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CULTURE, IDENTITY, AND EDUCATION: AN EXPLORATION OF CULTURAL INFLUENCES ON ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

Judy M.Y. Lee
Department of Sociology
McGill University, Montreal
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I dedicate this thesis to the first Chinese who sailed to North America; to my parents who gave me education; and to my God whose creation inspires my mind to soar.

ABSTRACT

Cultural influences on educational achievement were explored in this study of Chinese university students. Academic choices, goals, and performance in relation to family background, ethnic identity, and cultural socialization were ascertained through semi-structure interviews and questionnaires. The sample of thirty-two McGill University students represented a cross section of majors, and were selected into groups based on length of residency in Canada. Data from university records, which showed the evolution of Chinese enrollment and achievement patterns over the last three decades, provided the historical context for the interviews. Major themes regarding family and ethnic identity emerged which suggest that educational ambitions may be socioeconomically motivated, and rooted in an ethnic minority's aspiration for upward mobility. However, the key facilitator of educational success is a strong home background and family system, which was able to promote and enforce a single-minded pursuit of education.

ABSTRAIT

Cette étude analyse l'effect des influences culturelles sur le rendement scolaire des trente-trois étudiants Chinois à l'Université McGill. Une analyse des choix académiques, les buts, ainsi que la performance académique par rapport à l'origine familiale, l'identité ethnique et la socialisation culturelle de ces étudiants s'est faite par moyen d'entrevues plus ou moins structurés et quelques sondages. Le contexte historique des entrevues s'est établi à partir des dossiers universitaires démontrant l'évolution de l'inscription et la réussite des étudiants Chinois pendant les trois dernières décennies. Les thèmes majeurs de la famille et l'identité ethnique se sont ressortis au long du travail, ce qui suggère que les attentes éducatives sont directment reliées au niveau socio-économique de l'étudiant. Il se peut que ces attentes soient également reliées à l'aspiration d'une minorité à la mobilité économique. Le catalyseur principal du succés académique, cependant, demeure un fort réseau de soutien chez la famille ainsi qu'une atmosphère familiale qui encourage une volonté de tout faire en vue de s'éduquer.

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INTRODUCTION

Ethnic stratification in North America is largely due to differences in inter-generational mobility, which have their roots partly in differential success within the educational system. Only some ethnic groups have been able to utilize education and achieve socioeconomic mobility in this way, suggesting that perhaps cultural factors among others, may be at work. The proposed research attempts to explore the "black box" of culture by examining the relationship between ethnic culture, as indicated by the degree of ethnic identity retention, and a specific form of achievement behaviour, namely educational achievement, for a sample of Chinese students at McGill University.

Much media attention has recently focused on the extraordinary achievement of Asian students. There is an implicit suggestion of a cultural phenomenon at work which produces highly motivated and successful students. This study attempts to explore the relationship between Chinese culture and the educational performance of Chinese College students. It builds on previous studies of Chinese students (Sue & Zane, 1985; Mordkowitz & Ginsburg, 1987). I will examine the academic attitudes, family environment, and life goals of North American born or raised, and recent immigrant or foreign Chinese students in relation to their academic choices and performance. Moreover, I shall introduce an explicit component of culture - ethnic identity - and explore the degree to which this may be the intervening link to academic success.

The study will begin with a review of the relevant literature and past research on ethnic stratification and Asian achievement, and will focus in on the research question. I will then give brief reviews of classical Chinese culture, ethnic identity, and the history of the Chinese in Canada. The next section, the actual research,

is a presentation of findings from interviews with thirty two Chinese McGill students. A discussion of these findings will follow. In the Appendix, I present a structural review of enrollment and achievement patterns of Chinese students at McGill University over the last three decades.

I. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND PAST RESEARCH

1. Ethnic Stratification: The Structural versus Cultural Debate

The differential socioeconomic achievement of ethnic groups in North America has elicited competing cultural and structural explanations for ethnic stratification. In general, structural explanations focus on societal institutions as determinants of inequality whereas cultural explanations focus on characteristics of the individual or a specific cultural group. Structural explanations vary from disadvantage or institutional theories of racism and discrimination, to exploitation in the labour market, to historical and demographic factors affecting both the minority group and the host society. Early theories of race and ethnic relations (ie. Park, 1950; Gordon, 1964) proposed disadvantage theories which view discrimination and white racism as a dysfunction to society. Ethnic conflict will decrease once immigrant groups have assimilated. (Yet to date, groups have not completely assimilated and ethnic cohesion persists.) Later structural proponents, with a more historical focus on the structural conditions of the host society, emphasised the economic basis of ethnic inequality. Cox's class theory (Cox, 1948); Becker's cost of discrimination (1971); Hecther's cultural division of labour (1975); and Bonacich's split labour market (1972; 1975) are all attempts to explain how the structure of the capitalist economy sets the parameter of opportunities for social groups. Barriers such as institutionalized discrimination; social and economic oppression; and labour market competition have served to prevent minority groups from attaining socio-economic parity with the dominant society. Some variants of structural theories account for the characteristics of the immigrant and the resources they bring with them to their new country. These theories are premised on the belief that

migration is a selective process that attracts the more motivated and talented within a population (Blau & Duncan, 1967; Chiswick, 1979) and that groups do not necessarily start at the same level in North America, or with the same historical purpose (Steinberg, 1981; Hirschman & Wong, 1986). Nee and Wong (1985) for example, suggest that the weaker village ties of the Japanese allowed them to begin family formation earlier and make the transition between sojourner to immigrant faster than the Chinese.

Structural theories also often take the form of status-attainment models (Duncan and Duncan, 1968; Featherman 1971) as applied to ethnic stratification. These studies affirm the importance of structural variables (marketable resources or skills and credentials that individuals bring to the labour market) although a substantial portion of inequality remains unexplained. Also related to this theme are studies which focus on changing demographic (sex ratios, fertility, geographic locations, and ethnic-racial composition of local labour markets) and occupational structures of the host society. For example, Lyman (1974) compares the Japanese and Chinese in North America, citing different immigration experiences and historical processes that delayed family formation among the Chinese to explain differential participation in the labour market and assimilation trends.

These theories, sometimes categorized as "resource" theories contain strong cultural elements while maintaining structural variables. Thus, the more complex and useful structural explanations cannot escape a cultural dimension and need to be grounded in the context of the larger society and its historical processes. Structural explanations, therefore, can clearly have cultural bases.

Cultural explanations arose in response to early structural disadvantage theories which were ahistorical and empirically challenged by the success of groups like the Jews

and Asians[1]. Despite having faced strong racism and discrimination, these minority groups have nevertheless attained high inter-generational mobility and were able to translate their resources into economic rewards. Thus, alternative explanations which focus on cultural components became popular. Originating with Weber's Protestant ethic (Weber, 1958), these cultural adaptation theories and their proponents (ie. Rosen, 1959; Glazer, 1975; Sowell, 1975;1981) argue that there are values, beliefs and behaviours specific to certain groups which allow them greater success in the North American context. For example, hard work, thrift, value of education, a future orientation, and postponement of immediate rewards seem characteristic of more successful groups (Sowell, 1975). Caudill and De Vos' (1956) study on Japanese Americans which systematically explored the link between achievement, culture and personality, found Japanese cultural values to resemble those of middle class Americans - traits that are adaptive to achievement in North America.

Spurred on by studies on motivation (McClelland, 1961), Asian achievement (Candill and Devos, 1956), and recent writers such as Glazer and Moynihan (1975) and Sowell (1975;1981), theories with cultural emphasis emerged. They cover a range of ideas including cultural identities (Shibutani and Kwan, 1965); attitudinal profiles (Williams, 1964); ethnic organizations and associations (Light, 1972); and the strength of ascriptive ties (Light, 1972; Bonacich, 1973; Nee & Wong, 1985). Rosen (1959) was the first to suggest that an "achievement orientation" more often characterized specific groups like the Jews. Light (1972) suggests that strong kinship ties among the Chinese allowed

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[1]Although this study will address Chinese educational achievements, the term "Asian" will be used to include those groups considered to be Oriental, such as the Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Vietnamese, etc., but will exclude non-Oriental groups such as the East Indians who are also from Asia.

them to utilize rotating credit associations for success in small business. Though a situational explanation, Bonacich's middleman minority thesis (1973) suggests that the temporal mentality of the Asian sojourners created tendencies towards hard work, thrift, concentration in liquidable occupations, and a future time orientation.

