactions with teachers, especially for newly arrived immigrant mothers who have difficulties communicating in English.

### **Recreational Organizations**

Recreational activities are an important part of the lives of ethnic Chinese and Taiwanese immigrants in South Orange County (see chapter 7). Other than exercising or making music alone or with a friend, people have several options for joining either groups that either learn a new skill or practice an acquired skill together.<sup>31</sup> Many of these hobby organizations are connected to a larger organization which provide them with practice location and administrative assistance. The SCCCA offers several activities under its umbrella. So do the Chinese Senior Citizen Associations. Several churches and even the Tzu-Chi association include choir groups and exercise groups under their auspices. However, there are also a few independent group formations

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<sup>29</sup> 南加州菁菁少年国乐团 (nan jiazhou jing jing (jin jin) shao nian guo le tuan) =southern California jin jin Chinese youth orchestra; 北橙县青少年儿童合唱团 (bei chenxian qingshaonian ertong hechang tuan) = north Orange County young adults and children choir group.

<sup>30</sup> However, the interaction patterns of the 1.5 and second generation immigrants are another subject matter to be discussed in a separate study.

<sup>31</sup> private group formations, such as Mahjong playing clubs, are not included in the list of community organizations, since they are not public ally visible and accessible for all residents of the area.

that start at a person's home and use the facilities of other organizations as they grow bigger in membership. The Chinese tap dance group of Irvine, which started in the instructor's garage, is such an example.<sup>32</sup> Over time the group got well versed in their skill and became well known for their performances at New Year's festivals and annual association banquets.

However, the tap dance group is not the only organization involved in stage shows during meetings, fund raising events and other festivals in the South Orange County area. Many other groups are well known for their acts as well, such as the Irvine Chinese Chorus<sup>33</sup> affiliated with the SCCCA and the Chinese Folk Dance Troupe, as well as the Hua Yin Chinese Orchestra to name just a few. Sometimes, recreational groups are formed as subsets of larger groups for the purpose of creating show pieces for the annual New Year's celebration. Examples are the theatrical plays staged by the Irvine Chinese Chorus and the dance troupes formed by the OCTA or the TMDAOC for their respective events.



Photograph 8.3 Theatrical play by the Irvine Chinese Chorus at the New Year Festival of the SCCCA, February 1998

Another choir is the Lake Forest Choir, which is an offspring of a church group but operated independently at the time of fieldwork. Some attendees of special master courses to study voice

<sup>32</sup> The instructor had originally started the project to get to know a larger cross-section of people for gain potential clients for the her business as a salesperson of mutual fund investments.

<sup>33</sup> 爾灣華聲合唱團 (erwan hua sheng hechang tuan) = Irvine Chinese Chorus

improvement have also formed small singing groups, which meet on a regular basis. Sports groups initiated by immigrants from Taiwan in the area other than folk dance and tap dance, include Tennis teams and Golf teams.<sup>34</sup> The most popular exercise activity, however, is ballroom dancing.<sup>35</sup> Ballroom dancing classes were first offered through the Irvine Chinese School/SCCCA but quickly moved to a new location with more space.

At the time of fieldwork two separate instructor teams offered reasonably priced ballroom dance classes.<sup>36</sup> The instructor of the initial Ballroom dance classes at University High School, a highly decorated dance champion from Taiwan with satellite dance schools throughout the San Gabriel Valley, offered classes through the Irvine Community Services Department. The course was listed as 'Chinese Social Ballroom Dancing'<sup>37</sup> next to an entry for 'Social Ballroom Dancing' taught by a different, non-Chinese teacher. Participants paid the course fees either through the City's Service Department or directly to the instructor who gave a portion to the City. Classes were held in the Lakeview Senior Center of Irvine. Other classes of interest in the Community Service brochure included 'Chinese Exercise/Dance Fitness' (which is linked to the Chinese Folk Dance Troupe) and 'Chinese Brush Painting'. Instruction was usually given in Chinese. The other dance instructors, trained in Taiwan as well, started as an extension of the 'Irvine Evergreen Chinese Senior Association' at the Lakeview Center and later cooperated with a for-profit Ballroom dance school located in the Newport Industrial Park. Both Chinese dance teacher teams rent spaces from established Dance Schools, such as the 'South Coast Ballroom Center' for their monthly evening parties.

Groups which form among ethnic Chinese and Taiwanese at English classes offered by the adult schools run by the city of Irvine, Fountain Valley/Huntington Beach, and Laguna Hills are also counted as recreational organizations. Most women who attend these classes are not preparing for immediate entry into the workforce. Their main motivation is to familiarize themselves with English and meet other like-minded homemakers with similar backgrounds. The large number of

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<sup>34</sup> At the time of fieldwork informants talked about basketball teams in Fullerton (North Orange County) and in Diamond Bar (Los Angeles County), but none of them were involved in these.

<sup>35</sup> The interest in ballroom dancing has been infectious all over East Asia. In mainland China ballroom dancing in the parks has almost replaced Tai-Chi exercises. The candidate said to replace Chinese premier Jiang Zemin, Hu Jintao, is known for his penchant and skill for ballroom dancing as well (a fact which is mentioned frequently by people from Taiwan and China alike).

<sup>36</sup> According to the definition of associations presented above (Knoke 1986: 2), groups who come together and pay for instruction do not qualify as community associations. However, since many of the groups like ballroom dancing meet in non-profit community centers they are directly linked to community organizations at large and therefore included in the list.

<sup>37</sup> 爾湾华人舞蹈社 (erwan huaren wudao she) = Irvine Chinese Ballroom Dance Society

immigrants from Taiwan in the area increases the likelihood that a language class has a substantial portion of Chinese and Taiwanese students. Many of them are not recently arrived immigrants, but women in search of contact and self-improvement. The Chinese toastmaster club is another self-improvement group, which is essentially a recreational organization. Interestingly, the club used to meet during the Irvine Chinese School hours operation in rooms of University High School, like many other activities offered to parents waiting for their children to finish lessons. As the Chinese School grew in size and needed more room, the toastmaster club had to move elsewhere. At the time of fieldwork, a toastmaster club member who was also a key member of the Yiguan Dao movement invited the group to use the rooms rented for the temple for toastmaster meetings on Sunday mornings. This gives a glimpse of the potential for overlap between the various social groups beyond their institutional affiliations.

### **Patterns of Participation**

After the introduction of different types of ethnic organizations, interest turns now to the mode of participation among immigrants. It is assumed that motivations to join, the number of groups attended at any given time, the group composition, and the duration of membership in a group has an impact on the degree of community cohesion. Groups with very stable membership rosters and time-consuming activities are not likely to be strongly connected to other groups in the area. Since their joining and leaving rates do not fluctuate there are few opportunities for contact through weak ties between former members who switched affiliations (Popielarz 1995). There are also few chances to attract new members through people who are involved in two or more different organizations at once. The composition of associations by gender, ethnicity and occupation also influences connectivity among social entities. If, for example, groups are neatly separated by gender there are less occasions for cross-over contacts for the exchange of ideas and mutual assistance in projects using a combination of skills of both men and women. Separation by ethnicity has strong effects as well. Ethnic conflict is more likely to turn into violence in civic societies where community associations are separated by ethnic affiliation rather than integrated (Varshney 2002).

### **Motivations for Joining**

In order to understand variations in participation there is first the issue of motivation to join an association. Scholars of the dynamics of civic society have stated that social involvement is

difficult to predict (Knoke 1986, McPherson and Smith-Lovin 1982, 1986, McPherson et al. 1992). An approximation is best reached by looking at the status dimensions of class, ethnicity, gender and age. Individuals with high social status have usually the highest joining rates in a society, which in the United States would usually be considered to be a white upper-middle class man over 40 (Knoke 1986: 6). Explanations for motivations for joining are not only guided by rational choice and the prospect of benefiting from other members, maybe even as a free-riding passive member. Motivations are rather multifaceted. Selective incentives to join a group are either material, socially motivated, or an expression of solidarity with people who share the same values (Knoke 1986:10). In addition, membership allows participants to obtain privileged positions, especially when the separate organizations in a larger community contribute to social integration rather than fragmentation (Knoke 1986:7).

The most prominent motivation for joining any social group among informants in this study is the desire to socialize with others and to find comfort in the company of others with similar backgrounds and therefore similar norms and values. The perfection of a particular skill is a welcome by-product of enrolling in any recreational organization. Membership in professional associations and alumni associations, as well as rising to leadership positions in some of the churches, has benefits for business owners and professionals, especially those who are self-employed. Joint membership provides access to information and other social circles by way of weak ties. Involvement in the leadership structure of any association guarantees visibility in the public eye, including non-members, which is of particular interest to client-oriented professionals such as real estate agents. However, some highly engaged immigrants are discontent with the fact that privilege, status and influence are limited to their interactions with other ethnic Chinese and Taiwanese in South Orange County.<sup>38</sup>

On the other hand, the same aspects which work as incentives to become involved cause other immigrants to shy away from joining social groups. Several informants explain that they would rather keep their extent of participation low, both in amount and intensity. They prefer not to accumulate more obligations to others based on joint membership. Some also stay away to avoid exposure to potential gossip, something many have experienced back home in Taiwan.

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<sup>38</sup> In the San Gabriel Valley in Los Angeles County, which has a higher density of ethnic Chinese residents, immigrants from Taiwan have managed to gain public visibility through political office (Fong 1994). With the exception of decision on land use issues the political field in South Orange County does not warrant much involvement. Most immigrants in Taiwan have not felt the need to be more politically involved.

*"If I would participate in everything I could affiliate myself with in relation to my school, work, and interests, I might as well have stayed in Taiwan." (informant #54).*

### **Number of Involvements**

Before discussing group composition as well as joining and leaving rates, a short overview on the number of organizations joined at any given time by an informant is helpful. In their study of the relationship between the lifecycle stage of individuals and their involvement in associations Knoke and Thomson (1977) sort their informants into three groups of joiners. The study was conducted in Nebraska in the early 1970's and did not include membership in Christian churches due to problems with data classification and comparability. Based on this distinction, the authors concluded that 36% of people were involved in no social organization and 21.5% had joined three or more groups. The remaining majority of people consistently participated in one or two groups (Knoke and Thomson 1977:55).

The present study is by no means comparable to the research in Nebraska. Although a few informants in this study joined no social group at all, the main characteristic of the sample is that informants were recruited based on their membership in a social group operating throughout South Orange County. Even when setting church membership aside, only 8% of all informants joined no other organizations. The majority, 50%, of the informants in this study are more likely to attend two or three organizations than one or two. The average number of organizations joined is 2.6 without including active church membership and 2.9 (sd=1.37) when counting church memberships. Membership affiliations range from zero to six organizations per person.

More instructive for the present analysis than the inclusion or exclusion of church groups is a distinction between organization whose members meet on a weekly basis and those whose active members meet quarterly or at the most on a monthly basis (see section on 'frequency of interaction' in chapter 7 ). Informants join between zero and three organizational meetings on a weekly basis, which include recreational organizations, Christian churches and the Yiguan Dao group, and indirectly organizations related to their children's education (with the exception of PTO's). The average number of involvement is 1.3 organizations per person (sd=0.69). Organizations that meet on a monthly to quarterly basis, such as cultural, professional, and political associations have between zero to four memberships per person, the average rate of participation is 1.6 per person (sd=1.02). The larger standard deviation points to a greater degree of variation in the frequency of involvement in these types of organizations which also include

alumni associations and to some extent the Tzu-chi foundation. Further insights into the effects of group composition and leaving rates highlight what accounts for this distribution.

### **Variation in Group Composition**

#### **Gender, ethnicity, occupation, and education**

The degree of homogeneity of social groups in terms of member's gender, ethnicity, occupation and educational level informs us as to the group's potential for overlap with or separation from other associations. According to previous research on the dynamics in voluntary associations, men and women tend to be involved in different types of organizations, resulting in differential access to opportunities for the establishment of weak ties (McPherson and Smith-Lovin 1982: 884). Men are able to generate larger volumes of weak ties since they are more likely to participate in formal, economically oriented associations with a large membership base. Women are predisposed to attend smaller, community-oriented associations, which generally are more time-consuming than the organizations in which men are involved (McPherson and Smith-Lovin 1982: 894). Since organizations practice selective recruitment along occupational and educational lines and individuals, especially women, practice selective joining, these tendencies can be overcome when both genders participate equally in the workforce at equal pay based on equal level of education (McPherson and Smith-Lovin 1982: 898; 1986: 68).

Segregation by sex is more pronounced for women than for men. Men are more likely to belong to organizations which include members of the opposite sex (McPherson and Smith-Lovin 1986: 71-72). Certain types of community organizations have different proportions of male and female memberships. Political interest groups, professional associations, as well as age- and youth-oriented groups are expected to be more sex integrated than church groups, fraternal organizations, charity organizations, as well as hobby and recreational groups. Churches often feature separate prayer groups for men and women, while instrumental groups, such as the Chamber of Commerce, are more likely to include both genders and operate as bridges to other community organizations (McPherson and Smith-Lovin 1986: 75).

Among the informants of this study there is no significant difference between men and women in terms of their participation in recreational activities.<sup>39</sup> Men, however, are more likely to be involved in associations that meet on a monthly or quarterly basis ( $t(58)=2.645$ ,  $p<0.01$ ). Although

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<sup>39</sup> Men have slightly lower rates of involvement in recreational activities, but that does not register as significant.



alumni associations and professional associations, especially the ethnic Chamber of Commerces have women on their board of directors and even as in lead positions, the majority of members are indeed men.<sup>40</sup> The various community organizations show no significant differences in overall attendance between ethnic Taiwanese and ethnic Chinese others than the tendencies indicated in the descriptions above. Certain churches and professional associations have a majority of members from one or the other ethnic group, but looking at all groups combined there is no distinct difference in attendance of choirs, sports groups, charities or cultural gatherings. Membership in other ethnic groups and membership of non-Chinese or Taiwanese is discussed separately below.

Occupational backgrounds of informants have an influence on group composition. While homemakers and people in the workforce join recreational and religious organizations at equal rates, it is not surprising that a difference occurs for participation in professional, political, and alumni associations ( $t(58)=3.630$ ,  $p<0.001$ ). A specific look at all four different occupations reveals that professionals are more likely to be involved in these rather formal associations ( $F(3,36)=5.550$ ,  $p<0.005$ , Tukey HSD  $p<0.005$ ) and business owners are a close second in attendance in comparison to homemakers (Tukey HSD  $p<0.05$ ). This observation is further reinforced when looking at the different educational achievements of informants ( $F(3,56)=4.546$ ,  $p<0.01$ ). Other than people with high school diplomas from Taiwan as their highest degree, graduates of American universities tend to be involved with association meetings on a monthly or quarterly basis (Tukey HSD  $p<0.005$ ). This also holds when comparing membership in all types of organizations combined ( $F(3,56)=4.629$ ,  $p<0.01$ ).

Depending on the level of inclusion of age groups, membership in ethnic organizations is rather age homogenous. Most organizations had members who are between 40 and 60 years of age at the time of fieldwork. More interesting is the analysis of joining and leaving rates in organizations in reference to an individual's position in the lifecycle.

### **Variation in group composition due to lifecycle stages**

Participation patterns among informants in this study are also influenced by their time of arrival in the United States, the age and birthplace of their children, the location of their spouse, and the extent of obligations they have towards parents and siblings. Studies based on longitudinal data have shown that the lifecycle position has an influence on the number of organizations a person is

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<sup>40</sup> Membership rosters support this observation.

involved in and their likelihood in joining a social group, resulting in a curvilinear pattern of participation (Knoke and Thomson 1977, McPherson et al. 1992, Rotolo 2000). The departure of the first children from home, and at the very earliest when the last child has entered school age, is considered to be the time of peak involvement in social organizations. However, as people get older they are expected to participate in fewer recreational organizations and more political and professional associations (Knoke and Thomson 1977: 49).<sup>41</sup>

Rotolo (2000) continues the dynamic approach to study membership participation established by Knoke and Thomson and fine-tunes it for more recently collected data. He specifically studies the staying power and leaving rates in social groups due to the lifecycle position of an individual (Rotolo 2000: 1156). His study concludes that some people join, stay around and leave again, changing affiliations quickly, while others join organizations and keep their commitment for almost an entire lifetime. Transition to marriage and the arrival of children, as opposed to childless people, are crucial for the explanation of variations in joining and leaving rates. Contrary to what one might think, women often stay involved for longer periods of time, despite having children (Rotolo 2000: 1154). As more children in the family join youth groups, the time of adult affiliation is extended. But women also change affiliations often during these childcare years. Marriage does influence the joining rate positively. More people join organizations upon marriage and stay involved for long periods of time (1155). Young adults join a larger number of organizations but do not stay involved for long periods at a time. Middle age is a time for a moderate number of participations and an increased duration of membership. Older people join groups less but do not terminate their affiliations easily (Rotolo 2000: 1150).