An interesting twist to the cultural theory is Lewis' (1959, 1966b) idea of a "culture of poverty" which suggests that cultural endowments are determined and perpetuated by the structure of one's environments.[2] Thus, as obvious from the review of the last section, the cross over of both sides of the debate tends to cloud the theories. Nevertheless, the role of culture is still hard to dismiss. More recently, the inseparable factors of both culture and structure, and the continuum of explanations in between have lead some to propose conjoint theories that address both levels of cause and effect. For example, Bonacich's middle man minority theory (1973) suggests that sojourner labourers who awaken host hostility respond to it by going into small business, and working hard to enable their return to their homeland. Going even further, Light's dualistic formation of disadvantaged minorities (1979) argues that while disadvantage in the labour market at the structural level affects all minority groups (not just sojourners), it is only groups such as the Asians who had the cultural resources to create small business as a response to the need for non-wage income.

Explanations for Asian achievement, in particular Hirschman and Wong (1986), Li (1988), Light (1974), and Nee

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[2]. Critics of cultural theories argue such explanations are ideologically biased and "victim blaming" (Valentine, 1968), and rooted in tautological and circular reasoning (Lieberson, 1980). These explanations are also hard to defend when cultural values and achievement orientations often reflect more of the consequences of social inequality than its causes (Li, 1988).

& Wong 1985) have argued for a historical contextual analysis. For example, Nee and Wong (1985) argue that a more rigorous cultural argument must examine the historical context of immigration in two aspects: the cultural characteristics that enable the immigrant group to cope with host hostility and compete more effectively once its members arrived in America; and the socio-economic background of the immigrant group in the creation of opportunities for upward mobility. In short, adequate cultural arguments must account not only for the ideological component of the immigrant group but also for the availability of resources in combatting discrimination in the host society.

The above review attempts to show that it is futile to argue for exclusively structural or cultural explanations of ethnic stratification. Most recent research attempts explanations that address both levels. It seems apparent that cultural explorations are still worthy of research. Likewise, the purpose of the present research is not to validate one theory over another but rather to broaden our understanding of cultural forces. The aim of this study is to explore those cultural elements of the Chinese, which in a given historical context, play a part in educational achievement.

2. Educational Attainment

The key to inter-generational mobility and socio-economic parity with the white majority for many immigrant groups has been success in education. It is the educational achievements of these ethnic groups' later generations that have stimulated vigorous debates on the culture versus structure issue. In the United States, Jews and Asians have reached educational parity with other Americans (white) early in this century and later surpassed the schooling levels of most benchmark groups (Lieberson, 1980; Hirschman & Wong, 1986). Hirschman and Wong (1984) argued that in general, Asian Americans approach socioeconomic parity with whites due to over-achievement in educational attainment.[3] Canadian studies show similar trends. Using 1981 Census data, Li (1988) found that persons of Chinese origins (over 15 years and in the labour force) are about twice as likely as the national average to have completed an university education. Much of this may be attributed to the high percentage of foreign born and educated (86%) but even when comparing only native born, the Chinese are just below the Jews in attaining the second highest level of education.

The Jews and the Chinese are examples of successful minorities analyzed in the cultural literature. It is generally assumed that their upward mobility was due largely to a high cultural value placed on education. For Jews, this value stemmed from the Jewish religious emphasis on scholarship. For the Chinese, the direct route to status and advancement (to the Mandarin positions of the government bureaucracy) was through education in classical China. This, along with the high value of education in neo-Confucianist philosophy produced a strong cultural reverence for

[3] The Chinese picture has been complicated by large scale immigration beginning in the 1960s which resulted in a larger proportion of overseas-born Chinese and a lowering of the socio-economic profile.

education. Thus, these cultural explanations generally credit educational achievement to ancient traditions that revered scholarship and learning (Kitano, 1976; Dinnerstein, 1982; Brumberg, 1986). The seminal work by Caudill and DeVos (1956) on Asians suggests an overlap between the value systems of traditional Japanese society and the American middle class, both of which encouraged education. Similar claims about Chinese culture - as exemplified by family unity, respect for elders and those in authority, industry, a high value of education, and personal discipline - have been proposed as the primary cause of the exceptionally high educational achievements of the Chinese in America (Sung, 1967; Hsu, 1971).

However, some structuralists (Lieberson, 1980; Hirschman & Falcon, 1985) have associated parental concern for economic security with the extended schooling of their children; education is a strategic investment in human capital amidst a hostile society. For the Jews, some suggest that they did not act on their educational ambitions until extended schooling was financially both feasible and rewarding (Steinberg, 1981). Slater's classic article, "My Son the Doctor" (1969) has challenged Jewish cultural explanations by arguing that the classical religious Jewish scholarship is not at all conducive to contemporary educational success. For the Asians, Cordes (1984) dismisses the "transplanted culture thesis", suggesting that the influence of Confucian culture on overseas Chinese are overdrawn. Similarly, Ogbu (1983) claims that it is not the Chinese cultural respect for learning and education, nor their family and socialization which propelled them to success in school, but rather their immigrant minority status in North America as sojourners with an original objective of acquiring an education and returning to their homeland. Hirschman and Wong (1981; 1986) argue that the high educational attainment of Asian-Americans has roots in the pre-World War II era where favourable structural

conditions (changes in the occupational structure of the Asian-American population, a somewhat positive rate of occupational return to education, and the economic structure of the state of immigration), were all conducive to Asian-American educational gains. For example, in the early decades of the century, economic progress and the growth of the ethnic economy facilitated educational ambitions for second generation Asians by providing them with economic resources and social incentives to enter the ranks of the "independent professions."

Similar structural arguments rooted in a historical context are echoed by Nee and Wong (1985), who in comparing the Japanese and Chinese also stress the importance of family ties and household types in the timing of socioeconomic attainment and assimilation process of these groups. They suggest that high educational attainment was a response from the minority group to escape the ethnic enclaves and enter the expanding primary labour market in the post WWII advance capitalist economy.

The above studies all essentially propose a structural explanation of a minority group's response to a hostile environment. Granted, complex structural, historical and demographic factors shaped the differential achievement of ethnic groups in education, the influence of cultural elements however, cannot be overlooked. Structural conditions may create the opportunities and rewards for education, but they do not address "how" and "why" one group does better in school. There have been minority groups that have failed in education. Blacks and Hispanics as well as other immigrant groups such as the Irish and Italians, have not been able to utilize education as a means to upward mobility as rapidly as the Jews and Chinese. That some groups have utilized education as a means to achieve inter-generational mobility does point to an adaptive strategy that is worthy of investigation.

3. Research on Asian Students

The extraordinary level of educational attainment among Asian North Americans is buttressed by a wide variety of other evidence including reports on classroom behaviour, test scores, and an over-representation in institutions of higher education.[4] Research on Asian students can be found in literature and journals from sociology, psychology and education, and ranges from within-group studies to cross-cultural studies involving Asians from the Pacific Rim nations.

Cross-cultural studies dispute any genetic explanations of higher intellectual abilities but instead locate explanations to differential experiences at home and at school (Stevenson et al, 1985). For example, Au and Harackiewicz (1986) found that Hong Kong elementary students with higher perceived parental expectations do better on arithmetic tests. Yet, Stigler and Smith (1985) noted that Chinese students from Taiwan underrate their level of competence compared to American children. Hess, McDevitt, and Mei (1987) compared mothers' attribution of their children's math performance among sixth grade Chinese children from China, Chinese-Americans, and Caucasian-Americans. They found that Chinese mothers were low in praise and attributed low performance to lack of effort whereas Caucasian mothers showed unqualified praise and attributed responsibility to external sources; the behaviour of Chinese-American mothers lay somewhere in between. In a comparative study, Yao (1985) found similarities between family characteristics of Asian-American and Anglo-American high achievers in such things as high parental expectations and concern, stable family environments, and close-knit family relationships, although Anglo-American families tended

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[4] See (Bell, 1985; Kitano 1976; Lynman 1974; Vernon 1982; Wong, 1980b).

to be less structured and provided less formal experiences outside school.

There is also the possibility that Asians perform in reaction to stereotypes. Wong (1980; 1981) found that the teacher's positive perception and expectation of Asian students' emotional stability and academic competence, as "model students", proved advantageous to the students. Similarly, negative stereotypes work in reverse. Bannai and Cohen (1985), found that the stereotyped image of Asian students as passive-methodical by teachers prevented them (the students) from being encouraged to develop much needed communication skills.

Research on Asian college students in North America has studied not only their academic patterns in higher education, but also their social psychological profiles. Psychological studies have addressed the non-assertiveness of Asian Americans (eg. Fukuyanma & Greenfield, 1983; Sue & Sue, 1983) and findings suggest that though this may be accurate, non-assertiveness may apply only in certain circumstances. Others have focused on such things as sexual experience and attitudes (Sue, 1982), finding the Chinese to be no different from the rest of the college population. In an interesting study comparing social psychological characteristics of Japanese and Chinese American students, Sue and Kirk (1973) found both groups to differ from other students but to varying degrees; the Japanese consistently occupied an intermediate position between the two groups suggesting differential acculturation due to historical and political circumstances. Sue and Kirk (1972) studied the psychological characteristics of Chinese-American university students, and found them to score higher on quantitative than verbal ability tests; to be more interested in physical, applied sciences and business occupations; to be more conforming and introverted; and to prefer concrete-tangible approaches to life. Sue and Zane's (1985) within-group study of American-

born, American-raised, and recent-immigrant Chinese university students found that beyond GPA scores, the image of the high achieving well-adjusted Chinese is weak and that recent immigrants are less socio-emotionally adjusted. They compensate for their language problems by taking reduced course loads, studying more hours, and limiting career majors.

The general view of these social psychological studies is that Chinese students are doing well in school, but achievement may be limited to specific mathematical non-verbal fields. Additionally, they enlist specific strategies to maintain a high GPA. They may take fewer courses and concentrate in science and math fields. The cost of achievement is also a high one; there is a general implication that Chinese students are psychologically NOT well-adjusted and are too limited in their school experience. They participate little in extra-curricular activities, are generally non-assertive, and have low verbal abilities.

The most recent and comprehensive literature that contains all compiled and available data on the academic achievement of Asian Americans is Jayjia Hsia's "Asian Americans in Higher Education and at Work" (1988). Hsia's book describes the cognitive behaviour among Asian Americans based on historical/anecdotal records; small scale studies of subgroups; well-designed statistically, or physically controlled studies of subgroups; and national survey data with the category of Oriental or Asian Americans (Hsia, 1988:19). A number of consistent themes emerged from these studies on the performance of Asian American students. Asian Americans have single-mindedly invested in education. Low drop out rates for high school students, a high proportion that plan postsecondary education, high college retention and completion rates, and traditional Asian proclivity for scholarly and healing pursuits have earned Asian Americans a strong record in the academic arena.

Most importantly, consistent across all educational surveys and admissions tests, and at all educational levels, there exists a pattern of relatively high mathematical and low verbal abilities held for every cohort of Asian Americans. Actual achievement in school reflects this pattern. Problems in English proficiency seem to exist and related strategies are employed early in the school career. At the college level, this translates to avoiding courses with verbal and written communication requirements and choosing majors in quantitative fields. One study showed that the shorter the time an Asian America senior lived in the U.S., the more likely he or she was to plan a science major, especially in applied sciences (Hsia, 1988:129). Recent Asian immigrants in college have managed to keep up by using several strategies: majoring in subjects that limit classroom participation and written assignments, taking lighter course loads, and spending much more time studying. Even native-born Chinese manifested limited communicative skills in higher educational environments. Such problems have reinforced a pattern of differential concentration in engineering, mathematics, and sciences in contrast to the humanities.

The qualitative section of this thesis is in part based on Mordkowitz and Ginsburgs' (1987) exploration of the home backgrounds of 15 Harvard Asian students (Chinese, Japanese and Koreans) - all children of immigrants. Through qualitative interviews, they uncovered important elements of family structure and value system that were conducive to academic success and helpful against the motivational problem of learned helplessness. Evident in their sample of Asian students, was a generally high value placed on education (and not cognitive scaffolding[5]) which was reinforced by a strong

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[5] This is defined as a sensitive tutoring interaction by parents.

concrete commitment to education. These take the form of allocating economic priority to school-related needs; relocating to communities with better school systems, even immigrating to America for better educational opportunities. The children are well aware of these sacrifices which tend to generate guilt and responsibility but also positive motivation to work hard. Hence, it is a general understanding that the primary obligation of children is to excel in school while the parent's duty is to provide the best possible opportunities for learning. The priority of education is exemplified by the complete lack of pressure to contribute to household chores or family income, and the strong discouragement of part-time work or any activity that might interfere with school. Additionally, performance is attributed to effort, and this along with high expectations motivated students to work hard even without extrinsic rewards or praise. Other motivational tools cited in their study include comparisons to siblings, other families, and to success stories (or role models) in the Asian community. There also is direct oversight into the child's free time and activities, little use of babysitters when young, and no spendable allowance. Finally, there seems to be low verbal interaction within the family which may account for similar low verbal abilities in the school setting.

4. Research Questions

If Chinese students are high achievers, is it because positive values and traits for achievement are more characteristic of the Chinese? Is there anything specifically "Chinese" about their strong academic orientation, or is it just a class or minority status phenomenon associated with the immigration experience and a perception of inferior status, whether real or imagined? And if so, is this adaptive strategy simply a reaction to the structural context of the host society as proposed by some (eg. Li, 1988) or are there underpinning cultural elements at work retained from a Chinese cultural past? Researchers on ethnicity have sought to measure the prevalence of ethnic culture through measures of "ethnic identity", which have been found to decline with generations (Weinfeld, 1981; Isajiw, 1981; Reitz, 1980). Yao (1983) argues that the Chinese-Americans are actually bicultural, possessing characteristics of both Chinese and American culture. Ethnic identification as a measure of Chinese culture now and in the early socialization processes, and its consequence for educational achievement is the focus of this study, which attempts to combine the two areas of research (educational achievement and ethnic identity) in an exploratory analysis. The focus is therefore on students and their cultural identity. However, we need to first begin with a cultural reference point - classical Chinese culture.

II. CLASSICAL CHINESE CULTURE

For this study, the reference point is classical Chinese culture which will be the premise for exploring the retention of what constitutes "Chinese culture" for the Chinese overseas. Yet culture is by nature processual and any ethnic culture transplanted to North America adapts itself, changes, and is transformed (this is the premise of the cultural adaptation thesis). Thus, an analysis of ethnic identity and cultural retention needs to be linked to the past as well as to the present and placed in its proper context. The prototypical study, Slater's "My Son the Doctor" (Slater, 1969) systematically analyzed North American Jews' educational achievements and socio-economic mobility in terms of the Jewish "shtetl". She argued that the high educational achievements of the Jews cannot be linked to traditional Jewish religious education. In the case of the Chinese, there is considerable debate as to whether the Confucian influence on overseas Chinese is valid (Nee & Wong, 1985) or overdrawn (Corbes, 1985). Peter Li (1988) in particular, argues that any cultural influence on the adaptation and survival of the Chinese stemmed from a new Chinese-Canadian culture and not a primordial culture. Hence, in analyzing the achievement of the Chinese, the focus should be on the structure of Canadian society rather than any transplanted traditional culture (Li, 1988:4). Yet culture, even if processual suggests not only change but also a retaining of elements of the past and possibly the traditional culture. Therefore, an exploration into this cultural adaptation thesis would require a cultural reference point. Thus, because classical Chinese culture and the Confucian influence is of relevance to the project at hand, a brief summary of its main features will be presented here.

Any exploration of "classical Chinese culture" requires a discussion on the role of Confucianism[6] in defining the Chinese world view and cultural heritage. Of special importance to the issue of educational achievement is the deeply embedded reverence for education and scholarship in historical China which, as with other enduring aspects of China's cultural past, can be traced to this philosophy. Confucianism by 5th century BC, was the official orthodoxy of Chinese culture and for the next 2000 years maintained the social and political order of Imperial China.