The findings of this study show that the participation rate in any community organization increases slightly with the length of time immigrants live in the United States ( $F(3,56) = 2.233$ ,  $p < 0.1$ ). The effect is mainly visible for the involvement in associations meeting on a monthly or quarterly basis, especially among second cohort immigrants (Tukey HSD  $p < 0.01$ ). With respect to the lifecycle position in reference to children being in school, attending college or entering the workforce, a small rise in attendance numbers is visible for parents with children in college or older in comparison with parents who still have at least one child in junior high school or younger

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<sup>41</sup> Knoke and Thomson's research identifies seven stages in the lifecycle: (1) young and single, (2) young and married, (3) young parents of pre-schoolers, (4) young parents of older children, (5) older parents with children departing from home, (6) older couples with children in the workforce, (7) older singles. Their types of organizations include the following categories: job related (professional societies, unions, farm organizations), recreational (hobby, sports, and literary discussion), fraternal-service (sororities, alumni associations), civic (political clubs, school service groups), youth (youth groups), other (veterans and nationality groups), and none.

( $F(4,55)=2.151, p<0.1$ ). This confirms at least to this point the findings of Knoke and Thomson (1977). However, in contrast, it is not the number of professional or fraternal associations which is of growing interest for people with more free time to engage in public life, but the number of recreational organizations. Participation in organizational meetings on a weekly basis, which are mostly hobby oriented groups, is significantly higher among immigrants whose children are in college and about to enter the workforce or at least have only one child that is still in high school ( $F(4,55)=3.216, p<0.01$ ).<sup>42</sup> Apparently immigrant parents hold back with their own leisure activities until they have fewer tasks to master, such as driving the children around or working part time for the children's education.

*"Well, as a matter of fact, until 2 years ago I worked - and so we really only started dancing once I gave up working - it wouldn't have happened with my work - I would have been too tired - not enough energy to go dancing. When the kids were smaller we would have had no time either - kids required too much of our time. We basically had to supervise them, be around them - so there was not much room for things like dancing. Now we don't have to care all the time anymore. It's only now that we have time just for ourselves." (informant #62)<sup>43</sup>*

Another interesting aspect of an immigrants position in the lifecycle is their obligations towards parents and other family members. As already introduced in a different context in Chapter 7 discussing transnational activities among informants, immigrants whose parents are living within driving distance in the Southern California area, are involved in a lower number of organizations ( $t(58)= 2.217, p<0.05$ ), specifically in recreational organizations ( $p<0.01$ ).

However, it is the involvement in formal associations that meet on a monthly and quarterly basis, such as political and professional associations which give an indication of the orientation of immigrants towards either Taiwan or the United States. Members of recent cohorts are not yet engaged in these activities, which, of course, is related to the observation that many of them they did not graduate from prestigious schools in Taiwan and/or hold professional jobs in the United States. Informants, whose spouse is living with them in the United States instead of separately in Taiwan, are more likely to be members of one or more political, professional or fraternal association ( $t(58)= 2.223, p<0.05$ ). Again, this effect is challenged by the fact that it is mostly

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<sup>42</sup> A comparison of the difference between groups revealed that parents of children in college and the workforce are most likely to engage in more recreational activities than parents of junior high school attendees (Tukey HSD  $p<0.01$ ) and the parent of children in high school and college are somewhat likely to be more involved (Tukey HSD  $p<0.05$ ).

<sup>43</sup> 慢慢可以有一点自己的时间 (man man keyi you yidian ziji de shijian) = gradually it is possible to have some time for ourselves.

women who are residing in the United States without their spouse and women tend to engage in fewer numbers of these particular types of social organizations. In sum, there are several factors which influence participation in representative civic organizations, including length of residence, occupation, and education. At the very least, it is safe to say that involvement in this type of association indicates some commitment to life in the United States and interest in integration with the larger society, rather than in attendance of a large number of recreational organizations.

### **Membership Stability**

The changing number of social groups an individual is part of at any given time in the lifecycle points to phenomenon of membership fluctuation of stability. Joining and leaving behavior of individuals does not only affect their personal social networks but also has an influence on the characteristics of an organization itself. Groups may change their social composition by age, gender, ethnicity, occupation, and other sociodemographic features as a result of their members' varying affiliations. One explanation for membership fluctuation is the lack of empowerment some members might feel. A sense of control with respect to the organization's activities and missions determines a member's commitment to the group and further involvement in any political process (Knoke 1986: 8). A more suitable approach for this study is to look at the social ecology of organizations from a network perspective.

McPherson et al. (1992) have likened the dynamics in and between groups to the process of natural selection. They employed an evolutionary model of variation, selection and retention to explain the changing sociodemographic compositions in social space (156). Membership varies by gender, education, ethnicity and age. Selection usually takes place through the recruitment of homogenous, meaning like-minded people from similar socioeconomic backgrounds. Retention refers to keeping of members or replacement of members with newcomers who fit the sociodemographic profiles of the dominant recruiters in a group (McPherson et. al 1992:156). The likelihood of members entering or leaving an association, then, depends on the number and strength of social network ties among group members and between group members and non-members. According to the principles of evolution, strong ties promote stability, weak ties create disruptive or directional selection (McPherson et al 1992: 167).

Shared membership of at least two alters in a personal network points to a higher stability in an organization, because it reflects a higher number of ties between members and is an indicator of the existence of strong, i.e., multiplex ties (163). No shared membership with a personal network

contact leads to instability, because it means that members are only weakly connected and ties are uniplex. Members probably have several ties to members of other organizations in their networks, which may or may not attract them to their respective organizations (McPherson et al. 1992: 165-166). The more sociodemographically heterogeneous the members of a group are, the more likely it is that they have relationships with others outside the group who are probably more like them. Weak ties are a major source of change, causing membership profiles to shift slightly in sociodemographic composition. The direction is usually towards increased homogeneity among members. Overlapping social circles, the major interest of the analysis in this chapter, are both a problem and a solution for the stability of social groups. The fluctuation caused by overlaps based on joint memberships in organizations or personal social networks has both positive and negative effects, by bringing in new members and luring people away (McPherson et al. 1992: 157).

The byproducts of urbanization and industrialization - higher mobility and more exposure to people of various backgrounds - have increased the likelihood for these processes to occur. However, in reality, the opportunities for an individual to meet others with different sociodemographic characteristics which could attract him or her to a new organizations are rather limited. Usually its people with similar backgrounds who spend the most time with each other. As a result, the structure of most personal networks with its focus on like-minded people reduces the overall possibilities to interact with a diverse set of people. People can only make choices within an existing social structure (McPherson et al. 1992: 167-168). So the probability for a complete turnover of the membership characteristics of a social group is not very high. Nevertheless, fluctuations do occur, although primarily due to the existence of weak ties.

As for this study, chapter 7 showed that alters in the personal networks of informants introduce each other to new associations and recreational groups. Indeed, the larger the number of shared membership in a social groups with people in a person's network who also provide each other with social and instrumental support, the longer that person stays involved with that particular group. But ethnographic accounts showed that loyalty extends only to another person and not necessarily to an organization. It does not keep immigrants from exploring other interests in South Orange County. Informants switch their affiliations within the landscape of available ethnic organizations. Especially membership in recreational organizations fluctuates highly. Since people are flexible in their joining preferences, the combinations and compositions of friendship circles are subject to moderate change.

Although informants are usually not aware of the whole range of ethnic organizations in South Orange County and make few efforts to find more facilities due to their limited time budget and the infrastructure constraints in the region, there is a sufficient number of opportunities to learn a new skill or sport, or to enjoy making music in the company of others.<sup>44</sup> Potential participants are in the position to choose what suits them best and what they want to be involved in on an annual or bi-annual basis. In some recreational fields, such as singing and dancing, they even have several alternative ethnic groups to pick from. They find out what they like to do or want to explore and then proceed accordingly.

*"I did that for 2, 3 years - but then I realized that I didn't like it all that much - you know I guess I did some growing up - slowly discovered what I really liked to do in life - it took me some time - seems like when you are young everything looks equally interesting or suitable - and only when you get older do you develop your specific character - and you learn what you really like." (informant #37)<sup>45</sup>*

The "pick and choose" attitude some immigrants have concerning their involvement in public spaces extends to religious associations as well. The literature often recommends excluding church memberships from studies of community organizations, because the differences in individual religiosity make comparisons with non-religious organizations difficult. Church membership is also often characterized by exclusivity and members tend to have little overlap with other groups (Knoke and Thomson 1977: 62, Curtis et al. 1992). Yet, although some Christian churches "capture" their members' attention for several years at a time, many immigrants from Taiwan switch their affiliations even when it comes to religious orientations and activities.

*"In former times I used to join a Buddhist organization, yet the highschool I attended was Catholic one, my mother is a Christian, so from little on I received Catholic influence - after moving to Irvine I got baptized - yet that doesn't play such an important role for me anymore. I also volunteer with the Buddhist organization Tzu-Chi." (informant #19)*

Explanations for this pattern can be found in Taiwan itself, which has a rich religious landscape. It is not unusual in Taiwan for family members to belong to different faith communities and even the same individual might simultaneously subscribe to several seemingly incompatible belief systems (Shambaugh 1998: 93). This justifies the inclusion of Christian church communities in the number of organization considered for evaluation as described above.

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<sup>44</sup> During interviews I often probed informants about their involvements with other types of organizations. In the process I often revealed the existence of other associations, religious organizations and recreational groups in the area - to the astonishment of informants, who had no ideas "this" or "that" group existed.

<sup>45</sup> 自己的个性 (ziji de gexing) = one's character.

Generally speaking, informants go through phases of more or less involvement in community organizations. There are plenty of opportunities to increase the size of one's personal network through the involvement in different organizations and the pool of weak ties they represent. Yet within that structure of opportunities which is clearly based on homophilous relationships, some informants make conscious decisions to keep the size of their networks small.

*"You go to the bank and you know them well - and they are always "hey, this and that". And I invite them to the SCCCA - and they invite me to their party. But I say "well, I don't want to go to so many parties." I am not a kind of a social butterfly. I need my time. And, I mean, for a while - you need to sit down and think "do I want to kind of - have all these parties?" You just say all these social things mean nothing. See what I mean. And if we are close friends we can just go to lunch - just a quiet lunch. You don't have to go to all those 400 people meetings - and its so noisy - and sometimes its meaningless. You see what I mean I don't want to spend that kind of money - sometimes its \$ 50 a piece. And with some friends you don't even know! (upset) So, I don't want to go beyond these three major activities I have." (informant #69)*

In sum, social structure is a more dominant influence on the opportunities for interaction with previously known and unknown others than an individual's likings and aversions by themselves. Moving to the United States does not introduce immigrants to a completely different set of close interaction partners in terms of class, ethnicity, age and gender. However, the distance from established kin, school, neighborhood, and work-based networks in Taiwan provides them with a chance to reduce their network size and coincidental obligations within their new social circles in North America.

### **Outside of Ethnic Organizations**

It is important to note that none of the ethnic associations introduced above deliberately exclude non-Chinese people from membership. According to the main organizers of these organizations, all people interested in anything the groups have to offer, from dance instruction, to Chinese language, joint worship, or business representation are welcome. However, in reality few organizations have any non-Chinese or Taiwanese members. This is partly due to lack of information and interest on the part of non-Chinese people in addition to the language barrier, and partly as a result of commitments to other community groups with more similar profiles and backgrounds. The time constraints created by the large distances between places throughout South Orange County plays a role as well.

On the reverse side, few ethnic Chinese and Taiwanese attend any non-Chinese associations and recreational groups. Those interested in professional contacts are busy attending workshops

and parties, so-called "Mixers", organized by the economic associations introduced above.<sup>46</sup> Others, who are interested in engaging in physical exercise or improving their musical skills hardly look for classes offered by a non-ethnic music school or sports club. Even though immigrants join general fitness studios in their neighborhoods for individual exercise, educational classes are preferable joined in the company of fellow Chinese and Taiwanese, even if attendance requires extended driving time. This holds true for people with few English skills and people with excellent English skills. Certainly, the interaction with other ethnic group members in the area and their reference to activities has an influence on the selection process as well. As introduced in chapter 6, once an immigrant enters the public space of a single ethnic organization, he or she becomes subject to evaluation by others if they opt to join a similar activity which is not run by co-ethnics. Although it is safe to assume that South Orange County is vast enough to stay anonymous, few immigrants choose that route. Since almost all informants have children who are, or have been, part of the school system it is difficult to avoid any interaction with co-ethnics. As a result, several immigrants choose to forgo participation in any community organization at all (see above discussion).

*"Yeah, a lot of people don't go anywhere." (informant #58)*

Nevertheless, at the group level interaction does take place between ethnic and non-ethnic organizations. For starters, many associations rent rooms in the Community Centers built and maintained by the respective city governments and church groups share the use of these facilities with each other. Cultural and economic associations conduct fund-raising events to support the Barclay Theatre in Irvine and the Pacific Symphony Orchestra and Pacific Opera at the Orange County Performing Arts Center in Costa Mesa. Religious organizations participate in volunteer activities, such as hospital visits, in cooperation with other community groups. Most importantly, Chinese recreational organizations perform at community events, such as the Irvine Harvest Festival or New Year Celebrations for senior citizens. They also visit schools to introduce students to cultural diversity. For some homemakers, this is sometimes the only occasion in which they come into contact with people outside their ethnic group.

*"Sometimes we do some kind of community service. Like go to the adult school or the senior center. We perform some pieces in the bilingual teachers associations conference at*

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<sup>46</sup> 交 议 座 谈 会 (jiao yi zuo tan hui) = friendly (discussion) meetings = "Mixers" for "food, fun, socials and networking" as the handouts write in both English and Chinese. These "Mixers" are so popular all over the Southland, that even 1.5 generation and second generation immigrants hold their own events of that nature.



*Anaheim center. I have a friend at the Irvine School District, she is a bilingual coordinate and she tells me when she gets approached by some conferences or some bilingual activities, and so she passes it on to us and says "we need some community services". Then she asks us whether or not we have something to contribute."(informant #48)*

This increased the visibility of ethnic Chinese and Taiwanese in the general public space of South Orange County. Informants often mentioned that more of these activities were necessary to help in eliminating the stereotypes about Asian people. Sensibilities about the way they were perceived was high among ethnic Chinese and Taiwanese, probably because they were accustomed to continuous evaluation and gossip in their home country.



Photograph 8.4 Performance of the Chinese Folk Dance Troupe at the Irvine Senior Citizen New Year Festival

### **Community Cohesion? The Network of Community Organizations**

The nature of the ethnic community in South Orange County and its building blocks can be further determined by looking at the degree of interconnectedness between the individual ethnic community organizations. As shown above, there is a sufficient number of ethnic community organizations in the area such that some degree of membership fluctuation takes place due to the existence of weak ties. Ethnic Chinese and Taiwanese immigrants living in the area are driven by different incentives at various times to join or leave organizations. Studies have shown that the larger a community becomes in terms of absolute number of members, the larger its community

associations, and the greater the likelihood of affiliation of social groups into umbrella organizations (Knoke 1986: 13). Groups with a large connected membership base are more successful in political lobbying efforts through networks of interorganizational exchange in collective decision-making processes (Knoke 1986: 17). This study looks at the potential for the formation of umbrella organizations, such as the traditional Chinese Consolidated Benevolent association in Chinatowns established at the end of 19th century and beginning of 20th century. The assumption is that the stronger the overlap between any two community organizations, measured by the number of shared members, the more likely it is that they may cooperate with each other. Participation of two or more social groups in a joint community project might lead to the formation of an umbrella organization as a representative of their affiliations.

Prior to presenting the network structure of ethnic organizations in South Orange County resulting from overlapping memberships, a short overview of the potential for interconnectivity in space is needed. Chapter 7 already discussed the fact that informants have to use a car to reach acquaintances, even if they live in the same 'neighborhood'. Attendance at any social gathering requires travel by car as well. However, almost half of all the 62 social organizations included in the network of associations described below meet within the borders of the city of Irvine. Some of them have no permanent headquarters other than the address of an organization's president, such as the Orange County Taiwanese Association. Yet, most of their meetings take place in one of the community centers run by the city of Irvine, or in one of the parks of the city of Irvine. The majority of religious organizations rents space in one of the two industrial parks of the municipality. The industrial parks within the borders of Irvine are the largest areas among all the cities of South Orange County, followed by the commercial spaces available in Newport Beach and Costa Mesa. Irvine certainly functions as a geographic magnet for many ethnic Chinese and Taiwanese living in the area.