Confucius' greatest contribution was in codifying Chinese culture into philosophical theory; Confucianism was Chinese philosophy. Concerned with the problem of man in society, Chinese philosophy draws a close relationship between the philosophical and political experience. As an all encompassing philosophy of life, a practical code of behaviour, "the Way", it merges the social and political experience into one cultural whole (Dawson, 1978:71). In this sense, the ideals of Confucianism penetrated every stratum of Chinese society as it outlined principles that governed all aspects of social life. For example, the aspiration and pursuit of education as a symbol of status and achievement filtered down even to the level of the peasantry because learning was a socially valued moral cultivation. Finally, what separates the Chinese world view from the civilization of other times is that the Confucian theory of society was accepted by ALL schools of thought in China (Bodde, 1959:49).

Historical and geographical factors helped the consolidation of Chinese culture throughout the centuries by a single philosophy. Confucianism remained intact throughout dynastic China before its complete and final dismantling

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[6] Confucius lived just prior to the beginning of recorded Chinese History (c221 BC).

under the establishment of Mao Tzedong's communism[7]. Hence, the longevity and all encompassing nature of neo-Confucian Chinese culture renders it relevant to any discussion of the Chinese overseas (De Barry ed., 1960). (Also, given that the majority of the parents or grandparents of the subjects interviewed in this study probably left China prior to the Communist takeover and some much earlier, it can be assumed that their inheritance of "Chinese culture" will contain Confucianism influences.) Two main aspects of Chinese culture need to be addressed here; the focus on the family system as the basic social unit, and the high respect for education and its practical implementation, the civil service examinations.

1. The Family System

The basic social unit of the Confucian state was the well ordered family. As a microcosm for the social and political order, the Chinese family system was THE social system of China. Preceded by economic conditions (a rural economy conducive to stability by tying generations to the land) and the practice of ancestor worship (the first to establish the land became the ancestor worshipped), Confucianism only gave it an ethical significance. A large part of Confucianism was and is the rational justification for the family system, or its theoretical expression (Bodde, 1959:43).

The major characteristics of the family system were the subordination of the individual to the group; the young to the aged, the living to the dead (ancestors); the wife to the husband; and the daughter-in-law to the mother-in-law

[7]In certain historical periods, Confucianism was overshadowed by its philosophical and religious rivals, Buddhism and Taoism (although it still exists in the government examinations and as a general code of ethics practised by the people). However, the Confucian revival during the Sung dynasty reestablished it firmly until its fall in the 19th century (De Barry, 1960).

(Bodde, 1959:43). Relationships were never equal but have distinct superior and inferior status within a given hierarchy; duties and responsibilities were clearly defined. Marriage was based on progeny, not romantic love, leading to arranged marriage and concubinage. Females in this strongly patriarchal society were subordinate to males: first to the father, then the husband, then the eldest son. Valued only for her ability to bear sons and so perpetuate the family line, the birth of a girl was "unfortunate" since she was destined to leave the family and worship someone else's ancestors (Dawson, 1978:chp.7). The system of relationships was governed by "li" (propriety), the norms of proper social behaviour. Proper "li" would in turn foster social virtues, the most important virtue being filial piety. The relationship between father and son was the most important of the family relationships accorded by Confucius. The father's duties were to provide moral example, support, training in occupation, and a wife for his son. His son in return owned his total allegiance to his father (Dawson, 1978:141). Examples of filial piety were popular themes in art and literature and the young, schooled early in the proper virtues, were often told stories of immense self-sacrifice for parents.[8] The group insurance offered by the

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[8] Chinese literature and folklore is full of Confucian ideals and it assumes a knowledge of the Confucian classics and Chinese history. History was a "mirror" for later generations to judge themselves. Several Confucian themes have special places in Chinese literature. One is the devoted mother who inspires her son to noble deeds (or of course, examination success) as a result of her wise teaching or great self-sacrifice. In return are themes of filial piety, even of the wife to her husband's parents. Unthinking and uncomplaining devotion to duty is part of the feminine ideal. When love is the central theme, the ideal pair of Chinese lovers is a beautiful maiden and a talented student destined for examination success. The "happily ever after" ending comes only with the birth of numerous sons who received top places in examinations and attain high office. (Dawson, 1978:chp.10)

virtue of filial piety - that by birthright every individual when old can count on the young, had a moral influence throughout centuries in developing strong social fraternity and security (Bodde 1959, 1981).[9]

The centrality of the family is a key variable that almost defines Chinese culture. The very name of an individual symbolizes the supremacy of the family; surnames always precede given names and families with the same surnames form larger clans who act as the larger social organization. The individual was dominated by family and clan in traditional Chinese society: his upbringing, formation of attitude, vocation, public career, social life, material security, and emotional life (Dawson, 1978:chp.7). There were few organizations outside the family. Such intense family solidarity offers insurmountable psychological and emotional security to the individual.

The state social system parallels the family system in that both the social and political unit are one and the same - the family and not the individual. Thus, the family as the microcosm for the larger society stipulates that the family's emphasis on status and hierarchial difference would extend to the greater world. At the family level, proper "li" and the corresponding social virtue of filial piety, along with ancestor worship, gave an individual stimulus to ambition in a career; as it provided for the needs of aged parents and established a reputation which might bring glory to ancestors. Yet, at the national level, "li" and the virtue of filial piety did not extend to the state. The corresponding virtue of loyalty to the state that Confucius had hoped would be developed was overshadowed, and loyalty remained at the family level.

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[9] Some have argued that the binding force of this respect for the aged is responsible for the low level of juvenile delinquency of Chinese overseas (Bodde, 1959).

The ideals of the Confucian family may not have characterized every Chinese, yet it is generally assumed that the values and principles were for the most part upheld. Social reality rarely mirrors ideals but there was a high likelihood that Confucian philosophy governed social life. Some of these ideals were even upheld and enforced by law. For example, breaches of filial piety constituted a serious crime punishable by the state (Dawson, 1978:140). That the family unit defined all social life and was the basic social, political, and economic unit which held a society together for 2000 years is likely to be a cultural attribute that characterized the Chinese, even overseas.

2. Education

The high respect for education and scholarship in China can probably be traced to the complexity of the Chinese written word - a pictorial language with thousands of characters which demanded time and skill to master (Bodde, 1981). The high prestige of the written language, combined with the tremendous difficulties to its mastery gave to the scholar unequal status in China. It also produced important political and social consequences. The many regional dialects of the huge empire are incomprehensible to each other, yet China remained unified under the standard written word. As a barrier to outside influences, the language also served to consolidate China's isolation from the world. Even the word "civilize" in Chinese means to spread the written word (Bodde, 1981:39).

The Chinese perspective on education was defined by Confucius, who placed importance on social role rather than individual achievement or pragmatic gain. The aim of education was the cultivation of moral character and the development of virtues. The seminal idea on education comes from Confucius' statement that with "education, there are no classes". With education, all men have the ability to

improve themselves. This egalitarian claim, along with the view of education as a means to improve man's social behaviour and therefore a means to a better government (a moral man will in turn create a moral government), foreshadowed the institution that maintained the political stability of the Chinese empire, the Imperial examination system.

3. The Examination System and the Mandarins

The examination system was a means to recruit government officials (Mandarins) to staff the large centralized bureaucratic state. Inherent to its rationale is Confucius' contention that government was too vital a matter to be left solely to accidents of birth and therefore needs to be assisted by an elite body of individuals educationally qualified for this important task. Based on the premise that good government stemmed from self-cultivation of the superior man, the educational system was general, broadly humanistic and ethical rather than technical, and consisted of humanities and the study of five Confucian classics (Bodde, 1981). These classics dealt with the questions of how to bring order and prosperity to the people so as to secure peace and harmony for the world.

Administered by the imperial academy (124 B.C.), the examinations consisted of 4 levels: local, provincial (once every 3 yrs.), metropolitan, and the final exam. Social and economic advancement (appointments to office) increased at each progressive level. The exams were in the form of essays; the chief requirement for success was a thorough knowledge of Confucian classics and historical literature, and a mastery of several poetic styles. The successful were highly literate men, steeped in political ideology of their time, who pursued careers in political administration.

The importance of the examination system in traditional Chinese life for the ambitious scholar cannot be

overemphasized; one had to sit for a fresh examination (provincial) every 3 years to retain status and the Chinese scholar/bureaucrat was expected to keep up his reading of Chinese classics.[10] Additionally, the exams were theoretically open to all[11] and there was no limit to the number of times one could attempt an exam, leading many to spend large part of life in quest of success. The 18th century satire, "The Scholar", talks about a downtrodden peasant's success after years of failure. Folklore and historical literature often document the rise of peasants from lowly positions to one of high respect and status via the examination system. Yet, despite the egalitarian claims of the examination system, there was often widespread corruption which varied in degrees according to dynasties but became excessive in the era just prior to the fall of Imperial China (Dawson, 1978). In theory, the examination system remained the one and only entrance to government positions, and as such isolated education as the single means to upward socio-economic mobility. This major venue to government service was also in many ways, the only route to worldly success in classical China. To understand this, one must look at the class structure of classical China.

4. Class Structure

The Confucian ethic may have characterized the ruling elite of Chinese society more so than the masses who were tenant farmers. However as in other civilisations, it was this elite who defined the social fabric of a society and nowhere else did the peasants seek to imitate the gentry as

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[10] Because the exams were based primary on Confucian classics, the regularized system of government examinations consolidated Confucianism as the orthodoxy of Chinese culture throughout later dynasties and endured even when other philosophies and religions were prominent. (DeBarry, 1960)

[11] Females and some social groups were excluded from the exams.

the Chinese. This was due to the strong influence of Confucian ethics in directing the Confucian state.

According to Confucian theory, the four main classes of Chinese society, in order of prestige, were the scholar, farmers, workers, and merchants. Trade was looked down upon and after the unification of the empire (221 BC), the nobility became politically and numerically unimportant and was replaced by a new ruling bureaucracy of scholar-officials who were salaried, appointed, non-titled, and in theory, non-hereditary. These "mandarins" were actually part of a larger dominant social group - families of office holders, retired officials and rural landlords, or the "gentry" (Bodde, 1959:51). The Chinese "gentry" was unique in that it consisted of landowners, scholars, and politicians - all in the same social class.

The Confucian ideal of education was so strong that merchants were perceived as "social parasites" and it was the successful government official and not the successful businessman who represented the highest ideal.[12] Rich merchants attempted to assimilate into the gentry by giving their sons the Confucian education which via the examinations could lead to a government career. What resulted was a government elite whose scholar officials often were also landowners or related to the rural landlords and who, as public officials, gravitated any monetary surplus to agricultural land (Bodde, 1959:52). This consolidated the upper and ruling class whose power was based upon their socio-economic position in the framework of a theoretically "open" society.

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[12] Such social hierarchy was reinforced by government restriction on private enterprise and consequently, in conjunction with other historical and geographical reasons, the merchants never rose as a class in China.

5. Democracy and Social Mobility

The gentry dominated the Confucian state through the institution of the examination system, and so ensured the durability and political stability of the Chinese empire. Yet in theory, all men, even the poorest had no unjust barriers that prevented them from elevating themselves. Based on Confucius's assertion that "with education, (there is) no class", China's version of social democracy granted all men the possibility of moral and intellectual improvement. This seemingly egalitarian system sanctified a highly hierarchial society, yet at the same time granted individuals the possibility of moving upward or downwards in the social structure. Everyone had potential, yet there was a firm acceptance of class distinctions justified through a doctrine of equal education.

In reality, the egalitarian claims of education were questionable as nepotism and corruption were rampant, and there was even a time when positions or certificates could be bought or granted, and exemptions given.[13] Government power was actually restricted to an elite group and ruling officialdom probably tended to be reproduced from its own ranks (Bodde, 1959:74). Some documented cases of important officials from peasant origins produce a little evidence of mobility among the peasant class but the numerous cases among the gentry suggests that mobility may actually have been horizontal. If there was not equality, there was at least a generalized belief in the "spirit of equality" and this belief together with some evidence of social mobility helped to stabilize Chinese society and maintain the status quo.

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[13] These were objects of satire in the famous 18th century novel, "The Scholar".

6. Conclusion

The previous discussion of Chinese classical culture showed the Confucian roots of the Chinese cultural heritage, with special emphasis on the family and education system. It was argued that Confucian ethics and ideals formed an all encompassing and integrated moral philosophy which dictated social relationships at all levels, from family to government, and which was also enforceable by law. Thus, the values and behaviour of Confucianism shaped the social reality of the Chinese majority.

The centrality of the family as a single social, political and often economic unit, and the subjugation of the individual to the family in very clearly defined roles and responsibilities, likely had important consequences for the Chinese immigrant. A cultural value which renders the family supreme is advantageous in a foreign land or in a minority context where the individual is served best by a family which functions as a single social and economic unit, and as protection against a sometimes hostile outside world. Specifically, virtues such as filial piety ensures the obedience and responsibility of children towards their parents and acts as a stimulus to educational success which will bring glory to their family and ancestors.

In addition to the strong familial bond, the historical significance of the examination system in classical China has important consequences for later generations. As the only means to upward mobility, it directly linked education to socioeconomic mobility. Moreover, the general belief that education was open to all, and that there were neither legal nor ideological sanctions against social mobility gave even the peasants the possibility and aspiration to rise via education. This value of education and the perception of its opportunities has thus preceded the Chinese overseas, irrespective of their socio-economic background in China. That the majority of early Chinese immigrants whose children

received university education were from rural peasant backgrounds attests to the strength of this aspiration. (Hirschman and Wong, 1984)

The fact that success in education was the only route to worldly success in classical China is of utmost importance. It is also the major avenue to worldly success in the western industrial society. Education is the strongest determinant of inter-generational mobility among immigrant groups (Hirschman and Wong, 1986). The value of education as a means to upward mobility combined with strong family bonds, and the centrality of the family as social and economic unit, create conditions conducive to the pursuit and attainment of educational goals in North America. These two elements of the Chinese cultural heritage may prove advantageous for overseas Chinese and shed light on their high educational attainment. This is essentially a transplanted cultural hypothesis but not one that argues strict cultural determinism. Rather, it is suggested that these two cultural elements, the value of education and the centrality of the family, may have been exploited in the context of the immigrant/minority experience, and in a system of free education. That Chinese students in Canada have in fact retained and used these cultural elements remains to be established.

III. ETHNIC IDENTITY

One aspect of the cultural inheritance thesis is that elements of an ethnic culture are retained, and members of a group identify consciously or behaviorally with these cultural elements. This identification is often referred to as "ethnic identity". Ethnic origin as a significant variable in socioeconomic achievement and in the stratification literature is well documented (Li, 1988). However, there has been little research that connects the degree of ethnic identity to achievement behaviour, specifically educational attainment. At the individual level, and especially in a multi-ethnic society, identity with an ethnic group may take on a greater meaning in the context of ethnic achievement.

The persistence and intensification of ethnicity (or ethnic cohesion) over time and generations in North America has disproved early assimilist predictions that immigrant groups' eventual assimilation (mainly economic) into the host society will lead to the fading away of ethnic identity (eg. Park, 1950; Gordon, 1964). Other similar structural explanations view the persistent of ethnicity as rooted in the exploitation of labour (Bonacich, 1975; Blalock, 1967) or a cultural division of labour (Hechter, 1975).

The term "ethnicity" in this study is defined as an identity of a people who share a common culture and heritage. The important aspect of this identity is that it is an "ascribed status and members share a sense of peoplehood based on descent language, religion and other common experiences" (Weber 1968:389). Research on this "subjective identity" seeks to measure the retention of these constructs in various generations of different ethnic groups.

Past research in ethnic identity retention centered on later generations of children of immigrants. Early social historians formulated a notion about the development of

ethnic awareness in the third generation, popularized as the "law of the third generation": "What the son wishes to forget, the grandson wishes to remember" (Hansen, 1952:496). Research in the last few decades has produced mixed support, for and against this hypothesis (eg. Lazeritz and Rowitz, 1969) but in general, long term ethnic identification is weak (Reitz, 1980). For example, a study of Toronto ethnic groups showed systematic decline in ethnic awareness from immigrant to second and third generation respondents (Isajiw, 1981). Yet, a counter hypotheses argues that ethnic identity may decline in terms of traditional measures of its retention (language, residential and social segregation, etc.) but members of an ethnic group may maintain a sense of identity that is marginal, symbolic or expressive rather than instrumental (Reitz, 1980; Weinfeld, 1988:609). In a Canadian study Reitz (1980) found that there does appear to be a renewed interest in ethnic identity in the third generation but that it takes a different form, beyond objective measures of such things as language or customs. Sometimes called "middle class ethnicity", this new ethnic awareness can in some cases, become an important political tool in the emerging role of ethnic organizations as an ethnic polity in the political process (Weinfeld, 1988).