Other locations of organizations can be found in either Fountain Valley, Costa Mesa, or Santa Ana, all to the north of Irvine. These ten locations include a mixture of organizations, from the meeting places of the Taiwanese-American Chamber of Commerce, to the Fountain Valley Chinese school and a few churches. To the south of Irvine, only three locations in Laguna Hills and Mission Viejo were mentioned frequently enough to be included in the list of organizations compiled for this study. Another set of groups, almost all of them alumni associations, meet further away from South Orange County, in places along the San Gabriel Valley. These particular

alumni associations have no separate chapter in Orange County. Informants usually attend these gatherings in Hacienda Heights or San Gabriel on a yearly basis.

A main premise of the investigation on community cohesion among ethnic Chinese and Taiwanese immigrants is that the affiliations between ethnic community organizations are visible in joint membership of individual actors in at least two organizations (Foster and Seidman 1982). Membership of individuals in social groups has a dual effect based on the opportunity for contact a social group has to offer. People create linkages among the social organizations and at the same time, the organizations create linkages among the people (Faust 1997: 188). These linkages are weak ties by reason of joint membership of any two actors in a group as well as weak ties between organizations by reason of a shared member between any two groups. All relationships are mutual and reflexive. Two groups that share at least one member are mutually related, not one-directional (Breiger 1974: 184).

Links are, of course, mere potentials which might or might not be acted upon.<sup>47</sup> However, linkages based on joint membership or a joint member can become strong ties if the number of links increases. Any two organizations which share three or more members are considered strongly connected (Freeman 1992: 161-162). Links between organizations based on only one member in common are considered weak ties that function as bridges between clusters of organizations. Another way to look at the resulting structure is to view a cluster of social groups as the 'core' of a community, and the surrounding social groups tied to a cluster by a single link as the 'periphery' of a community (Freeman and White 1993, Wasserman and Faust 1994).

The principles of affiliation networks were first developed using data from the now famous community study of the joint events attended by a set of women in the American South (Davis et al. 1941). Network analysts created a set of methods to analyze such 'two-mode sociomatrices' which depict the relationships between actors and events or groups (Breiger 1974, Freeman 1992, Freeman and White 1992, Wasserman and Faust 1994, Borgatti et al. 1997, Faust 1997, and many others). Since a more detailed description and discussion of the network tools used to study community cohesion can be found in chapter 4, the following introduces only a few aspects of the analysis which created the two network diagrams below, showing the network among

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<sup>47</sup> Two people who are in the same choir might never engage in a direct conversation with one another. However, each member may approach the other one in times of need, especially according to the traditional Chinese view of obligations based on shared membership and commonalities. This is a very different situation than not knowing each other at all.

organizations resulting from at least a single joint member, and at least two joint members respectively.

Using UCINET, the two-mode matrix of actors and organizational membership was translated into a one-mode matrix of affiliations among organizations based on a at least one joint member. The data is based on the membership of 90 informants in 62 organizations.<sup>48</sup> Separate membership affiliations of spouses are not included since in most cases both husband and wife are registered in an organization for those gatherings and social groups they attend together.<sup>49</sup> The dataset was then imported into the network drawing program Pajek 0.82 (Batagelj and Mrvar 2002), which uses a spring-embedder to map the relationships between entities in space. Therefore, the point in the center of each network diagram is also the most central point in the network of organizations.

The two figures displayed on the next two pages both use a separate color for each different type of organization, such as red for recreational organizations and yellow for alumni associations. Figure 8.1 shows the network of ethnic community organizations that is a result of the minimum requirement for connectivity, i.e., that organizations have a single member in common. Figure 8.2 depicts the extent of connectivity between the same groups that is produced when only displaying linkages between organizations that share at least two members. This means that two immigrants have to have not just one, but two activities in common to create a tie between organizations. However, any overlapping membership between organizations does not imply that people who happen to be members in the same organizations are also members of each others personal networks.

Although only a snapshot of affiliations at the time of fieldwork, a few insights of the network depicted in figure 8.1 are noteworthy.<sup>50</sup> All organizations are connected to at least two other organizations by reason of a single joint member. This is somewhat surprising given the

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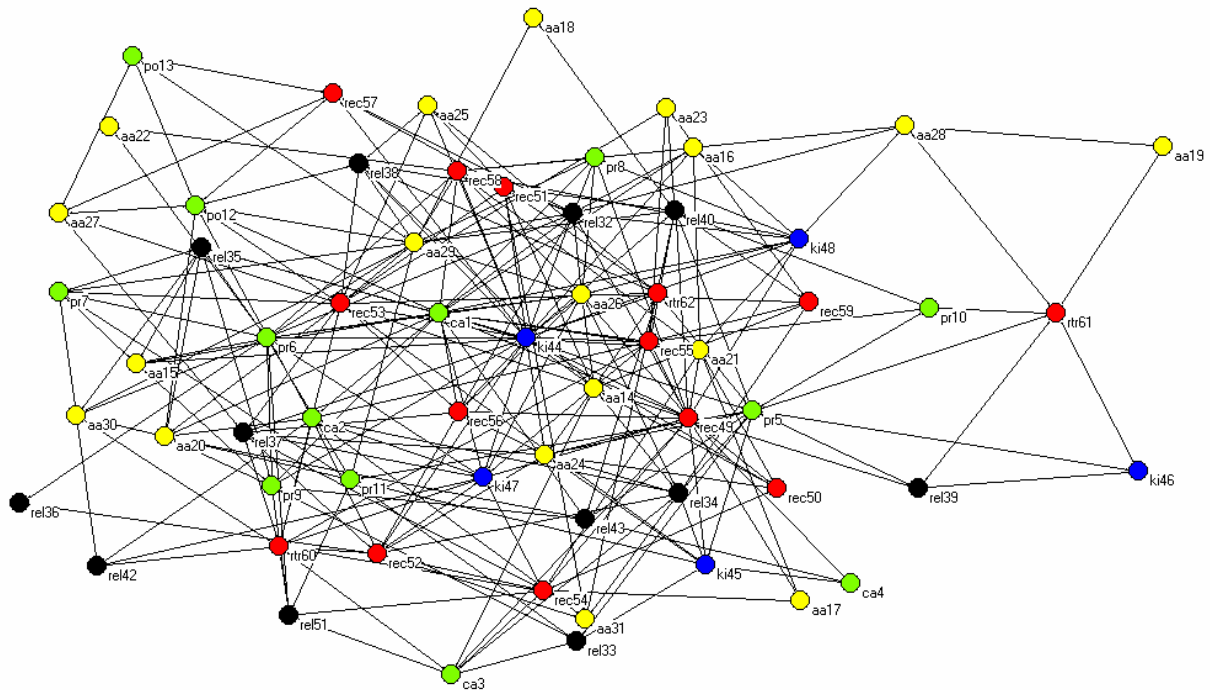
<sup>48</sup> The 75 informants included in the matrix that computed the network hypergraph are informants interviewed in structured interviews (N=60) and informants of semi-structured interviews (N=30). The inclusion of 'background informants' was avoided, since many of them represent the leaders of the respective groups, including the pastors of churches. Leaders are either involved in a disproportional large number of organizations or in the case of pastors they are only involved in their church and no other grouping. Therefore informants of background interviews are not very representative. Key informants were not included either. The 62 organizations are introduced in the beginning of this chapter and listed separately in the appendix. Informants who are not involved in any organization are included, but can not be detected in the one-mode matrix of organizations on which the network diagram is based.

<sup>49</sup> The only incidents of separate affiliations occur for some recreational organizations, training related recreational organizations, child -related organizations, and professional associations. In these cases, a spouse is indeed the only person connected, since his or her partner rarely interacts with the respective group members.

<sup>50</sup> A future research project should aim to elicit affiliations with organizations at different time points. This would also show how fluctuation between organizations are created and what type of relationships are sustained even when people are not members of the same group any longer but become friends outside the boundaries of a particular social organization.

assumption in the literature that religious organizations tend to be rather isolated, all-encompassing social groups. At the center of the diagram is the Irvine Chinese School (ki44) and the SCCCA (ca1). Organizations which are further removed from the center than others are more likely to be alumni associations (yellow), followed by religious organizations and political organizations (e.g., po13), in comparison to recreational groups (red). Cultural and professional associations, as well as child-related organizations also tend to more centered in the space. The two ethnic Chamber of Commerces, the OCCACC (pr5) and the TCCOC (pr6) are on opposite sides of the network with several connections linking each to several other organizations. Among the alumni associations, BeiYiNü Highschool (aa14), Chenggong University (21), Donghai University (aa24), Taiwan Normal (Shifan) University (aa26), and Taiwan University (aa29) are most likely to function as bridges between other organizations linking two other groups with each other.

None of the religious organizations, not even one of the Buddhist groups, share a common member with another religious group. Recreational organizations, cultural and professional associations, and even alumni associations are, however, linked to other groups in the same category. Joint membership in two alumni association is the result of immigrants' attendance of both their highschool and university group meetings.

**Figure 8.1 Network of organizations that have a at least one member in common****Legend:**

- green cultural (ca), professional (pr) political (po) associations
- yellow alumni associations (aa)
- black religious organizations (rel)
- blue child related organizations (ki)
- red recreational organizations (rec) and adult training (rtr)

ca1 South Coast Chinese Cultural Assoc.  
 ca2 Hakka Chinese Association, Irvine Branch  
 ca3 Evergreen Chinese Senior Citizen Assoc.  
 ca4 Santa Ana Senior Citizen Club

pr5 Chinese American Chamber of Commerce  
 pr6 Taiwanese American Chamber of Comm.  
 pr7 Doctor and Dentist Association  
 pr8 North American Taiwanese Professor Ass.  
 pr9 Chinese Computer Association  
 pr10 Chinese Hotel and Motel Association  
 pr11 Lions Club

po12 Taiwanese Association  
 po13 Taiwanese American Citizen League

aa14 BeiYi Nuezhong Highschool  
 aa15 Jianzhu/Jian Highschool  
 aa16 Jinmei Nüzhong Highschool  
 aa17 SongSan Junior Highschool  
 aa18 Zhanghua Highschool  
 aa19 Zhongsan Nüzhong Highschool  
 aa20 University of California, Irvine

aa21 Cheng Gong University  
 aa22 Chung-li University  
 aa23 Zhengzhi University  
 aa24 Donghai University  
 aa25 Furen University  
 aa26 Taiwan Normal (Shifan) Univ.  
 aa27 Jiaotong University  
 aa28 Mingchuan University  
 aa29 Taiwan University  
 aa30 Taiwan Medical College  
 aa31 Taiwan Music College

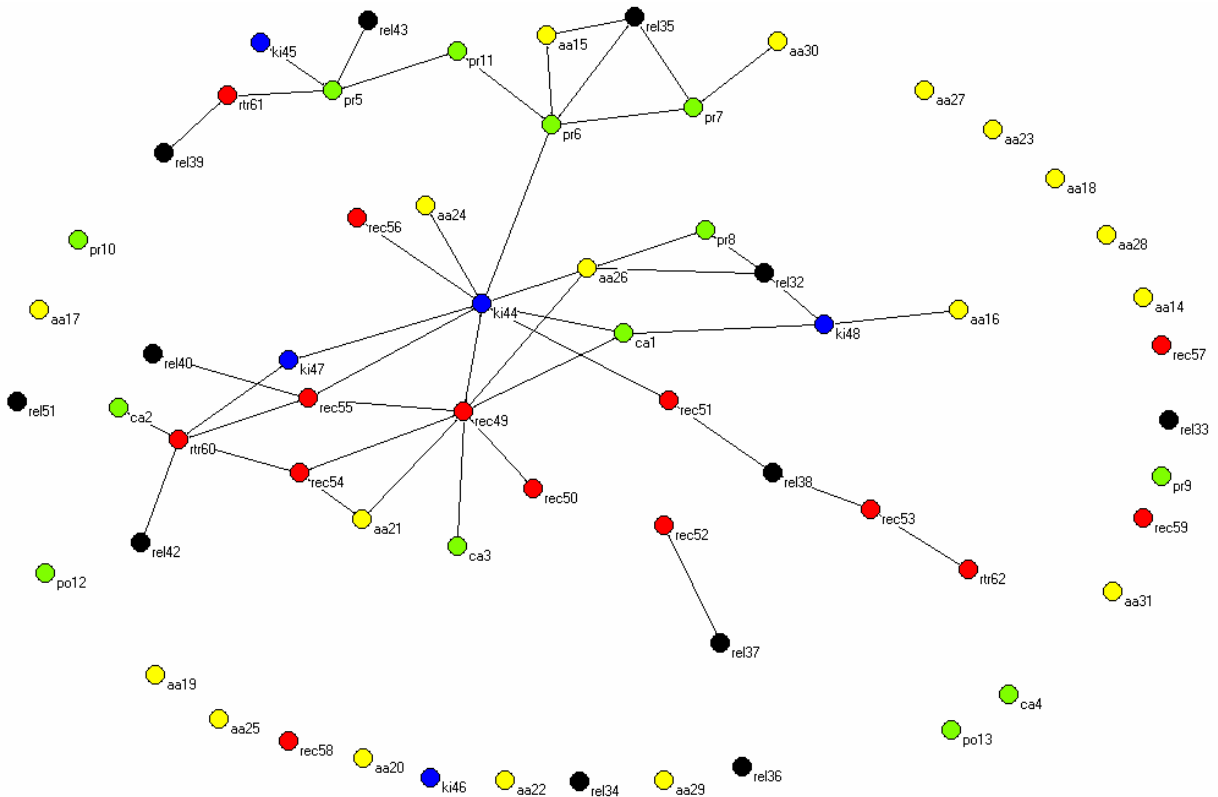
rel32 E.F.C. Taifu Church  
 rel33 Baptist Church  
 rel34 Evangelical Church  
 rel35 Taiwanese Presbyterian  
 rel36 Canaan Church  
 rel37 Church of Irvine  
 rel38 Peace Evangelical Church, LH  
 rel39 E.F.C. Garden Grove  
 rel40 Tzu-Ch'i Buddhist Organization  
 rel41 Tibetan Buddh. Group, Irvine  
 rel42 Buddhist Prayer Group, Hh  
 rel43 Yiguan Dao Temple

ki44 Irvine Chinese School  
 ki45 Fountain Valley Chinese School  
 ki46 Westminster Chinese School  
 ki47 Chinese PTO Woodbridge High  
 ki48 Chinese PTO University High

rec49 Irvine Chinese Chorus  
 rec50 Chinese Folk Dance Group  
 rec51 Lake Forest Choir  
 rec52 HuaYin Trad. Chines. Orchestra  
 rec53 Ballroom Dance Shauna Lee  
 rec54 Ballroom Dance Jason and Lilly  
 rec55 Tap Dance Group  
 rec56 Chinese Chap.of Philharm. Soc.  
 rec57 Tennis at Woodbridge  
 rec58 Golf at SCCCA  
 rec59 Voice training course

rtr 60 Adult School of Irvine  
 rtr 61 Adult School of Ft.Villy/HB  
 rtr 62 Toastmaster Club

**Figure 8.2 Network of organizations that have at least two members in common**



Legend (for detailed labels see figure 8.1)

- green cultural (ca), professional (pr) political (po) associations
- yellow alumni associations (aa)
- black religious organizations (rel)
- blue child related organizations (ki)
- red recreational organizations (rec) and adult training (rtr)

Although the network diagrams graphically represent the betweenness centrality among organizations (Freeman 1977) as well as tendencies for central positions in the overall set of groups, it is not feasible to use the dataset to calculate betweenness centrality for both actors and organizations combined. Since one-mode relations were used to produce the above graph, they do not represent all patterns of affiliation ties between actors (Faust 1997: 189). Therefore no centrality or betweenness values are computed since they cannot be used to represent a set of most central people by reason of membership in central organizations. In fact, a one-mode network of informants by informants reveals a very disconnected structure. The approach used here simply wants to look at the potential reachability between membership pools of organizations.

A different mode of graphic display, a tree diagram of clusters not shown here, provides more insights on related sets of social groups, for example, orientation to music groups. However, a test of higher levels of connectivity beyond the existence of bridge ties between social groups is more revealing. First, there is the notion that two organizations linked by more than one tie are more strongly connected (Freeman 1992, Granovetter 1973). In addition, the definition of social cohesion within social groups put forth by Moody and White (2001, unpublished) can be applied for the social cohesion of a community, i.e., sets of connected social groups. They measure the cohesiveness of a group by testing how many actors (between 1, 2, 3, ....to k) can be removed without preventing the individual members of the group from reaching each other.

Translated into sets of social organizations that represent a community by replacing actors with organizations, this means that a community has a higher degree of cohesiveness if the removal of one, two, or more organizations does not disconnect the group. An organization is not subject to "removal" if it shares more than one or two memberships with another organization. In other words, a community is more cohesive if few organizations function only as bridges between two or more organizations (i.e., have only one member in common with either social group they are connected to). The clusters of organizations with the most number of ties linking them to each other are the most cohesive part of the network of organizations. They represent the core in a hierarchy of clusters characterized by diminishing levels of cohesiveness. Clusters of more cohesive groups are embedded within less cohesive groups.