Much of the past literature on ethnic identity has focused on Jewish identification (eg. Lenski, 1961; Ringer, 1967; Dashefsky, 1970). Studies on Asians have usually researched American Asians (Canada is at least a generation behind and lacks a large third or even a second generation of Chinese) and may not always be applicable to Canada due to different historical, geographic, and demographic features of Asian immigrants and their descendants. American studies on Asians have often focused on the Japanese (eg. Uyeki, 1960; Hasakawa 1973,) due to the existence of a stable third generation of Japanese Americans. The Japanese have been generally viewed as being culturally assimilated, especially

compared to the Chinese who seem to resist acculturation (eg. Sue and Kirk, 1973). One explanation argued by Lynman (1974) cites structural factors such as the migration of Japanese women, WWII internment, and a lack of post-war Japanese immigration for the differential assimilation of the Japanese and Chinese.

In a comprehensive Canadian study, Reitz (1980) found that the Chinese group, in comparison to other European ethnic groups, has the highest persistence of middle class ethnicity - that is, they may assimilate culturally but remain socially distant, an effect of cultural and NOT economic bias. He found that among the Chinese, the maintenance of group ties is only weakly related to job income or status, and deduced that this residual or "middle class ethnic cohesion" points to a cultural rather than an economic factor. This factor may in part be a result of social discrimination, even when equal income and status have been achieved, as well as the results of efforts within the ethnic community to maintain group cohesion.

There are various problems involved in research on ethnic identity. One major obstacle in identifying cultural identity factors is that for different groups, different factors may have salience. Driegher (1975), in a study of students at the University of Manitoba, found groups to stress different items. For example, the Jewish students identified strongly with endogamy and ingroup friends as opposed to the importance of religion and use of ethnic language which were factors strongly identified by the French students. Hence, for the purpose of this research, the ethnic identity factors to be explored will be based on previous research of ethnic identity for cultural groups in Canada, including the Chinese.

The ethnic identity scale used in this research is taken from Isajiw's study of ethnic groups in Metropolitan Toronto conducted between 1977 and 1979. Isajiw conceived ethnic

identity as "a phenomenon indicated by the attributes and behaviour patterns which derive from membership in a group" (Isajiw, 1981:2). Ethnic identity is divided into two basic aspects: external and internal. External aspects refer to observable behaviour patterns and can be categorized in five types: 1) cultural behaviour patterns (speaking an ethnic language, practising an ethnic tradition, etc.,); 2) participating in ethnic personal networks, such as family and friendship; 3) participating in ethnic institutional organizations, such as churches, schools, enterprises, and media; 4) participation in ethnic associational organizations, such as clubs, "societies", and youth organizations; and 5) participation in functions sponsored by ethnic organizations such as picnics, concerts, public lectures, rallies, dances, etc. Internal aspects of ethnic identity refer to images, ideas, attitudes, and feelings, the subjective awareness of belonging to a specific group. Ethnic identity retention does not imply retaining both these components to the same degree as elements of these two components may be retained in varying degrees. Someone may subjectively identify with his group without knowledge of the ethnic language, practice of ethnic traditions, or participation in ethnic organizations. Inversely, someone may practice ethnic traditions without strong feelings of attachment to the group. Additionally, some components of external ethnicity may acquire different meaning for different generations or different subgroups within the same ethnic origin.

In the present study, the level of ethnic identity will be explored among the subjects interviewed. It is hypothesized that external identities (ie. language, food, etc.) will correlate with the length of time in Canada; as the process of acculturation or assimilation progresses, one will less likely manifest distinct external cultural traits. However, it is also expected that the more intrinsic,

symbolic measures of identity will be most acute among those from affluent and educated backgrounds and among older immigrants or children of immigrants. I will explore the sense of "Chinese" identity whether external or internal, and its influence on academic behaviour and achievement.

IV. BACKGROUND

The History of the Chinese in Canada

The Chinese were one of the earliest groups to enter North America. The first Chinese' came in the 1850s as sojourners[14] from southern China to work the mines in California and in the Fraser Valley of British Columbia. In the next few decades, they were massively "imported" as cheap labour to open the then expanding Pacific West and in Canada, to build the CPR in the 1880s. At the completion of the railroad in 1885, political pressure (mainly from labour unions) mounted for their forced return to China and exclusion from Canada's core labour market. Exclusionary measures took the form of discriminatory taxes and exclusionary laws that discouraged Chinese migration and settlement in Canada. Such taxes include the 1876 tax on the common pigtail worn by Chinese males and a head tax for Chinese immigrants between 1885 to 1923. (The head tax was $500 by 1903 - over two years of wages.) Finally, the Chinese Exclusion Act in 1923 effectively stopped Chinese immigration. Between 1923 and its repeal in 1947, only 44 Chinese legally entered Canada. These exclusionary laws prevented the immigration of wives and females, and thus delayed the development of a second generation and the establishment of a Chinese Canadian Community for over half the century.

For those who were already in Canada, some had wives and children in China; others went back long enough to marry and perhaps father a child and returned, continuing to support the family overseas. Often, sons would join their fathers

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[14] Anthony Chan in "The Myth of the Sojourner" (1980) argues against this sojourner thesis based on linguistic, historical, and political reasons. He points out that if the Chinese had intended to return to China permanently, they would not have endured the hardship, discrimination, etc.

when they were of age and had enough savings for the passage and head tax. Thus, generations of males worked overseas. Whether married or not, there existed at the time a bachelor community, and although some did intermarry with Caucasians (which was prevented at one point by law), there was no significant stable family formation for the first half of this century. Thus, the legislation had serious effects in delaying the birth of a Chinese second generation and kept the Chinese for a long period of time as immigrants with little hope for inter-generational mobility.

Due to labour market discriminations, the Chinese were forced to work in non-competitive occupations such as domestic work, and had to initiate self-employment to avoid the rampant discrimination and anti-Asiatic policies of the blue collar unions. This was an adaptation strategy which resulted from their banishment to the margins of the labour market. Most Chinese concentrated in the laundry trade, restaurant and grocery store businesses or domestic servanthood where they were accepted and even appreciated (Li, 1988). Light (1972) argues that it was the rotating credit system supported by clan associations that allowed the small businesses to flourish. From tightly knit families and strong community ties, the Chinese built ethnic enclaves, Chinatowns, to protect themselves against the larger society.

In education, the Chinese had a slow start. Native born Chinese children were excluded from public schools in the United States and the Chinese community resorted to the courts to fight for their children's right to education. The courts ruled in their favour and from 1885, separate "Asiatic Schools" were established in the Chinatowns (Hsia 1988:12). This political action is surprising given the Chinese' passive and marginal existence in Western society and attests to a strong commitment to education for their children. Similar trends followed in Canada. Only 16 students were attending public schools in Victoria in 1901

but strong public sentiments to segregate them resulted in separate classes by 1908. A separate school resulted by 1922 when the total number of Chinese students reached 216. The students and their parents led a year long boycott until the board permitted the students to return to the schools (Sources as quoted in Li, 1988:32).

Up until the 1960s, the majority of Chinese or their families came from an unschooled peasants background, from the rural southern province of Canton where poor economic conditions had encouraged overseas migration patterns. When the immigration laws were relaxed and changes implemented in the Immigration Act in 1962, acceptance into Canada became based on the point system rather than the "preferred group" system, and many immigrants came over as part of the family reunification policy. New Chinese immigrants, at first mostly from Hong Kong and later Taiwan, also came in large numbers. (The first significant number of Chinese immigrants came over between 1967 and 1977; a total of 118,100.[15]) These tended to be educated or professionals as dictated by immigration policy (Reitz, 1980) but the recruitment of educated Chinese had already begun in the 1950's with the influx of foreign students, many of whom were later granted immigrant status. Later, a significant number of immigrants from Hong Kong and especially those from Taiwan, were of middle class and educated backgrounds. The post-war Chinese immigrants therefore constituted two very different populations.

Most recently, the composition of Chinese immigrant has again changed. The first influx of Indochinese refugees in 1975, were mainly of Chinese origins, and their immigrant status has lowered the overall socio-economic profile of the Chinese (Chan, 1987), although they may be originally from middle class and educated backgrounds. Additionally, a new

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[15] "Profile of Ethnic Groups"; Statistics Canada, 1989.

wave of Chinese emigration has begun from Hong Kong where political instability regarding China's takeover in 1997, and encouraged by the Canadian immigration initiative based on the entrepreneurial system, have stimulated much Chinese immigration to Canada. Chinese entering Canada through this means are, if not educated, at least wealthy.

In Quebec, the Chinese population total 26,755 according to the 1986 census; most of which are concentrated in the city of Montreal. Quebec is probably not the preferred destination of immigrants due to the language situation in Quebec. However, the lax Quebec immigration laws in the last few years have made Quebec and Montreal especially a tempora.y stop for these immigrants. Most immigrants come from urban centers and as such prefer to relocate to urban and English speaking centers.

The university sample for the present study included students who themselves or whose family backgrounds represent different groups of Chinese from different points in the immigration cycle. The sample contained a distribution of students that were Canadian born natives (or raised in Canada), foreign students, and recent immigrants. Given the university age of the subjects, it is likely (if they are permanent residents) that they are post-war immigrants or children of post war immigrants.

It is important to note here the historical and demographic differences in the Chinese population between the United States and Canada. Most studies of the overseas Chinese are of American Chinese and although they can generally represent their Canadian counterparts, they differ somewhat historically and demographically. Historically, the American Chinese experience is at least one whole generation ahead that of the Canadian Chinese. The Chinese first came to California and some then migrated up to British Columbia. The Americans contracted Chinese labour on a larger scale than Canada; Chinese labour developed the state of California

as well as Canada's Central Pacific Railroad. (Sources from Li, 1978:35). Later, anti-Chinese sentiments were stronger in the U.S.; there were more repressive laws and taxes, and the 1882 Exclusion Act not only curtailed Chinese immigration but specifically denied citizenship rights to those already in the country. (This occurred 31 years before Canada's exclusion act as Canada was not yet finished with Chinese labour.) Thus, the subsequent delay of a second generation due to an almost non-existent female population preceded the Chinese Canadian experience. The War Brides Act of 1947 and a family union policy finally allowed wives and children to enter the United States. Chinese family migration became substantial after the 1965 Immigration Act which placed emphasis on family unity amidst the civil rights movement (Li, 1978:45). Thus, in terms of sheer numbers and scale, as well as in time, the American Chinese experience foreshadows and amplifies the Canadian Chinese experience.

V. QUALITATIVE INTERVIEWS

This section will summarize the research methodology used to conduct the present study. It will outline the selection process that gathered a sample of thirty-two undergraduate students (currently enrolled at McGill) to be interviewed; it will describe the interviews; and it will provide a demographic profile and a general picture of the final sample. The analysis that follows this section is based on data extracted from both the interviews and the questionnaires, and analyzed according to qualitative methodology.

METHODOLOGY

1. Sample

The sample of McGill Chinese students were chosen from two sources: personal contacts (via Chinese organizations and clubs) and the McGill Student Directory (1987/88) which showed a preliminary count of approximately 692 students with Chinese last names, and in addition to names and addresses, contains information on faculty and year. The directory served as the primary source for selecting interviewees. Names were chosen based on the recognition of Chinese sounding surnames.[16] This procedure missed the following Chinese: those who had anglicized their surnames; those born to non-Asian fathers; and those whose surnames were not identified. All subjects interviewed were of Chinese descent and immigrants or children of immigrants.

Rather than obtaining a random sample, the attempt was to acquire a large range of students by faculty and length of residency in Canada. To minimize self-selection, names were chosen according to this stratified framework as they first appear in the directory which listed them alphabetically. There was an attempt to form three groups of Chinese students: Canadian-born, Canadian-raised (more than six years in Canada), and new Canadians (less than six years and included foreign students) but the final sample was unable to represent this distribution equally. Subjects were matched for sex and as close as possible, equal number of faculties and departments were represented (ie. professional schools, Arts and Sciences.) The final sample consisted of 32 undergraduates representing the whole range

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[16] This method has been used in previous study of ethnicity for Jews and some Asian groups. For a discussion of the accuracy of samples using "distinctive Jewish names," see Dashefsky, 1986. A more detailed explanation of Chinese name selection is presented in the Appendix I, p. 2.

of schools - from Arts to Sciences to professional faculties.[17]

2. Interviews

Contact was first made by telephone, then appointments set up after subjects had agreed to an interview. Those who agreed were then informed that they would receive an honorarium of five dollars at the completion of the interview. Approximately 6 or 7 of those contacted refused. Those who refused primarily cited reasons of schedule and time constraints. (Interestingly, the highest refusals did not come from students in intensive, demanding programs.) The actual interviews took place between February 1989 and May 1989. Most interviews (except 4 pretests) were taken on the McGill campus.

Subjects participated in a semi-structured interview (taped and later transcribed) and were later asked to fill out a questionnaire. The whole procedure lasted between 50 and no more than 90 minutes. The interviewees were asked general questions regarding their academic choices, experiences, and goals, and were prompted to talk about their family background, home environment, and Chinese identity. The first part of the interview focused on their academic experience while the later part focused on ethnic identity. Specific questions regarding ethnicity were asked based on questions from Isajiw's (1981) Canadian study. These were also included in the questionnaire (see Appendix 2) the subjects later filled out.

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[17] For professional faculties, and in particular Medicine, special care was taken to ensure that the student did NOT have a previous degree. This was possible to decipher because the first two digits of the student identification number indicate the year first enrolled at McGill. The final sample of students, with the exception of one, were undergraduates, even those from professional faculties such as Medicine.

3. Final Profile of Sample

Distinct demographic patterns characterized the final sample of subjects interviewed. While the original proposal sought a sample equally divided between local born, local raised (>6 yrs.) and foreign born (<6 yrs.), it became obvious through the selection process that equal proportions of the first two groups would be difficult to attain. In the final sample, the characteristics of these two groups were substantively hard to distinguish apart from some socioeconomic differences (eg. local born tended to have working class parents who emigrated to Canada much earlier) but the general school experience tended to be more similar than dissimilar. The strongest line of contrast occurred between the overseas (all from Hong Kong but NOT all foreign students) and the local group, as these two groups often represented extreme cases. Therefore, the findings to be presented will be based on analysis of comparisons between these two groups.[18] The overall demographics of the sample leaned towards a middle income and educated background (as to be expected from any university population), but there was a significant proportion of working class, especially among the local born populations. In summation, the students interviewed consisted of three distinct socioeconomic groups: the native born whose parents have been here the longest (from southern rural China origins and speak the Toiwsan dialect) and are restaurant owners, cooks, and factory workers; the local born or raised whose parents are either from Taiwan or Hong Kong and are from educated and/or affluent backgrounds and speak Mandarin or Cantonese; and the foreign born (includes some foreign students) who almost all (with one exception) come from wealthy or educated families, and who had extra resources (eg. tutors) at their disposal.

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[18]. See Appendix III for a demographic profile of the sample.

Attempts were made to represent all faculties in approximation to their Chinese population. As close as possible, each faculty was matched by gender and place of origin. Consequently, the faculties represented leaned towards Science fields and professional schools. Within the Faculty of Arts, few "liberal arts" and no humanities students were found available to interview, though some must have existed. The Arts students contacted were usually in a social science or math field and NOT humanities. The sample also contained a high concentration of students in professional schools such as Engineering and Business, which along with Medicine and the health sciences fields, were probably proportionally over-represented. The purpose of this over-representation was to explore the generally strong held preference for professional schools and in particular, the mystique surrounding Medicine as the "ideal" career choice and aspiration (a recurring quote from early pre-test interviews). The preference and concentration in professional schools or for career-related fields is consistent with the recent student emphasis of university as a pragmatic job-securing institution and may not necessarily be a distinctive feature of Chinese students. However, the extreme emphasis of this and the actual higher representation of Chinese in such programs suggests an issue which needs to be examined.

In terms of actual school performance, there was a range of GPA's (current or most recent), although it was skewed to the higher end. Fourteen claimed a GPA between 3.0 - 3.4 followed by 11 who claimed a GPA over 3.5. The lowest GPA fell in the range between 2.0 and 2.4. These grades are surprising given that few students claimed in the interviews that they were intelligent or even good students. They often credit their marks to hard work or effort which compensates for lack of ability and often felt that they could do better.