In fact, the network diagram in figure 8.2 shows a higher degree of cohesiveness than the network depicted in figure 8.1. The second figure illustrates that 42% of all social organizations become disconnected when taking away the organizations which function as bridges because they have only one member in common. The highest incidences of removal are not surprisingly among



alumni associations. Despite the fact that the BeiYiNü association (aa14) has a rather central position in figure 8.1 linking several ethnic groups to one another, it is detached in the second graph. In contrast, recreational organizations and child-related organizations are most likely to stay connected. The Irvine Chinese School (ki44) keeps its role as the most central organization with nine ties going out to other social entities. Interestingly, there is almost a clear division between cultural associations, such as the Senior Citizen Organization and the SCCCA, and the professional associations which are attached to one another along a chain. Not surprisingly, the Taiwan-American Chamber of Commerce (pr6) stays connected to the Doctors and Dentist Association (pr7), which in turn is linked to the alumni association for the Taiwan Medical College (aa30).<sup>51</sup> The Taiwanese Presbyterian Church (rel35) which emphasizes the use of the Taiwanese language (minnan hua) is also involved in this small cluster. Overall as a category, religious organizations have lower levels of detachment as expected from the literature, which usually would predict a separation between churches and other community groups. Most religious organizations in this study are linked to other organizations by more than one shared membership.

In terms of clusters, three separate clusters are clearly visible in the network, the dyad of (rec52) and (rel37) based on joint interest in traditional Chinese music, the cluster around the Irvine Chinese School (ki44) and the SCCCA(ca1), and the cluster around the two Chambers of Commerce, (pr6) and (pr5). The latter actually can arguably be divided into two clusters. The same holds for a separation of the string of groups containing a choir (rec51), a church (rel38), a Ballroom Dance Club (rec53), and the Toastmaster club (rtr62). Nevertheless, the distinction of five separate clusters does not contribute much in terms of new insights, with the exception of a geographic component. Links around (pr5) are more likely to include groups in Fountain Valley and links around (rel38) represent an orientation towards Laguna Hill, away from Irvine.

The main revelation about community cohesion occurs when calculating the connectivity among groups with the requirement that organizations have at least three members in common (figure not shown). Then, only two clusters remain. The Tzu-Chi Charity (rel40) is connected to the Tap Dance group (rec55), which also reflects the fact that most performances by the group take place in relation to charity events and hospital visits by the religious organization. The other cluster links the Irvine Chinese School (ki44) with the Chinese Choir (rec49) attended by most

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<sup>51</sup> The only other professional association in the "cultural cluster" is the 'North American Taiwanese Professor Association' (pr8) which shares a link with the 'Taiwan Normal University' (aa26) which links it to other educators at the Chinese School and the SCCCA in general.

mothers and fathers after they finish their duties as classroom guardians for the school, and the South Coast Chinese Cultural Association (ca1), confirming the latter's function as the only existing ethnic Chinese umbrella organization in the area.

## **PART IV**

# **DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS**

## Chapter 9

### Discussion of Findings

#### Discussion of Findings from the Analysis of Personal Networks

Chapter 7 presented findings on the structure of personal networks with the intention of gaining a better understanding of the factors that influence relationships among immigrants from Taiwan to South Orange County and between immigrants and the society at large. Each of the personal networks of immigrants is representative of a personal community and as such a building block of a larger community, independent of its location in space (Wellman 1999).

The personal networks of immigrants are in general not very large compared to networks in the social spaces experienced back in Taiwan. Although immigrants have to make an effort to find interaction partners in their new environment, they have several opportunities to interact with others in public spaces throughout the Southern California region, such as festivals, recreational facilities, religious groups, and social organizations. The length of time spent in the United States has an influence on network size. However, the effect diminishes after living for more than one decade in the new environment, since some immigrants make conscious choices to keep their networks small in size.

The majority of ties in personal networks link informants to alters who provide social support in the sense of co-participation in recreational activities, for the planning of cultural events at association meetings, or in religious settings. Many of the ties that connect individuals in a moderately strong manner last only for the time period of involvement in a specific group. Immigrants have a variety of options for social engagement and some change their affiliations at the beginning of each school year.

This is a departure from the traditional notion of 'guanxi', which prescribes individuals to foster relationships with joint members of any organization and maintain them over time, independent of their immediate utility.<sup>1</sup> While almost all informants report that they have to rely on other people to get ahead in Taiwan, they experience life in the United States as full of individual choices, that is, characterized by independence and self-sufficiency. "*Everybody just relies on themselves to get ahead*", is an often heard statement by informants.<sup>2</sup> After a few years in the United States,

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<sup>1</sup> For an introduction to 'guanxi' relationships see section on networks in Taiwan in chapter 2.

<sup>2</sup> 大家就靠自己 (dajia jiu kao ziji) = everybody just relies on themselves (informant #23, others).

immigrants no longer feel the need to nurture relationships in order to obtain instrumental support or talk freely about political opinions.

Emotional support is mostly supplied by former classmates who either substitute or complement the role of kin group members. Both types of relationships, to classmates and to family members, constitute the strongest ties in the networks because they link people who have known each other over an extended period and are less likely to fluctuate. The traditional approach to relationships with classmates, and people who have shared an important experience in the past, calls for lasting commitment to one another. They are the main recipients of the efforts to build and maintain 'guanxi' ties in which immigrants still engage. It also shows that these ties do not necessarily require people to meet frequently for the relationship strength to be considered strong. It is sufficient that they are used exclusively and consistently for specific needs.

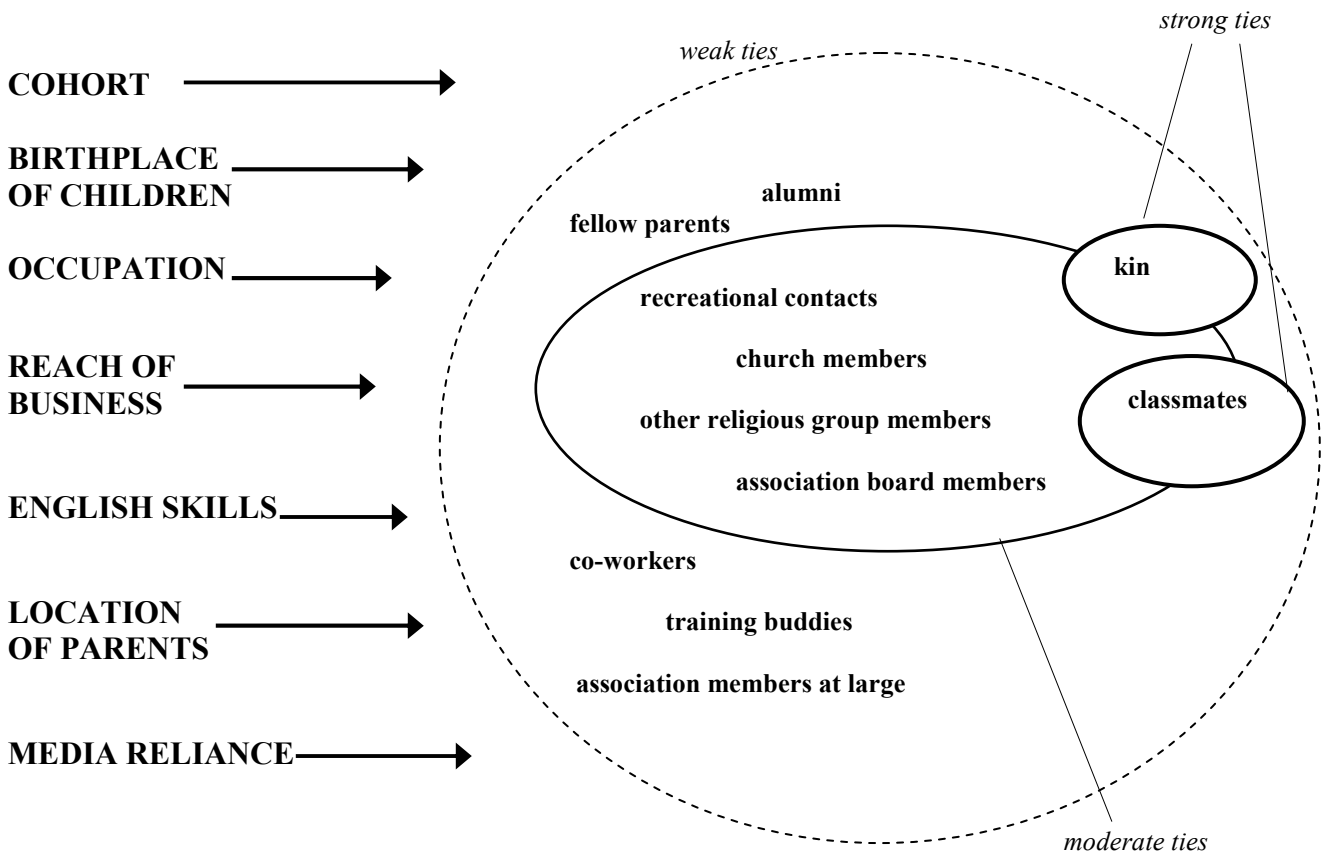
Other than assistance in emotional affairs, informants also turn to their former classmates and their family members for important decisions on investment opportunities, on the purchase of a house, and to some extent for guidance in finding employment. For information that help solve problems of everyday life, such as finding a car mechanic or a dentist, immigrants rely less on other people and more on ethnic and mainstream media sources. Ethnic media publications and broadcasting stations in Southern California are comprehensive and cover all aspects of life. Information by mainstream media sources is used for comparison by those immigrants confident in their English abilities and their independent judgment.

The spatial analysis of relationships reveals that immediate proximity is not the main criteria for selecting interaction partners. Yet, driving distance and avoidance of potential traffic hazards factors into the composition of immigrants' social activities and social circles. In this respect immigrants do not differ much from the geographic dispersal of network ties among residents in other American (Fischer 1982, McAllister and Fischer 1983) or in Swedish suburbs (Henning and Lieberg 1996). Beyond the local and regional area only ties to former classmates and close family members prevail. Transnational activities are minimal for long-term U.S. residents originally from Taiwan who are not involved in business activities in both East Asia and California.

The factors which explain the most frequently occurring patterns in the structure of personal networks are the cohort an immigrant belongs to, the birthplace of their children, membership in the workforce, and for the self-employed the locations they do business in, resulting level of English skills, the extent informants rely on media sources as substitutes for personal inquiries, and the location of living parents. The general structure of an average network is characterized by

clusters among joint memberships in social or recreational groups that often are created by multiplex ties. Outside of these clusters individuals are linked to a few former classmates and kin who either live elsewhere in the United States or abroad. Some of the close relations also include joint participation in recreational groups and associations. Most ties are moderately strong rather than strong, with the exception of links to providers of emotional support. Networks are not ethnically diverse and are not varied in terms of different role relationships beyond the regional scope of their networks, that is, at the transnational level.

**Figure 9.1 Conceptual model of the average personal network composition and the factors that influence its variation**



According to Wellman's typology of community types that are either 'lost', 'saved' or 'liberated' (Wellman et. al 1988) and which he later advanced into a typology of personal community networks that depicts combinations of these types (Wellman 1999), the networks of immigrants are most congruent with the type 'saved at the core and liberated at the periphery'. This combination is defined by strong, multiplex ties to kin group members and friends at the core of a person's network. They are then surrounded by ties to acquaintances low in neighbors and high in

degree of heterogeneity. This combination creates networks of moderate support and moderate density (Wellman 1999: 53). However, the networks of immigrants differ in two respects from Wellman's model. Indeed, networks have a core consisting of mostly former classmates and family members. Although the ties are strong, in many cases they are not high in multiplexity, given the geographic distance between people. In addition, the periphery of the network structure involves few neighbors and shows frequent changes in membership composition. But alters are homogenous in profile, providing the network with rather low levels of diversity.

Further personal network descriptors emphasized by Wellman include distinctions according to degree of intimacy (i.e., mutual assistance) and contact frequency (Wellman 1999: 71). The particular circumstances of immigration, as well as cultural differences, make it difficult to compare personal networks of ethnic Taiwanese and Chinese with the personal networks of suburban ethnically mixed Canadians on which his typology is based. For example, in comparison with the literature, immigrant interaction patterns should be considered high in contact frequency, and high in intimacy. However, in comparison with interaction frequency in Taiwan, the rates occurring after immigration to South Orange County are lower in both categories.<sup>3</sup> So, without making further comparisons, it is safe to say that immigrant networks have a core and a periphery and have a moderate level of density.

### **Discussion of Hypotheses Test at the Individual Level**

Several hypotheses have been developed regarding the influence of network structures on the incorporation process into the larger society. These hypotheses provide a framework to guide the analysis in an attempt to discover facilitators and constraints to integration inherent in the structure of personal networks and affiliation networks. The main assumption regarding the structure of personal network and the likelihood for integration was that affluent immigrants from Taiwan to South Orange County face low degrees of constraint due to high levels of human and financial capital, and the dispersed settlement patterns absent of ethnic clustering throughout the relatively recently developed subdivisions. However, another set of hypotheses looked at the likelihood of high degrees of constraints that might slow down the incorporation process, most notably, high involvement in transnational activities and the lack of urban focal points in decentralized spaces that hinder the development of diverse, extensive and heterogenous ties.

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<sup>3</sup> This observation holds true even when taking into account that personal networks in urban areas in Taiwan have much less interaction frequency and less number of kin group members than networks in rural areas.

Indicators of a low degree of constraints to social integration, or in other words, low barriers to interaction with members of the larger society, are the size of networks, the proportion of people from other ethnic groups among the alters, the proportion of alters with different educational backgrounds and occupation related income levels, the amount of multiplex ties, and the extent of media reliance. It was expected that the larger the number of alters in combination with higher percentages of non-ethnic network members and more diverse backgrounds of alters, the fewer the network constraints and the more opportunities for interaction with members of the larger society. In addition, the extent to which a person relies on media sources was assumed to inform about the level of dependency between an informant and his or her alters. People who rely less on others for information are more likely to interact with a wider range of people for socializing and are less likely to be involved in obligations with people they may need assistance from in the future. Fewer interactions with people overseas in Taiwan or elsewhere in East Asia was expected to pose fewer constraints on the integration process than engagement in frequent phone calls and/or travel to Taiwan.

Before examining the results of each hypothesis test, it is important to note the opportunities for the establishment of social ties in the United States in general. Findings from the analysis have shown that, although affluent immigrants have smaller networks than experienced in Taiwan, the number of alters they are related to in their new environment are about equal to the average network size of the larger society.<sup>4</sup> That points to sufficient opportunities for interaction with people of various backgrounds. However, other results reveal that those network ties that link informants in terms of co-participation in joint associations and recreational activities, have moderately high levels of multiplexity, a fact that was examined in more detail in chapter 8. Although there is exclusivity in the ties to important providers of advice and emotional support (i.e., ties are often uniplex), the existence of ties which are multiplex, in other words, moderate to strong ties, in personal networks gives rise to the assumption that occasions for interaction with a diverse set of people are not very plentiful.

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<sup>4</sup> Unfortunately, this statement is based on random observation and can not be completely proven. The General Social Survey Study (GSS) conducted every year in the United States includes a Network Module. However, the questions only ask informants to report on people with whom they discuss "important matters" (Burt 1984). Most respondents do not identify more than two or three alters as the most important people in their lives. In various years the mean number of these alters was listed as 3.01 (Marsden 1987). Other researches, most notably Bernard, Killworth, McCarty et. al (1990, 1996, 1998) have computed the size of networks among average members of the American society. However, their approach included all possible alters, weak, moderately strong and strong which created network sizes of 200 or more alters per person.



*Results for hypothesis 1*

The first hypothesis that predicted lower degrees of network constraints due to higher levels of human resources, can only be accepted when comparing networks within the group of informants. Indeed, informants that have higher levels of education and very good English skills have a larger proportion of non-ethnics in their networks. However, looking at the size of networks and the diversity of ties in absolute numbers, there are fewer interaction partners with different backgrounds than expected. Even those immigrants who have the highest proportion of members of other ethnic groups in the sample, embrace no more than 13% of non-ethnics in their social circles.

*Results for hypothesis 2*

The second hypothesis regarding the relationship between low degrees of network constraint and economic resources has to be rejected. Informants with large financial assets, as evident in the price range of their residences and the abundance of material possessions, have very homogeneous networks which are not culturally diverse, or at least not larger, more heterogeneous networks than less affluent immigrants.

*Results for hypothesis 3*

In contrast, the third hypothesis that claimed that dispersed settlement patterns lead to lower degrees of constraint can be accepted as valid. Immigrants have more flexibility in their interaction patterns, they can opt to escape the accumulation of future obligations with others, and even keep family members at bay if they so desire. Driving distances facilitate a "buffer zone" against immediate and continuous availability. In addition, the high proportions of media use as sources of information among the majority of informants shows, that people indeed have less need to rely on their network ties for instrumental support. Fewer binding relationships are necessary to navigate life in Southern California.

*Results for hypothesis 4*

The fourth hypothesis which looked at the connection between transnational activities and network structure, can neither be fully accepted nor rejected. The actual volume of transnational activities outside the scope of business transactions is on average not very high for both indicators in this study, phone calls and travel. Those with exceptionally high frequencies of interactions are informants of the fourth cohort who only recently emigrated from Taiwan. For members of this cohort the hypothesis seems reasonable. Their personal networks are smaller and less diverse

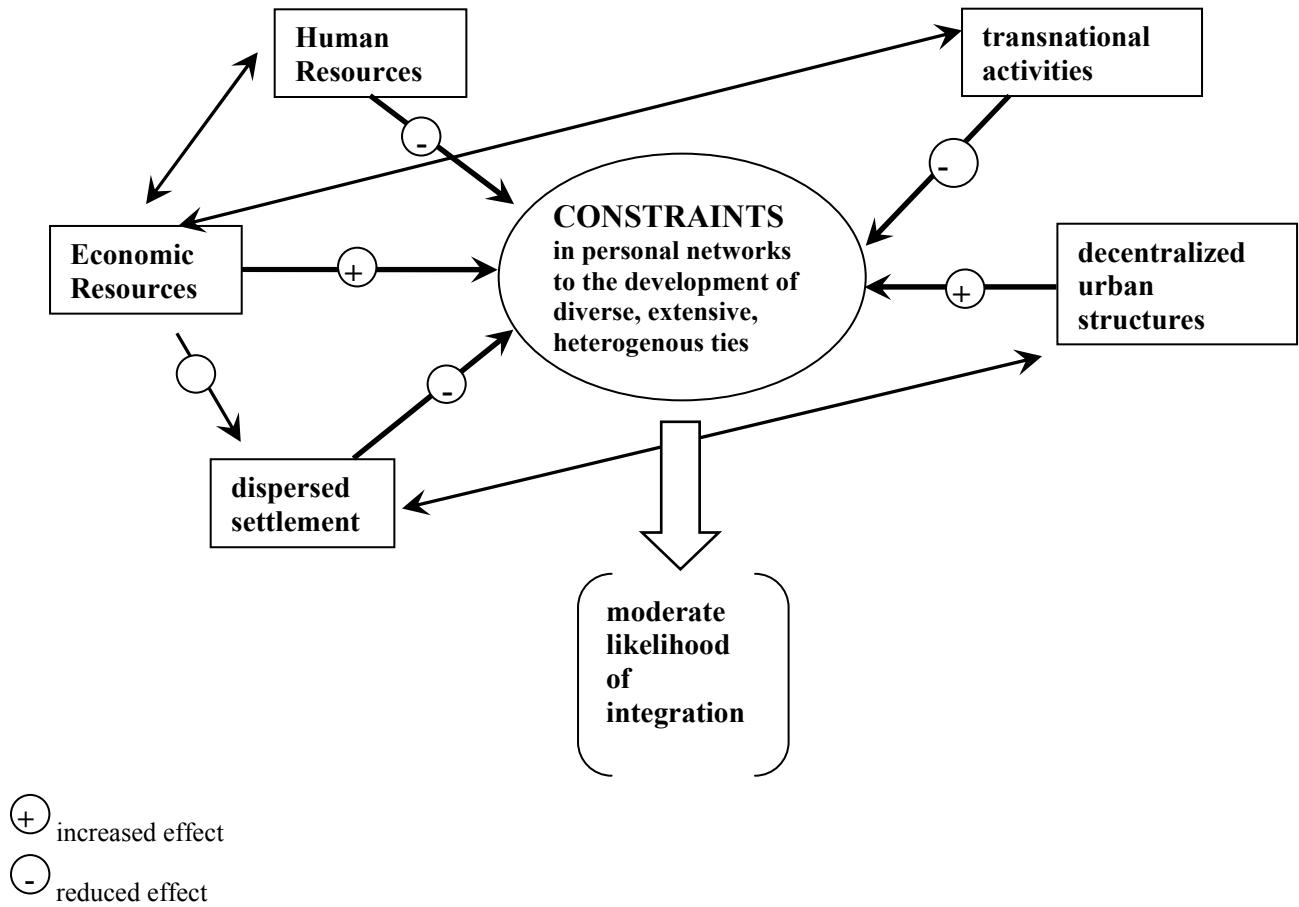
than those of informants with less frequent interaction patterns with family and friends in Taiwan. For the majority of observations, however, trips and phone calls are not an impediment to engagement with others. There is an equal distribution of people who travel rarely and those who travel twice a year among informants with larger and smaller networks, as well as more or less non-ethnic members in their networks. If anything, frequent travel is an indicator that a person has many family members still living in Taiwan, which usually frees up additional time for interaction in South Orange County. Nevertheless, those opportunities are not necessarily used to meet with others outside one's ethnic group.

*Results for hypothesis 5*

Although the test of hypothesis 3 showed that dispersed settlement patterns enable possibilities for interaction with non-ethnics, the competing hypothesis 5 that predicted that decentralized spaces hinder interaction could not be rejected. This hypothesis expected that the design of South Orange County would create greater obstacles to finding other people by chance. While the settlement structures free people from extensive responsibilities towards kin group members and neighbors, personal networks do not include a large variety of heterogenous and diverse contacts either. Neighbors, which have a high potential to be of various ethnic backgrounds, account for a very small number of network ties because few people identify with their immediate neighborhood. Co-workers, another role which may indicate a larger diversity, are only important if they are from the same ethnic group. Occasions to meet a co-worker in a different context are sparse. Only the activities of children bring people of various backgrounds together on a regular basis.

Figure 9.2 shows the combined results of the hypotheses test based on the model of competing sets of hypotheses shown in figure 3.1.

**Figure 9.2 Results of hypotheses test predicting the likelihood of integration at the individual level**



Overall, opportunities for integration with the larger society do exist. Immigrants do not face major obstacles to integration, such as widespread discrimination or class barriers. Nevertheless, the structure of their networks does not provide them with many opportunities to reach out to others from outside their own ethnic enclave. Many have limited amounts of time, and often children to care for, such that engagement with people from other ethnic groups would need a conscious and concentrated effort. Since most of the community organizations they attend, either in pursuing their own interests or on behalf of their children, are not ethnically integrated, as the analysis of the network of organizations showed, the number of occasions to engage with people outside of these social settings is indeed small. The convenience and comfort of interacting with people from the same ethnic group is a further disincentive to seek out others in the larger society.

### **Discussion of Findings from the Analysis of the Network of Organizations**

The quantity and variety of ethnic organizations in South Orange County introduced in chapter 8, showed that there is a sufficient number of co-ethnics in the area to support the establishment of these social groups. Contrary to the findings of other studies, for example the Brazilians in New York or the Russian Jews in Northern California, there is a rather widespread interest in public involvement among ethnic Chinese and Taiwanese, although not necessarily in terms of political engagement.<sup>5</sup> These organizations provide immigrants from Taiwan plenty of opportunities for interaction with each other. Furthermore, community organizations share enough overlap in membership enrollment to link every social group to at least one other social group.

However, the links between individual organizations do not generate a high degree of connectivity as defined by Freeman and others. There are very few social groups that cluster together and meet the requirement of three or more joint members (Freeman 1992, Faust 1997). In addition, while a substantial number of immigrants from Taiwan live in South Orange County, no umbrella organization of ethnic institutions had been formed at the time of fieldwork (on the notion of umbrella organizations see Knoke 1986). Only the 'South Coast Chinese Cultural Association' which sponsors the Chinese School and several recreational activities represents a conglomeration of social groups. It has some connections to other ethnic associations, but has not attempted to create any superstructure of group affiliations as, for example, a traditional 'Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Associations' in the Chinatowns of California.

Reasons for a departure from the social structure of Chinatowns and their mutual aid associations are not only geographic in nature, but also due to the fact that immigrants have developed diverse interests, even in areas that are economically rather homogenous (Wickberg 1994: 83). As a result, membership affiliations are volatile and group composition changes over time. In addition, modern technology and accessibility to information makes reliance on co-ethnics less necessary. There is less need to establish bases for the development of 'guanxi ties' (see data presented in chapter 7). Group membership is no longer based on ascription to a common region or family, but developed in relation to personal achievement, including graduation from a prestigious school in Taiwan. Most social groups function as opportunities for socializing or are based on shared interests in particular activities. Indeed, the ethnic organizations in this study,

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<sup>5</sup> Other studies usually do not include recreational organizations among their investigation of community associations, which makes them actually difficult to compare with the present study (see Markowitz 1993, Margolis 1998)

including religious organizations, are specialized social groups that serve specific interests and needs, but are no longer broadly based, all-inclusive institutions (Wellman 1999). They do not serve as 'replacement families' for those who lack traditional kinship relations in the new settlement area.

### **Discussion of Hypotheses Test at the Group Level**

The hypotheses constructed to guide the analysis of immigrant incorporation at the group level anticipated influences by the spatial structure of the geographic area, that is, the decentralized urban design of Orange County, and effects by the extent of 'institutional completeness' among ethnic organizations on the scope of ethnic group connectivity. Each predictor in hypotheses 6 and 7 respectively was expected to point to higher degrees of constraint in the affiliation network of social groups leading to a lower likelihood of integration. In addition, the assumption was that the test of these two hypotheses would shed light on the nature of an ethnic Chinese and Taiwanese community in South Orange County, based on the notion that the existence of a cohesive ethnic community is a function of the extent of overlap between discrete ethnic groups. The level of connectivity, then, indicates the degree of cohesiveness of the community as a whole.

#### *Results for hypothesis 7*

Hypothesis 7, which expected a high number of ethnic institutions to reduce opportunities for participation in organizations of the mainstream society, can be accepted, especially when the scope of observations is extended to include all areas of Southern California. Although co-ethnics within the area of South Orange County are not self-sufficient in terms of economic or political institutions, the overview of social organizations illustrated that there is a sufficient number of ethnic social organizations to allow choices among the different groups and community services. A full range of commercial services is available in the region at large. However, many of the informants in this study are not dependent on the existence of an ethnic enclave economy since they have the skills and financial means to gain entry and participate in the economic sector of the mainstream society.

In regards to social spheres of interaction, results of the analysis showed that the present number of ethnic organizations creates enough opportunities for interaction between fellow ethnic group members such that the likelihood of contact with members from other ethnic groups is reduced. This led to the conclusion that the higher the number of ethnically exclusive organization a person is involved with, the higher the obstacles to integration into the larger society.

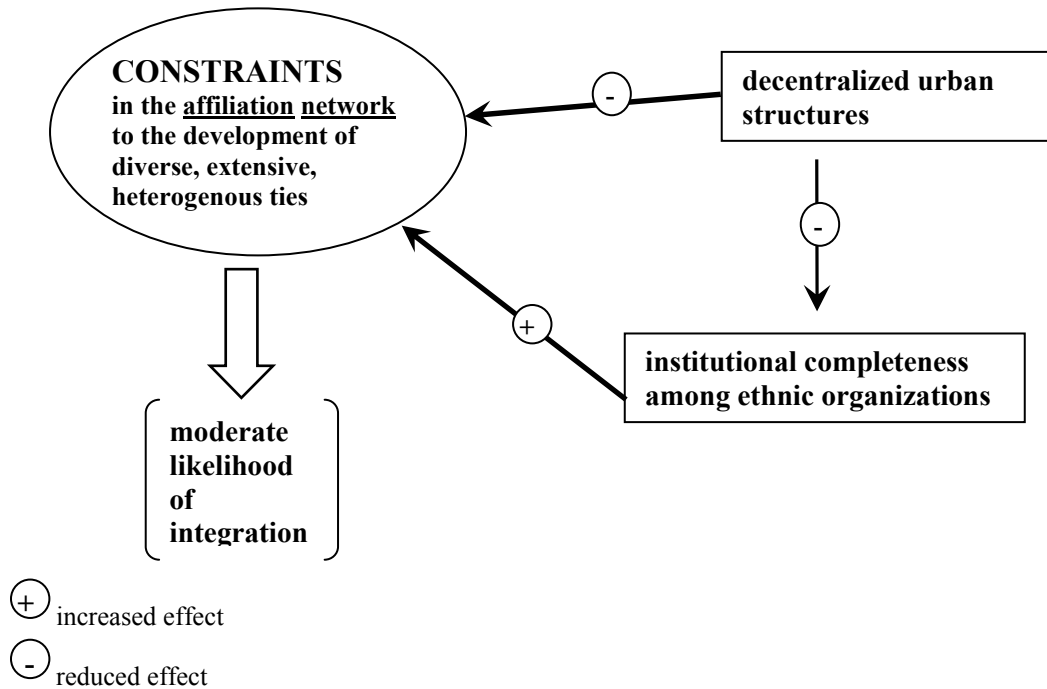
*Results for hypothesis 6*

In contrast, the assumption of hypothesis 6 that decentralized urban structures reduce the number of occasions for interaction with the mainstream society and therefore create higher degrees of overlap between ethnic organizations, cannot be so easily accepted. At the individual level the increase in influence of the lack of central places and distinct boundaries of the urban space of South Orange County on the level of network constraints was validated (see hypothesis 5). Immigrants do not meet other people by chance and are more likely to engage with a co-ethnic when they interact outside either their workplace or their children's school related events. At the group level, however, findings of the analysis revealed that the level of connectivity between social groups is not very high. In addition, fluctuations in membership affiliations point to a network of organizations that does not have a very stable structure. The spatial characteristics of the area might hinder the occurrence of group overlaps rather than facilitate it as anticipated by the hypotheses in response to the lack of reference points for finding social activities and friends in the mainstream society. Therefore, this observation essentially calls for a rejection of hypothesis 6.

As established in chapter 7, living within walking distance from one another is no longer a prerequisite for the development of ties with co-ethnics. The vast area of South Orange County creates spatial constraints and keeps immigrants who are linked through strong and moderately strong ties from meeting each other on a daily or even weekly basis. It literally "leaves room" for the development of weak ties based on joint memberships in a new organization which may or may not lead to further involvement. The infrastructure and geographical layout of the area is instrumental in preventing the personal networks of immigrants from becoming so densely knit in response to mutual obligations based on shared backgrounds and experiences, that they would become stifling. Although ethnic Chinese and Taiwanese immigrants prefer to join social groups, they have no use for all-inclusive institutions as representations of ethnic solidarity.

Figure 9.3 shows the results of the hypotheses test regarding the high network constraints expected for affiliation networks based on the model of competing sets of hypotheses shown in figure 3.1.

**Figure 9.3 Results of hypotheses test predicting the likelihood of integration at the group level**



The design of the urban area that is South Orange County with its large expansions of infrastructure and subdivisions has further effects on the interaction patterns of co-ethnics. As the number of ethnic Chinese and Taiwanese increases in the area, which is even more likely to happen in the next few years, there will be less need to participate in ethnic organizations with the purpose of finding others with similar ethnic backgrounds and interests. As Fugita and O'Brien found in their study of Japanese American communities, the more densely populated a geographic region becomes with members of an ethnic group, the more likely it is for co-ethnics to meet in general public spaces, such as school meetings, sports games, supermarkets and restaurants (1991: 115).

Therefore, the findings of the present study also fit the theoretical assumptions concerning the relationship between urbanism and ethnic subcultures put forth by Fischer (1977, 1982, 1995). Urban areas facilitate subcultural institutionalizations (i.e., the formation of various ethnic groups) by reason of housing large numbers of settlers within its extended space. At the same time, urban areas undermine involvement in community organizations due to large distances, diverse interests, and multiple but scattered opportunities to meet other people (Fischer 1995:560). Population concentration due to urbanism appears to sustain ethnic institutions, but not necessarily to sustain individuals' ethnic attachment (Fischer 1995: 558).

### **A Virtual Community? Findings on Community Cohesion**

So, what is the verdict in terms of the characteristics of community among ethnic Chinese and Taiwanese in South Orange County? The illustrations above showed that there are plenty of ethnic groups and organizations, which supports the initial proposition of chapter 8 that an ethnic community does in fact exist. However, the community, which is the product of people linked through membership in related organizations, is in large parts only loosely connected. Although a few dense clusters are visible in the structure of the network of organizations, the majority of social groups is linked to each other by uniplex, weak ties. More importantly though, none of the organizations is disconnected and therefore isolated from the other groups. In conclusion, the network of ethnic organizations has, at best, a moderate level of cohesion.

Yet it is unlikely that all immigrants have a sense of being members of a large cohesive ethnic community in the area. In fact, the ethnographic record showed that many informants know only about the two or three ethnic groups of which they are members and never heard about certain other groups in the area. On the other hand, the ethnic community identified in this study is not a 'virtual community' (Rheingold 1993), accessible only for those who participate in its institutions and existing independent of any location in physical space. The personal networks of co-ethnics are not the only noticeable manifestations of the ethnic community either, as suspected in reference to the community definition by Wellman (1990, 1999).

Instead, almost all ethnic Taiwanese and Chinese in South Orange County have knowledge about distinct ethnic social organizations at well-known locations. The Irvine Chinese School, for example, is ubiquitous to all immigrants from Taiwan in the area, no matter if they participate or not.<sup>6</sup> Most people also know that the likelihood of finding ethnic groups is higher in community facilities run by the City of Irvine than in other municipalities of South Orange County. Irvine is a focal point for immigrants from Taiwan in the larger geographic area (see chapter 6 for more details).

In addition, ethnic newspapers and ethnic Yellow Pages publish plenty of information that increases the visibility of community organizations for those in search of "points of entry" (i.e., newly arrived immigrants who need to find the first ethnic group to enter the network of community organizations). Often, new settlers from Taiwan have heard about the quality of life in South Orange County, associated with the many activities offered by and for co-ethnics, prior to

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<sup>6</sup> The Irvine Chinese School is also known to a substantial number of non-ethnics living in South Orange County. However no particular size of proportion among the general population could be determined.



emigration while comparing potential places of relocation such as the San Gabriel Valley, San Jose, Jersey City, Seattle, Vancouver and Toronto.<sup>7</sup> It turns out, that location and the knowledge about locations does matter. Dispersed settlement structures influence both personal networks and the networks of organizations.

### **Revisiting the Typology of Ethnic Community Cohesion**

When placing the community of immigrants from Taiwan in the typology of ethnic communities displayed in figure 3.1, it best matches the category for those immigrant communities who have no reference point of co-ethnics arriving prior to the Hart-Celler Act of 1965, settle dispersed throughout metropolitan areas, and show moderate levels of cohesion. Findings on this particular community of immigrants seems comparable to studies on Iranians living throughout the municipalities of western Los Angeles County (Bozorgmehr 1997), Salvadorians in greater Phoenix (Menjivar 2000) and Indians who settle in various cities of the state of Connecticut (Purkayastha 2000). Although arguably not equivalent due to different generations of immigrants under study, immigrants from Taiwan also share common features with Japanese-Americans settled across several small cities in rural California. They both maintain high levels of participation in the institutional life of their ethnic communities despite dispersed residences (Fugita and O'Brien 1991: 96).

Indeed, the community of ethnic Taiwanese and Chinese in South Orange County differs from the more tightly knit communities of Vietnamese immigrants in the city of Westminster, North Orange County (Gold 1994) and Armenian immigrants in Glendale, West Los Angeles County (Bozorgmehr et al. 1996). It also varies in comparison with the settlement of even larger numbers of ethnic Chinese throughout the San Gabriel Valley of Los Angeles County. The higher density and larger size of the ethnic population there has created a mixture of more geographically concentrated, strongly cohesive communities, also called ethnoburbs, and socially isolated ethnic organizations which share no connection with each other (Fong 1994, Horton 1996, Li 1999). At the macro level the result is a larger ethnic community that is only weakly connected. The same

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<sup>7</sup> However, it is important to note that the size of any ethnic community has no influence on the availability of a large number of high-paying jobs for highly qualified immigrants from Taiwan (the ethnic community in the San Gabriel Valley is no exception). The economic and structural conditions are suitable for self-employment of immigrants but are not comparable to the employment opportunities in East Asia. The result is that many immigrants lead 'astronaut lifestyles' discussed in chapter 6 (Wong 1998, Zhou 1998, Ong 1999, Salaff n.d.: 11).

holds true for the community of Brazilian immigrants in the urban center of New York (Margolis 1998).

As the analysis of the network structure created by community organizations in South Orange County revealed, the various entities within the ethnic community are neither strongly connected, which would exemplify strong cohesion, nor weakly connected, which would be evident if it consisted almost exclusively of uniplex ties and featured several disconnected social groups. Some representations of the community, mainly the cultural organizations and the economic associations, build a community core that is highly robust. At the same time, peripheral sections exist in the community, but are not isolated from other groups in the structure. Therefore, this combination at that specific moment in time warrants the label 'moderate level of cohesion,' introduced above.

### **Findings in Relation to Other Studies on Immigration and Spatial Structures**

Now that a clearer understanding of the immigrants from Taiwan in South Orange County has been presented, it is instructive to reevaluate some of the findings in the relevant literature. The moderately cohesive community of ethnic Chinese and Taiwanese should not be considered a diaspora or a transnational community (Glick Schiller 1992, Cohen 1997, Laguerre 1998). As Portes et al. (1999) noted, transnational activities are not really a new phenomenon, only the scope of back and forth movement is larger than ever before, facilitated by modern technology in combination with large numbers of affluent migrants. Further there are, as of now, no signs of a slow down in the flow of new migrants from the most prominent sending countries to the United States (Waldinger and Bozorgmehr 1996: 21). The characteristic of the most recent immigrants from Taiwan has changed to consist mostly of women and their children in search of a better education and quality of life. However, the reduced economic opportunities for highly educated professionals has merely slowed the main breadwinners from seeking employment in the United States, but not the family from migrating.

Time spent in the new environment is the main influencing factor on the reduction of frequency and scope of transnational activities among those immigrants who are not involved in international business transactions. Transnationalism is not sustained at an even level. As Massey concluded, there is no such thing as "*temporary migration*" (1986: 683). Over time, after repeated back and forth movements, some migrants decide to orient their social life toward the United States, and yet others refocus their attention to life in Taiwan. Some turn into 'settlers', others into

'sojourners'. However, other than most of their Chinese predecessors at the turn of the previous century, this new type of 'sojourner' is able to return to their homeland.<sup>8</sup>

Women whose spouses work in East Asia exemplify these differences quite vividly. Some astronaut wife's return to Taiwan after their youngest child has entered college. Others opt to stay and settle in South Orange County for good, despite their children's entrance in the workforce and the lack of entertainment and scarcity of social gatherings in Southern California. The relationship with their husbands has often diminished and visits to Taiwan have become more and more focused on the care of elderly parents. The different approaches to the reconciliation of the demands that living in two different worlds puts on people who are engaged in transnational activities is also evident from their patterns of involvement in ethnic social organizations in the United States.

Participation in professional associations, cultural associations, and religious organizations reflects a tendency for more of a personal commitment to life in the United States. The same can not be said for immigrants who participate only in a large number of recreational activities. Recreational involvement by itself does not necessarily speak of a commitment to life in North America, especially since these activities are often an extension of activities already practiced back in Taiwan. It is very convenient to join and quit these groups, whereas putting one's name on the roster of a professional association is more likely to show an interest in finding social recognition in the local community.

Overall, it is important to distinguish between two types of migrants from Taiwan, 'immigrants' and global or 'flexible citizens' as Ong (1993) calls them (see also Mitchell 1997, Ong and Nonini 1999). 'Immigrants' settle for good and eventually become instrumental in creating a distinct ethnic social space in their geographic environment. 'Flexible citizens' are migrants who have access to and residences in two or more countries. They display a clear orientation to their home country, not only in terms of cultural orientation, but also in terms of social and economic activities. This approach to migration is not a new phenomenon either, as historic research on overseas Chinese in the countries surrounding the Pacific has demonstrated (Lin 2001). The present-day acquisition of American citizenship is mainly a strategy to ensure the safety and continued financial welfare of all family members (Olds and Yeung 1999 22-24). Children may

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<sup>8</sup> The Chinese sojourners, generally all men, living in the United States between 1880 and 1930 often lacked the funds to return to China. The political situation, especially the harsh immigration laws, also kept them from leaving (Siu 1987, Chan 1991)

attend school in the United States and later work in the family business or for other corporations in East Asia (Froschauer 1998, Ley 2000). There is reason to believe that the latter strategy is mainly employed by upper middle class and upper class people from Taiwan (i.e., people who are rather wealthy to begin with). Taiwan's middle class is more likely to become settlers in the countries to which they migrate. However, further research is needed to shed light on this issue.

With respect to those migrants from Taiwan who eventually settle in the United States and orient themselves to life and work in the United States and with respect to the literature, what can be said about their assimilation? Although it has been determined early on, that incorporation of this group of newcomers to America is best described with the term 'integration', since co-ethnics are interested in maintaining their cultural identity while struggling to engage in relationships with the larger society (Berry 1997), reflections on the applicability of terms and their implications provide some concluding remarks.

It is safe to say that after several years of residence in the United States the majority of this group of affluent immigrants is culturally assimilated. Migration does not change culture in the sense of displacing old cultural forms, but introduces new cultural elements in addition to old ones and encourages individuals to adapt to these new conditions through changes, however slight, of customs and values. Relocation to the master plan communities of South Orange County has exposed them to a number of core American values having to do with individual space, privacy, and their daily routines. For many immigrants entering life in America has not been a complete shock, since they had some familiarity with the visible artifacts of American culture prior to arrival. In this respect it is interesting to think about the question of what effects returning migrants and frequently visiting immigrants have on the local culture and economy of Taiwan (Wu 1997, Mahler 1999 on effects of return migrants on their home culture).

This study has shown that the classic idea of spatial assimilation leading to structural assimilation in economic, political and social arenas, is obviously not applicable in this case. Dispersed settlement patterns fail to automatically induce contacts between diverse neighbors. In addition, lack of English language skills do not pose barriers of entry to desegregated upscale neighborhoods, in part made possible by the ethnic information infrastructure and the existence of ethnic real-estate agents. The right amount of money can buy a house in any desired location.<sup>9</sup> In

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<sup>9</sup>This does not hold true for the established communities in America's Midwest, Northeast and midsize towns of the Old South. Real estate agents there, often not "infiltrated" by ethnic real estate representatives, pre-select the

today's suburbs it is easy for first generation immigrants to lead and *"maintain a life like the one they would have lived in a more traditional ethnic enclave"* (Alba and Nee 1997: 862).

Distance has become a relative matter in the deconcentrated living spaces of urbanized counties such as Orange County. What might be considered a "far away" location for one individual, might be judged "just around the corner" by another. Informants in this study were more concerned about avoiding a large number of highway intersections than their actual driving distance or time to any point of interest. Certainly, proximity is not a necessary condition for contact, especially not in upper-middle class neighborhoods where instrumental help is rarely requested and everyone has easy access to transportation.

Therefore, as the test of hypotheses has shown, residential segregation of ethnic groups is not a requirement for a cohesive ethnic community. Contrary to Driedger and Church (1974), who argue that residential segregation is a requisite to the institutional completeness of ethnic groups, immigrants at the end of the 20th century do not need to cluster residentially to interact almost exclusively with co-ethnics when engaging in consumption and recreation. This is not to say that locations in space have become completely irrelevant or that personal communities have similar levels of intimacy, range, contact frequency (by phone) and friend/family ratios whether they include more local or more distant network members as Wellman insists (1999).

To put it more simply, space does matter. Identifications with locations continue to play an important role in dyadic relationships and group formations. According to the findings of this study, the difference lies in the extension of space. Instead of an orientation towards a single neighborhood, people associate with an area, consisting of several neighborhoods. They are assisted in their orientation by the homogeneous character of the master plan communities and subdivisions of South Orange County. Mission Viejo, Laguna Hills, Newport Coast and other places, all share comparable design structures. Santa Ana on the other hand, stands in stark contrast to these planned communities. And the cities of Monterey Park or Hacienda Heights are not only different in appearance, but also located in a different geographic region.

The enlargement of the space which people perceive and identify as their home area and which defines participation in social organizations, is the main difference between decentralized spaces and inner city neighborhoods, such as 'Little Italy' or 'Chinatown' (Gottdiener 1985). In such an extensive space each ethnic group might draw their boundaries of inclusion and exclusion

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neighborhood locations they show to immigrants (personal communication with real estate agent B. Queen in Greenville, NC).

differently. The aggregation of personal networks of co-ethnics creates a spatial embeddedness (i.e., a spatial orientation) for community members. They also assign their own 'landmarks'. For the community of immigrants from Taiwan such focal points exist in the city of Irvine, with the Ranch 99 supermarket, the Lakeview Community Center, and the University High School as the most frequented locations for social gatherings. However, this orientation of a community within a delineated space does not represent an example of 'place specific territorial functioning' (Taylor 1988), which in urban spaces is associated with a smaller geographic area, such as street blocks (Taylor 1988: 83).

This study also confirms that experiences of places, concepts of space, and attachment to places, play a role in the selection process of immigrants in search of a place to live (Sorkin 1992, Rodman 1993, Soja 1996, see discussion in chapter 2). Southern California is a highly desirable place. A large subset of immigrants is less willing to live and work anywhere else in the United States. They want to live in the Greater Los Angeles area and enjoy the quality of life it has to offer or else stay in Taiwan. In terms of 'quality of life', the ethnic economy in the region and the opportunities for socializing with co-ethnics adds to such factors as spacious, new housing and warm weather. The master plan communities, as odd as they might strike some, are very much sought after locations by affluent immigrants from Taiwan. A home in these subdivisions represents the achievement of status and independence.

Fischer's notion of a "*critical mass*" of residents in urban areas that support the development of "*subcultures*" can be extended to these decentralized urban spaces (Fischer 1975: 1325). However, the question remains how numerous exactly a group of co-ethnics has to be in order to develop a separate subculture, such as the occurrence of a moderately cohesive community of ethnic Chinese and Taiwanese which is not a subset of any larger ethnic community (i.e., as those found in the San Gabriel Valley). It would also be interesting to learn if further increases in the population size of immigrants from Taiwan to South Orange County will result in more visible residential clusters. A comparison with the developments of ethnic community formations in other metropolitan areas of the United States, such as Greater San Francisco, Atlanta, Boston, Houston, Dallas, and Denver, are expected to shed more light on these questions and improve our understanding of the importance of South Orange County as a distinct place.

Along the same lines, further research is needed on the effects of increased ethnic group size on the integration of second and 1.5 generation immigrants in South Orange County. Although they have more opportunities for interaction and socialization than their parents, preliminary analysis

suggests that the present rates of structural assimilation to primary groups in the social sphere (i.e., intermarriage rates) are much lower than previous research predicted (for example, Cheng and Yang 1996: 342).<sup>10</sup>

In terms of other theoretical concepts from the literature on assimilation, it can be concluded that structural assimilation of first generation ethnic Chinese and Taiwanese immigrants occurs only in relation to secondary institutions of the mainstream society, but not to primary institutions. Nevertheless, economic assimilation and socioeconomic mobility is attainable for affluent, well-trained immigrants without renouncing ethnic attachment (Reitz and Sklar 1997, Fugita and O'Brien 1991). The traditional paradigm which assumes that ethnic assimilation takes place in a straight-line with newly arrived immigrants starting at the bottom of the economic scale and gradually moving up the economic ladder does not apply for highly skilled immigrants from Taiwan. Instead, ethnic institutions and culturally specific behaviors and values often assist rather than hinder the process of incorporation.

In a sense, the interaction patterns between immigrants and members of the larger society, both at the individual and group level, also fit the notion of 'segmented assimilation' (Portes 1995b, Zhou 1997a). However, findings of this research contrast with Portes and Zhou's findings that strong network ties and strong community coherence are responsible for the prevention of downward mobility among recent immigrants. Dense social networks of strong ties might be present and beneficial among less affluent immigrants (e.g., the Vietnamese in Southern California), but they have not been proven to be advantageous or mandatory for the success of affluent immigrants.

Low levels of structural holes and high degrees of tie multiplexity bind co-ethnics together, but limit and constrain interactions with people outside the ethnic group, thereby possibly reducing the range of economic opportunities (Granovetter 1973, Burt 1992, Lin 2001). High levels of group cohesion are unnecessary and may have detrimental effects on the long-term success of the ethnic group. They might even act as a mobility trap (see Wiley 1967). As the findings of this study have

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<sup>10</sup> A big difference in the social interaction patterns of the second and 1.5 generation has been observed and warrants further investigation. While 1.5 generation immigrant children hardly ever interact intimately with children of other ethnic groups, second generation children have integrated social worlds until they enter high school. In high school, many start to get more and more exclusively involved with members of their own ethnic group, especially in their "dating" choices. This tendency is expected to prevail and become stronger as the number of immigrants from Taiwan to South Orange County increases. In terms of transnational orientation, research has shown that second generation immigrants allegedly benefit from transnational activities (Portes 1999: 471-472). They derive a stronger sense of identity and belonging and cultural and language maintenance is made easier (on identity issues of second generation see Tonks and Paranjpe 1999).

demonstrated, a moderate level of cohesiveness in combination with many structural holes is sufficient for an ethnic community to provide a sense of comfort and attachment for its members in the social sphere, while leaving room for economic and political engagement with the mainstream society. This also shows the present utilization of social capital among immigrants from Taiwan. In contrast to Coleman's (1988) and Portes' (1995) definition of social capital as a means of security for immigrants, they rather use their relationships as facilitators of opportunities<sup>11</sup> for socializing and economic transactions, but do not depend on them.

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<sup>11</sup> The notion of social capital as opportunities was established by Burt (1992), Lin (2001), and others.



## Chapter 10

### Conclusions

This study has illustrated how contemporary ethnic social spaces are created. The new type of ethnic community, exemplified by the immigrants from Taiwan in South Orange County, but also, among others, by Iranians in Greater Los Angeles and Indians in Connecticut, is moderately cohesive in its social sphere, but is not geographically clustered and is not exclusively dependent on an ethnic economy.

The inquiry on the factors that influence interaction patterns of immigrants, both with co-ethnics and with members of the larger society, revealed that social structure continues to influence the incorporation process, as earlier research on immigration and ethnicity has predicted: *"We have suggested that much of the behavior that is commonly associated with ethnicity is largely a function of the structural situations in which groups have found themselves"* (Yancey et al. 1976: 399). Demographic information on informants and their network members established that people of similar cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds spent more time with each other than with people who have different profiles. There is potential for contact with members of other ethnic groups, since the population size of people living in the master plan communities of South Orange County is rather large, but the actual number of incidents is limited by the existing network contacts between people who are alike. These findings confirm those of McPherson et al. that homophily is created by social structure and less by human agency (1992: 168).

However, both the structure of personal networks and the structure of the network of community organizations of this group of recent immigrants, are the product of a combination of influences that differ in composition from those anticipated by the two competing sets of hypotheses shown in figure 3.1. As the results of the hypotheses tests revealed (see figure 9.2 and 9.3), neither of the two sets could be confirmed or rejected in its entirety. It is not the case that structural constraints in personal networks have such a low level, that integration into the mainstream society is very likely. On the other hand, it is also not substantiated that constraints in personal networks and affiliation networks of ethnic organizations have such a high level, that no likelihood of integration exist in any part of the social, political, or economic sphere of the mainstream society.

Specifically, high levels of human capital among immigrants increase their likelihood of meeting non-ethnics. So does dispersed settlement which effectively frees people from obligations

towards ethnic group members. But few people make use of the opportunities to develop weak ties. Contrary to some earlier expectations, high levels of economic capital do not contribute to a higher probability of inter-ethnic engagement. This is partly due to the fact that some immigrants manage to reside and consume in South Orange County without generating income in either the local mainstream economy, or the local ethnic economy. Their financial capital has international sources leading to a kind of reverse remittances.

Transnational activities, such as phone calls or frequent travel do not severely obstruct opportunities for interaction with either co-ethnics or outsiders. These practices, however, enable immigrants to maintain intimate and strong relationships with former classmates and family members. Many do not establish new ties for emotional support in their new environment. Further, the decentralized urban design with its dispersed settlement, its low population density, and its culturally diverse residents, does provide opportunities to meet others in theory, as already alluded to, but not in practice. The same may be true for all residents in Southern California, independent of their ethnic affiliation (see Schweizer et al. 1998). The high turn-over rate of occupants in the subdivisions, architectural homogeneity, and dependency on a car for regional travel of almost any kind, causes immigrants and citizens alike to be less attached to any particular geographic or physical location (e.g., a coffee house district). The structure of settlements and streets is not conducive to overcoming social distances between members of different ethnic groups (see Shibutani and Kwan 1965 on the effect of perceptions of difference fueled by a lack of opportunities to gain knowledge about others).

On the other hand, geographic characteristics prevent co-ethnics from establishing a tightly knit, densely connected ethnic community, even though a sufficiently large number of ethnic social organizations is available in South Orange County. Immigrants do not see each other on a daily basis, which reduces some aspects of social control. A visible result is fluctuating membership rates and group compositions. These circumstances actually provide opportunities for ethnic groups to establish weak links to other social groups within the mainstream society.

In addition to the results of the hypotheses test discussed in the previous chapter, another way to identify the factors that influence interaction patterns is to think of them as centripetal and centrifugal forces that either link people together or drive them apart. Since intraethnic relations, (i.e., the extent to which co-ethnics are drawn to each other) influence interethnic relations, these effects are discussed separately for within group and between group interactions.

**Centripetal and Centrifugal Forces Towards Intraethnic Integration**

A centripetal force that increases chances for cohesion among co-ethnics, or in other words intraethnic integration, is the fact that the majority of ethnic Taiwanese and Chinese living throughout South Orange County are rather homogenous in terms of financial assets and educational achievement at the household level. This is supported by informants' emphasis on 'similar backgrounds' as the main criteria for making friends and joining others in social activities. The perception of stark difference between their own culture and that of the host culture, especially different approaches to establishing relationships (see description in the last part of chapter 6), also increases the tendency to engage more with co-ethnics. Affinity is also sought due to difficulties with the English language either as a result of problems with pronunciation or with the expression of thoughts. The shared interest in the well-being of their children and their children's educational opportunities and maintenance of their native language abilities further strengthens identification with other immigrants from Taiwan.

Forces that work as dividers among immigrants from Taiwan are dispersed settlements, availability of media sources for information needs, and ethnic differences. Although ethnic Taiwanese and ethnic Chinese join organizations and attend social events together, immigrants in South Orange County are aware of each others ethnic affiliations. The Christian churches and the Chambers of Commerce are the only organizations dominated by a single ethnic group. In personal networks strong ties usually occur only between people who share the same ethnicity, mainly because they were former classmates or are family members. The closeness of relationships is reinforced by the fact that they converse in their native language (e.g., Hokkien/Min language). However, informants are linked through moderately strong and weak ties to people of either ethnicity.

The main complications come from differences in political opinions regarding the reunification of Taiwan with mainland China. Just as in Taiwan, not all ethnic Taiwanese are strictly opposed and not all ethnic Chinese are completely in support. The main effect of these variations in ideology and affiliations is that there is not one unified view and identification among immigrants from Taiwan. These differences contribute to the fact that the community is only moderately connected and does not stand as one, although immigrants distinguish between themselves and immigrants who arrived directly from mainland China. Nevertheless, in the future, ethnicity might

play a bigger role, since more recent immigrants, members of the third and fourth cohort, are predominantly ethnic Taiwanese.<sup>1</sup>

The fact that immigrants do not cluster in subdivisions makes them less accessible to each other for everyday assistance. Immigrants who move into any of the master plan communities of South Orange County are not in need of instrumental support from co-ethnics. In fact, there are hardly any ethnic social welfare organizations or mutual aid associations compared to other areas in California with higher ethnic concentrations (see Wang 1993, Rose 1998). Real estate agents and investment analysts have taken over the role of assisting recent immigrants and new residents in their first steps towards acclimatization to the new environment, which seems appropriate given their levels of financial and human capital. In addition, ethnic and mainstream media sources provide further information on shopping opportunities, services, and social events. This easy access to "knowledge" makes it even less necessary to nurture relationships for the sole reason of preparing for a future situation in which a recommendation or assistance is needed (e.g., to get faster service at a car repair shop, to get access to a medical specialist, etc.). In other words, the development of 'guanxi' ties has become less essential for social and economic success (Lee and Tse 1994).

Instead, the main purpose of establishing relationships in South Orange County is to socialize and maybe even find spiritual guidance. A few people struggle initially with finding such contacts. However, over time many new residents to the area, especially women, appreciate the benefits brought by the highly dispersed co-ethnic settlement. They can choose with whom they want to interact and accrue mutual obligations. For some this is a continuation of their experience in Taiwan's large cities, where urban residents and some migrants who arrived from the rural areas *"have taken advantage of the possibility for anonymity and lack of community or lineage social control and have forged a new and freer life for themselves in the city"* (Gallin 1978: 279). Indeed, life in the master plan communities of Orange County removes people even further from demands of kin group members and neighbors and related obligations, supporting the findings of comparable network studies in urbanized areas (Marsh and Hsu 1995, Henning and Lieberg 1996).

However, this escape from social responsibilities is only possible if immigrants keep their engagement in ethnic organizations to a minimum. The more social groups they join and the more actively involved they become, the more likely it is that their social life will resemble the social

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<sup>1</sup> As the number of ethnic Taiwanese in South Orange County, which is already slightly larger than that of ethnic Chinese, increases further, there might develop more distinctly ethnic Taiwanese community organizations.

world of a rural village in Taiwan, or a Chinatown of the past. The increased volume of social control and exposure to potential gossip, in particular, affects women whose spouse lives in Taiwan.

### **Centrifugal and Centripetal Forces Towards Interethnic Integration**

Turning to the centripetal and centrifugal forces that influence the relationships between members of different ethnic groups, it becomes clear that some previous theories regarding these effects have to be questioned. This study began with the expectation that the design of master plan subdivisions, as well as the socioeconomic characteristics of most immigrants from Taiwan, would act as centripetal forces, bringing residents of various ethnic backgrounds into close contact with each other. This was not the case. However, expectations regarding centrifugal effects in relation to transnational activities were also not supported. Many people in South Orange County are busy and constantly engaged in business travel or leisure activities. Frequent coming and going is nothing unusual in the master plan communities of the area. These activities are not per se an obstacle to the establishment of relationships.

The number and variety of ethnic social organizations, especially recreational groups, the ethnic media, and the seeming absence of any economic costs to ethnic attachment, however, have a dividing effect. In a fast changing world ethnic groups offer an alternative to the impersonality associated with the temporary and passing encounters in the social spheres of decentralized urban spaces. Since most activities of interest are offered both by mainstream organizations and groups of co-ethnics, the choice is usually one of comfort, that is, being in the company of people with similar cultural backgrounds and experience.

The availability and scope of ethnic media functions as a divider between immigrants from Taiwan and other residents in South Orange County in the sense that it keeps people from sharing the same stories and information during conversations at work,<sup>2</sup> or in casual chats, however seldom they might occur, with neighbors or fellow parents of a different ethnic background. Although ethnic Chinese and Taiwanese are usually exposed to the same content on national and global news as members of other groups, and follow the local events as they see fit, other Americans might not have the same interests and information sources on developments in Taiwan

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<sup>2</sup> An often cited example of conversations at work are talk at the infamous "water-cooler". The "water-cooler" is considered the unofficial meeting place in corporate America. Employees run into each other at the water dispenser. This circumstance for communications is often mentioned when newspaper analysts comment on "what America talks about". Public opinion is allegedly generated and disseminated at these locations.

and East Asia in general. The emphasis presented by the regional Chinese TV stations on incidents in California often are also different from those of mainstream broadcasters. Ethnic media has two spheres of influence regarding interaction patterns, that are centrifugal in effect on both intraethnic and interethnic integration. It allows co-ethnics to be less reliant on one another for assistance and it keeps co-ethnics from fully identifying with the mainstream society in their region. If immigrants see themselves as different from other Americans living in their area, they are likely to resist joining community organizations in the society at large and integration is less likely to take place (Popielarz and McPherson 1995).

Another dividing force between different ethnic groups is evident in the fact that highly skilled immigrants are able to participate in the national economy (i.e., they are economically assimilated), but in the social sphere continue to be almost exclusively attached to their own ethnic group. In terms of general access to high paying jobs in their field of expertise, ethnic Chinese and Taiwanese graduates of American universities suffer no immediate disadvantages if they refrain from socializing with co-workers from other ethnic backgrounds after work (see Reitz and Sklar 1997).<sup>3</sup>

Centripetal forces that serve to bring people of various ethnic backgrounds together throughout South Orange County are related to professional and religious organizations and to the important role played by children and women. Although according to Fischer *"urbanism encourages individuals' involvement in hobby-based subcultures but fails to show that urbanism increases involvement in job-based subcultures"* (Fischer 1995: 559), meaning there is not much widespread interest in joining professional associations, findings from this study give reason to conclude that these professional associations are more likely to provide opportunities for integration than other community organizations. Ethnic professional associations represent the interests of their members at the local, regional and national level for the country in which they live. That opens avenues for cooperation with similar representatives of other ethnic groups in the mainstream society. In addition, members are usually structurally assimilated to the economic sector (i.e., to secondary institutions of the society) and have weak ties to a diverse group of people at the workplace. The analysis showed that the likelihood of non-ethnic alters in personal networks increases with the number of social organizations in which a person is involved.

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<sup>3</sup> There is a twist to this notion as seen further below. There is a difference between economic costs and social costs of ethnic attachment.

However, this only applies for membership in groups that meet on a quarterly or yearly basis ( i.e., cultural, professional and political associations).

Religious organizations have potential for increased interaction with core society institutions as well, since they may attend the same charity events and often share similar beliefs with other religious groups in the society at large. Several Christian churches have separate chapters and religious services for Mandarin, Hokkien, Cantonese, and English speaking groups under one roof. Interests in the teachings of Buddhism also brings people of various backgrounds together (especially in California). Ethnic recreational groups, however, as well as alumni associations, are not likely to contribute to the integration process.

Immigrant children play an important role in bringing people together. As the analysis showed, parents of school aged children born in the United States have the highest proportion of non-ethnic network members. Children have the potential to act as bridges between diverse groups of people (Hiebert 1998). In the case of immigrants from Taiwan, relationships between parents are one of the best opportunities for interethnic interaction, if, that is, interaction at school events goes beyond polite greetings and problems with English (e.g., pronunciation, emphasis) and topics of conversation do not get in the way.

Finally, findings of this study give reason to conclude that women are more likely than men to respond to opportunities for interaction with members of the larger society. This suggestion is mainly derived from observations of different coping strategies and attitudes towards life in America. Additionally, this study confirms the findings of other research that in contrast to men, women are often reluctant to return to their country of origin, because they might have to give up some of the advantages they have gained while living abroad (Leonardo 1987, Gmelch 1995, Ong 1996, Foner 1998, Pessar 1999, Hongdagneu-Sotolo 1999, 2000).

Although many ethnic Chinese and Taiwanese women find life in the seemingly endless sprawl of subdivisions and the undistinguishable rows of tract housing in Southern California "dull" and rather uneventful, they enjoy the fact that they have even more freedom from kinship and neighborhood obligations than experienced in urban Taiwan. They also feel a sense of relief that there is less need to weave and maintain social connections and they have more time for pursuing recreational interests. Many actually prefer the decrease in network size when moving to the United States. Nevertheless, they are interested in customs and attitudes of mainstream America and many like the opportunities for self-expression that women have in the United States. Lack of fluency in English is the main obstacle for many homemakers who are actually very interested to

learn more about the life of other people in South Orange County. These tendencies also show that the wide-spread assumption in American society that women establish and maintain social relationships more actively than men, extends to immigrants as well, or as Wellman and Wortley conclude in their findings on personal network structures "*men fix things, women fix relationships*" (1990: 582).

This is not to say that life in America is without any hardships for female immigrants. The psychological stress of having an 'astronaut' husband has an effect on some women whose husbands are neither present nor completely absent from day-to-day activities. They have to accommodate their husband's schedule rather than their own interests (Wong 1998, Waters 2000). For some women whose husband is mostly absent, spending most of the time in East Asia and often with a substitute wife, their freedom in America does not go far enough since co-ethnics would not approve of their affiliations with other partners.

Men who moved to South Orange County, on the other hand, experience a different set of limitations. Unlike women they often come to the conclusion that life in Taiwan has more to offer than life in America. Although few turn their thoughts into action, many immigrants contemplate a return to Taiwan or a change in their occupation to entrepreneurship involving frequent travel to East Asia. The myth of "America the land of unending potential and opportunities" may not necessarily become reality for them. They are disappointed about the lack of jobs available that present them with status recognitions comparable to their previous occupation in Taiwan or the occupations their education would have given them access to in Taiwan. Although immigrants who came as students in the 1960's and 1970's and chose to stay in the United States have landed well-paying jobs in their field of expertise, these positions have comparably lower status than the same job would hold in Taiwan. Male informants often reported that in the United States they are just "one of the boys" within their respective companies. Not only do they sense a glass ceiling for Asian Americans in U.S. companies, they also mourn the lack of opportunities to gain wide-spread social recognition since their social playing field is reduced almost exclusively to the ethnic community.

Ethnic Chinese and Taiwanese men working in the United States basically have to struggle with the fact that, despite the global compatibility of their education and their professional skills, immigration takes a toll. Any adaptation and familiarization process to a new environment requires time, especially regarding the establishment of lasting social relationships. As much as it is possible to enter a company at a high level, in terms of social interaction, immigrants have to



become accustomed to the appropriate social customs and formalities gradually and from the bottom up. In this respect, the notion that "*ethnic attachment carries no economic costs*" put forth by Reitz and Sklar (1997) needs to be reconsidered. For the group of immigrants from Taiwan such a notion may apply from a financial point of view. However, from the point of view of personal satisfaction it causes a real dilemma. The comfort of interaction with co-ethnics stands against the social costs of not interacting with co-workers outside of work. Eventually, the lack of social interaction with the mainstream colleagues contributes to the perceived glass ceiling for the career aspirations of ethnic employees (Fong 1998).<sup>4</sup>

However, aside from the opportunities for socializing and the willingness to copy American behavior patterns, there are limits to the possibility of eliminating these hurdles for immigrants who arrived at a later stage in life. Members of the 1.5 generation of immigrants, who have been partly enculturated in America, have a clear advantage in this process. In addition, interaction with phenotypically different immigrants continues to be an issue in some circles of American society. The combination of these aspects gives reason to question the continuation of immigration flows of affluent, highly skilled professionals from Taiwan in the near future.

A summary of the comparison between centripetal and centrifugal forces that effect both intraethnic integration, referring to interaction and cohesion within an ethnic group, and interethnic integration, referring to interaction between members of different ethnic groups (e.g., an ethnic group and the mainstream society), is provided in table 10.1.

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<sup>4</sup> Fong (1998) reports that workshops are offered to Asian graduate students about to enter the job world in the United States. They are introduced to the importance of sports games, especially the practice of watching sports, American drinking habits and dating rules. Many also receive assistance in reducing a thick English accent.

**Table 10.1 Comparison of the centripetal forces that increase integration and the centrifugal forces that decrease integration both within ethnic groups and between ethnic groups**

	Features	Centripetal effects	Centrifugal effects
Intraethnic integration	gender	women have shared interests in children and recreational activities	men mourn lack of opportunities for achieving social status, 'astronaut wives' fear gossip
	children	shared interests in education of children	competition regarding children's achievement is unnerving
	language	feelings of comfort and acceptance	use of Taiwanese instead of Mandarin
	ethnicity	joint background brings people together	different affiliations and ideologies prevent a sense of unity
	media	shared information	no need to ask co-ethnics for assistance
	number of organizations	more organizations provide more opportunities to meet co-ethnics	large numbers might lead to disjoint clustering in the future
	type of organization	recreational organizations are preferred meeting spaces for co-ethnics and show the highest overlap	over reliance on alumni associations or political association could lead to lower rates of overlapping organizations
Interethnic integration	gender	women's attitude towards inter-ethnic interaction is positive	men's attitude is characterized by indifference, disappointment
	children	meeting at school events brings parents together	once children leave home, no more opportunities for interaction
	language	English proficiency enables communication	problems in deciphering accents make communication difficult
	ethnicity	identification as Americans lessens ethnic divide	different cultural experiences (e.g., upbringing)
	media	American TV and movies present opportunities for joint experiences	different sources of information present no opportunity for exchange of thoughts
	number of organizations	low availability of co-ethnic organizations may promote more membership in other ethnic organizations	no incentive to join other organizations but those of co-ethnics
	type of organization	professional associations and religious organizations provide bridges to each other based on joint interests	recreational and alumni associations provide no opportunity for joining by members of other ethnic groups

The overall finding of this research is that the ethnic community of ethnic Chinese and Taiwanese is integrated to the mainstream society in the economic sphere, but forms its own social enclave within the greater social sphere of life in Southern California. While the economic spheres of interaction overlap locally, nationally and globally, so far the social communities of South Orange County residents with diverse ethnic backgrounds exist parallel to one another.<sup>5</sup> However, findings of this study also give reason to expect that the situation of immigrants from Taiwan eventually will become comparable to that of second and third generation Japanese Americans, who allegedly are structurally assimilated while maintaining a high level of ethnic group cohesiveness (Fugita and O'Brien 1991).

Findings on Japanese American communities show that the relationship between assimilation and ethnic group cohesiveness is influenced by cultural predisposition, structural opportunities, and demographic characteristics (Fugita and O'Brien 1991: 182). Structural opportunities and demographic characteristics of immigrants from Taiwan to South Orange County have been discussed in depth. The reference to cultural predisposition brings to mind the emphasis of Chinese culture on shared common background for finding interaction partners. Thus, it is important to understand the extent to which both the mainstream society, but also the ethnic community, tolerate ethnically mixed networks in the social sphere. Since the present data is not sufficient to answer the question of tolerance of ethnically mixed networks satisfactorily, additional research is needed. Further investigation on the change of membership affiliations in ethnic community organizations over time would be a useful contribution to this end.

Insights on intraethnic and interethnic integration are meaningful for the future of ethnic harmony in the diverse place that is California.<sup>6</sup> A further extension of these ideas might be applicable to the process of immigrant incorporation in other nation-states.

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<sup>5</sup> The notion of "parallel communities" is borrowed from McBroome 1993.

<sup>6</sup> Harmony between ethnic groups living in the affluent areas of Southern California might be upset in a new twist to the fight for resources, such as prices of luxury goods and access to educational institutions. Though not all Taiwanese Americans are high academic achievers, their proportion of successful applicants to Ivy League Universities and the cheaper but acclaimed University of California system is higher than the average. Although "affirmative action" which benefits ethnic minorities in the selection process for slots at universities, has been abolished in California, the number of Asian Americans entering the universities in California continues to be large. The proportion of Asian American and recent Asian immigrants at the University of California, Irvine, which is local to Orange County and therefore highly desired by all residents of the area, is almost 70% (according to UCI statistics). This gave the university the nickname "UCI = University of Chinese Immigrants". This might create animosities and resentment towards Asian Americans in the near future.



# Appendix

## A. Overview of the History of U.S. Immigration Policy

Historically, immigration policy can be summarized in five time periods (Bernard 1998: 48). The 'colonial era' from 1609 to 1775 was characterized by advertising and recruiting of newcomers. However, each colony had different preferences, for example for people from similar specific religious backgrounds. The time period attracted mainly farmers, workers, artisans, and tradesmen who had been dislodged by a changing European economy. They settled in the individual colonies according to previously established ties based on joint geographic or religious heritage. The 'open door era' between 1776 and 1881 was very much driven by the need for more labor. Several territorial governments throughout the settled areas of the United States at the time, established immigration offices to attract newcomers and advertised the advantages and opportunities of their region throughout Europe (Bernard 1998: 53-55).

The third period is known as the 'era of regulation', taking place between 1882 and 1916. The flow of immigrants had been so magnificent and the burden of accommodating new arrivals so heavy on a few select cities, that the U.S. Congress decided on a set of laws to regulate and monitor the immigration process. The goal was to admit only the employable and healthy. Many regulations and rules of exclusion were aimed at immigrants from Asia, mainly Chinese immigrants (e.g., the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882), who had arrived in large numbers willing to work for very little money. In addition, the Expatriation Act of 1907 declared that an American woman who married a foreign national would lose her citizenship. This law was repealed in 1924 (Cable Act) for most foreign nationals but upheld for women marrying Asians. The large influx of eastern and southern Europeans was considered a major problem as well. Throughout this period several acts to regulate immigrant approval were drafted, implemented, changed and redefined. All of them had the establishment of rationales for rejection as their goal.

This was even more emphasized during the following period of immigration policy which lasted from 1917 to 1964, the 'era of restriction'. During this period a quota system for acceptance and rejection of members of separate nationalities and entrance tests were implemented. The Quota Act was first introduced in 1921 with a limitation of the annual number of entrants of each admissible nationality to 3 percent of the foreign-born people of that nationality as listed in the U.S. Census of 1910. As soon as 1924 the Quota Act was restricted further with the implementation of the Johnson-Reed Act and allowed only 2 percent of foreign born of any

nationality recorded by the 1890 census. This national origins system was created to prevent more changes in the ethnic composition of American society to take place. Its goal was to encourage more "assimiable" groups to enter the United States in reference to the people already occupying the territory there (Bernard 1998: 61). The system did not distinguish between immigrants and refugees which lead to a rejection of numerous World War II escapees in keeping with the annual quotas. The Refugee Relief Act of 1953 did change this practice, yet the exclusionary principle of national origins based on fixed quotas remained (McCarran-Walter Act of 1952). However, the restrictions on immigrants from Asia were slightly eased and introduced a first step towards liberalization.

After the second world war American attitudes towards foreign peoples began to change and the new self-image of the United States as the leader of the "free world" initiated calls for a reevaluation of the restrictive nature of immigration policies. The fifth period of policy making, which began in 1965 and has lasted until today, reflects this new tendency: the 'era of liberalization'. The quota system according to national origins was replaced with an increased overall ceiling for annual immigration. As a result the allotment of visas for newcomers from the Eastern hemisphere amounted to 170,000 visas, one third more than visas for newcomers from the Western hemisphere (Bernard 1998: 70). This distribution was adjusted to equal portions of visas for Eastern and Western Hemisphere immigrants in 1976. However, until today, all applicants get approval on a "first-come, first-serve basis". No country can be assigned more than 20,000 visas annually. The biggest change is nevertheless the equal treatment and access for applicants from countries of Asia, Central and South America and others who had been previously at a disadvantage.

The custom of preferential treatment for family members and skilled individuals which had been in use during the previous period of immigration policy was continued during the liberalization era. The same holds true for non-quota regulations for non-citizen family members of U.S. citizens. In addition, refugees from all countries of the world were admitted under parole without numerical limitations according to need. This reform bill of the immigration policy, named the Hart-Celler Act after the two Congress men who sponsored the bill initiated by the late president John F. Kennedy, reached Congress in 1965 and began to show its first results in the year 1968. For example, India had sent 300 immigrants in 1965, but for 1975 the number of immigrants from India was listed as 14,000 (Bernard 1998: 71).

The Immigration Act of 1990 was a major revision of the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965, that remained basic immigration law. It continued the spirit of the 'liberalization era'. It included an increase in total immigration under an overall flexible cap, especially an annual employment-based immigration from 54,000 to 140,000 immigrants, and a permanent provision for the admission of "diversity immigrants" from "underrepresented" countries (i.e., countries of Western Europe). The overall number of immigrants per year became 700,000 starting in 1992. In addition, temporary admission was granted to some and made immigration more accessible in the work-related nonimmigrant categories (U.S. government INS 1995). The main aim of this act was to open the borders wider for legal migration of skilled laborers and to make it harder for undocumented illegal immigrants to enter the United States.

### **B. List of Ethnic Community Organizations in South Orange County**

- ca1 South Coast Chinese Cultural Association (SCCCA)
- ca2 Hakka Chinese Association, Irvine Branch
- ca3 Evergreen Chinese Senior Citizen Association
- ca4 Santa Ana Senior Citizen Club
- pr5 Chinese American Chamber of Commerce (OCCACC)
- pr6 Taiwanese American Chamber of Commerce (TCCOC)
- pr7 Doctor and Dentist Association (TMDAOC)
- pr8 North American Taiwanese Professor Association
- pr9 Chinese Computer Association
- pr10 Chinese Hotel and Motel Association
- pr11 Lions Club
- po12 Taiwanese Association (OCTA)
- po13 Taiwanese American Citizen League (TACL)
  
- aa14 BeiYi Nuezhong Highschool
- aa15 Jianzhu/Jian Highschool
- aa16 Jinmei Nüzhong Highschool
- aa17 SongSan Junior Highschool
- aa18 Zhanghua Highschool
- aa19 Zhongsan Nüzhong
- aa20 UCI alumni
- aa21 Cheng Gong University
- aa22 Chung-li University
- aa23 Zhengzhi University
- aa24 Donghai University
- aa25 Furen University
- aa26 Taiwan Normal (Shifan) University
- aa27 Jiaotong University

aa28 Mingchuan University  
aa29 Taiwan University  
aa30 Taiwan Medical College  
aa31 Taiwan Music College

rel32 E.F.C. Taifu Church  
rel33 Baptist Church  
rel34 Evangelical Church  
rel35 Taiwanese Presbyterian  
rel36 Canaan Church  
rel37 Church of Irvine  
rel38 Peace Evangelical Church, LH  
rel39 E.F.C. Garden Grove  
rel40 Tzu-Ch'i Buddhist Organization  
rel41 Tibetan Buddhism Prayer Group, Irvine  
rel42 Buddhist Prayer Group, Hacienda Heights  
rel43 Yiguan Dao temple

ki44 Irvine Chinese School  
ki45 Fountain Valley Chinese School  
ki46 Westminster Chinese School  
ki47 Chinese PTO Woodbridge High  
ki48 Chinese PTO University High

rec49 Irvine Chinese Chorus  
rec50 Chinese Folk Dance Group  
rec51 Lake Forest Choir  
rec52 HuaYin Traditional Chinese Orchestra  
rec53 Ballroom Dance Shauna Lee  
rec54 Ballroom Dance Jason and Lilly  
rec55 Tap Dance Group  
rec56 Chinese Chapter of Philharmonic Society  
rec57 Tennis at Woodbridge  
rec58 Golf at SCCCA  
rec59 Voice training course by Mrs. Huang  
rtr 60 Adult School, Irvine  
rtr 61 Adult School of Ft.Vlly/HB  
rtr 62 Toastmaster Club



**C. Structured Interview Questions**

			#
name	sex	place of living	education
location of interview	age	years in California	job/occupation
date	place of birth	years in US	family members in US
time /duration	phone #	other places/loc. in US	family member outside US
language: M / E	tape: yes / no	city in Taiwan: language: M / T	Visa
			referral                      yes/no

**I. History / Biography**

How long have you lived in Orange County?  
6 month / 2 years / 5 years / 10 years

What were the reasons to choose Orange County?  
friends / weather / school

Have you lived anywhere else in the US?

What were the reasons to leave your home country?

How long have you lived in your present home?

What were the reasons to choose this particular neighborhood?  
What were the reasons to choose this particular house?

Do you have any immediate family - such as brothers, sister, parents, children living in this area?  
Within an hours drive?

Who is that in relation to you?

Which child in the line or sibligns are you? oldest? youngest?

What number in the line of sibling is your spouse?

Who else of your extenden family and kin group lives in the US?

Does everyone in your kin group have many siblings?

Where do your parents live?

Where do your spouse's parents live?

If they are deceased, where did you bury them?

How old are your children?

What do your children do?

Circumstances back in Taiwan:

Which school did you attend? Which high school? Which university?  
How about your spouses schooling? high school? university?  
Your children?  
Your siblings? brothers? sisters?

What do you do for a living?  
Did you always do that?  
What did you study?

What does your spouse do for a living?

Who was your first contact in the US?  
Who was your first contact in California? Irvine?

## **II. Membership in Organizations**

What kind of things do you like to do in free time?

Whom do you enjoy the above activities with?  
How did you hear about it?

Which other social organizations do you attend?  
Who else you know is a member?  
How often does this group meet?  
How did you learn about it?

What do you do regularly on Mondays? Tuesdays? Wednesdays? Thursdays? Fridays? Saturdays?  
Sundays?

Which organizations did you attend in the past?

Is your child in a Chinese school? Which one?

Do you have musical interests? concert? opera? theater?  
Do you have any sports interests?  
Do you attend any meetings or gatherings in Monterey Park? anywhere else in the San Gabriel  
Valley?

Do you still belong to any organization back in your home country?  
Which one? How do you keep contact?

## **III. Social interaction partners**

Whom do you consider to be a friend?  
Where did you meet? How long have you known each other?

How do you differentiate between friends?

Do you have friends at work? In your neighborhood? At your social activities? At your child's school? At your church?

for each person mentioned:

sex									
age									
ethnic group									
place of living									
time spent in U.S.									
context of first meeting									
role									
frequency of meeting									
English ability									
importance (rank from 1-7)									

Who do you talk to about issues occurring in the neighborhood?

Who do you talk to about issues occurring at the workplace?

Who do you talk to about issues related to your child's education and development?

Who do you go shopping with?

Who do you go out to dinner with at least once a month?

Who have you invited to your house for a cup of tea or dinner in the past half year?

Who do you ask to join you in a new recreational activity?

Whom do you ask to join you in a new organization?

With whom do you discuss important issues with - problems with you partner, your child, change of live situation?

With whom do you talk if you are feeling depressed?

Who contacts you to talk about their depression or their problems with spouses or children?

Who asks you for information? Whom do you help?

#### IV. Channels of Information

for each person mentioned:

sex									
age									
ethnic group									
place of living									
time spent in U.S.									
context of first meeting									
role									
frequency of meeting									
English ability									
importance (rank from 1-7)									

How did you find your home? Who helped you?

How did you find your current job? Whom do you ask if you need to change jobs?

How do you go about financial information? Who gives you information? How did you decide?

How do you find information about insurance and health care?

How did you decide which car dealer to go to?

How do you find out about social activities?

#### IV. Global relations

With whom do you have contact in Taiwan? How do you keep contact?

How often do you call someone in Taiwan? Whom do you call? What is the purpose/intention?

What are the monthly costs?

How often do you fly back to Taiwan? What is the purpose/intention?

How often does your spouse fly back? If spouse in Taiwan: How often does your spouse come to the United States?

Do you visit mainland China? Who in your family does?

Do your children travel to Taiwan? How often? With whom do they keep contact?

#### V. Referrals

Is a list (roster) of organization members available?

Is it possible to be referred to one or more of your friends for an interview?

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