VI. FINDINGS - MAJOR THEMES

The presentation of the major findings are grouped together under three general themes: Family and Education, External Environment, and Ethnic Identity. Contents within these themes will overlap; family and cultural identity for example are intrinsically intertwined as the family institution is the major transmitter of cultural identity. These categories are only for analytical purposes. Throughout this presentation and analysis of the qualitative data, the emphasis will remain on the academic career and achievement of these students in the context of their cultural heritage.

This section contains a large number of quotes extracted from the interviews. They are presented verbatim with minimal editing and may contain grammatical errors. These are purposely left uncorrected so as to maintain the authenticity of the quotes and to highlight the varying levels of English proficiency amongst the subjects. Within the text or separately, the quotes will also be presented with the subject's sex, major, and whether her or she is from the local born or raised group, or from the overseas group (usually Hong Kong).

FAMILY AND EDUCATION

The following discussion addresses the socialization environment of the student and his or her family background in relation to academic achievement.

1. Higher Education

A strong consistent theme echoing throughout the interviews is the high value placed on education and the constant pressure to excel in school and to attend university. Expectations of academic performance begin early, often at primary school and remain so until university. Of the 32 students studied, 20 indicated that doing well in school was a "generalized understanding" while 8 claimed it was a "strong and consistent pressure". Doing well in school is almost the principle obligation of the child and the possibility of not attending university is never entertained. Internal pressures rival these external ones and most have at an early age internalized the importance of school and feel a strong personal responsibility to attain "good marks", enter university in a secure field, and be "successful".

Without exception, university is seen as a natural and logical progression from high school. Most claimed that an university education was "must" or a general understanding and expectation; said one girl, "there was no question that I wouldn't go!" This quote from a local female in Education is a typical response:

> "I figure that was the general rule, that it was just natural to go on. There was no question about it - right after high school you go to CEGEP, after CEGEP it was automatically university."

Even for those claiming not to be "good students" and who were not high achievers in terms of marks, "the possibility of NOT going to university did not even cross ones's mind" and they always managed to maintain a minimum to get by and

enter university. Among the one or two rare exceptions who claim that they were NOT overtly forced to go on to university, the emphasis on higher education for "one's own good and future" was nevertheless strongly stated, and they themselves chose to go because it was a "natural and logical" progression, "common sense" as one engineer puts it, "something I want to do anyways, how else am I going to find a job?" This quote from a local born female in Nursing typifies the expectations of a college education as a natural and logical step:

> "university because there has never been a question. My parents have been telling us all our lives to work hard in school and we had to go to university - all the kids go to university."

Many students pointed to external expectations along with parental pressure. This was true especially of those from Hong Kong. The following quote from an overseas female student suggests that the pressure came as much from their society as from her parents.

> "I didn't feel much pressure from my parents. I feel the pressure from school and after you graduate from high school, you just don't know where you go and the job you'll get is probably like office-girl. They didn't give that much pressure, actually, they just keep telling me, 'if you don't go to higher education, where are you going to end up?'...."

However, external pressures were not limited to the overseas group. It was evident even among those who have been here longer. University as an end goal from hard work in school was a general understanding not only of parents but of peers and the larger community as well.

> "There was no question. I think we wanted it very much. I don't know what my parents would say if one of us didn't want to go to university. It would come as a big shock to my parents because it seems in my family the natural thing to do. There was never any question of dropping out of high school, or doing something else after high school, it just follows I think. It was never said verbally because of my example and because my parents went to university,

> and because it's the thing to do amongst all our friends."
> (Local female in Medicine)

The prospect of not going to university can be met with extreme repercussions. One local female in Engineering had an older brother who dropped out of school and is working:

> "my older brother they were really mad about; they were trying to throw him out of the house but they mellowed out. They want us to get a degree so they won't be ashamed."

This corporate "shame" of the family symbolizes the failure of the parents in not being able to enforce or provide a university education for their child, a principle responsibility and general expectation of the parents.

2. Academic Choices

Most students (especially the local born) claim autonomy in choosing academic majors, but it became apparent as the interviews progressed that they were strongly influenced by parental preferences which were clear and specific, toward a field that is career/job oriented - professional and prestigious. Seventeen students claimed that their parent's preferences influenced them "moderately" or "very much" while only 7 claimed "not at all". Science and health professions, in particular Medicine, were strongly encouraged due mainly to the job security, prestige, and financial rewards. At times the push for these few key professions such as Medicine and Engineering were encouraged due to the parents's ignorance of various fields and options, especially among less educated parents. However, with the exception of Medicine and Engineering, no ONE profession was pushed. Most parents were willing to leave the ultimate decision to the child, confident that they too will share the same pragmatic perspective, which they usually did. Only 6 claimed that financial considerations influenced them "not at all" and 4 that status and prestige had no influence. The highest number, 11 and 13 claimed "very much" respectively. Finally, despite even aptitude and interest in less lucrative fields, pragmatism usually prevailed. As one girl with an aptitude for English but ended up in Business puts it: "when I said I wanted to be a writer, my parents told me I'd starve!!" In the survey 15 did claim that personal interest had a "moderate influence" and another 15 claimed "very much", but there were still comments such as "no way would I have chosen Dentistry based on pure interest".

The vague but insistent concern of some parents regarding their children's education is illustrated by these two quotes from local females in non-scientific fields. The preference for job and financial security is clearly stated. Says this

local born female student who "floated around" a bit before ending up in Education:

> "Well, my father always looks out for our education, but they didn't push. They didn't say don't do this, don't do that - it's just taking it out about what we liked. They did have an expectation of a career goal, not just to finish school and to find anything but to have a profession."

And a local born female in Political Science:

> "oh, they had no idea what I was going into. I told them but it was kind of hard to explain political science to a Chinese. All they asked me was could you get a job with that?"

Preference for Science

The over-representation of Chinese in Science, applied science and professional fields, especially Engineering are based on a few key factors: future career and job security, a general lack of information on the choices and options available, and an investment in the math and sciences from high school. Says one student, "it seemed a waste not to remain in it; from science, one can also enter either Engineering or Medicine - the most respected fields". Also, there was evidence of a streamlining effect in high school; those in science streams were perceived as "smarter" or more serious students, and therefore the pressure to remain in the science stream.

> "Well mostly I studied science in high school, in CEGEP. It seemed a shame to throw all that away so I picked Engineering - plus, there's more chance of getting a job there then anywhere else."
> (Local female in Engineering)

Some realized their unconscious progress into an applied science field; theorizing that it was "safe" especially for a Chinese.

> "How I chose it - the same reason why most Chinese people choose it because its safe in the sense that in Engineering, there's a lot of jobs. I didn't choose it because I was really into it, I could have

> very well gone into something else. I chose it because it's a good starting point, a B ENG degree as an undergraduate and from there hopefully you'll make something. I didn't know what else to go into. Basically it was a lack of knowledge. I wasn't sure what was the options open to me at the time. When you graduate from CEGEP, you have to apply to programs in universities and there isn't very much education about what was available. Basically, you do most of the research on your own; nothing else appealed to me. There might have been other things. I don't know, Engineering was just kind of something along the lines - unconsciously just decided to go into that."
> (Local male in Engineering)

In Hong Kong, the division into Sciences occurs early in high school and most (especially good students) are directed into the sciences again due to good future job and financial prospects. This bias toward sciences is especially acute as it is also institutionalized.

> "When I was in Hong Kong in high school my favourite subject was Chinese history. My parents said that I can get a better job probably if I take science. If I take Chinese history, the only think I can do is become a teacher which they don't want me to. They want me to be like something professional, like doctor or lawyer. They say work harder on math and sciences because you can get a better job."
> (Hong Kong female in Physiotherapy)

Language Limitations

The issue of language in limiting career options to science, mathematical and non-verbal fields is pertinent to overseas students and even to some in the local group. Of those from Hong Kong, most cited that difficulty with the English language at least "slightly" influenced their choice of academic major. Language was a strong determining factor in choosing majors for the overseas students, and as one foreign student points out; McGill accepts lower scores on TOFEL exams than other universities so many foreign students with lower scores end up there. However, the popularity of the Business faculty with its good job prospects amongst

overseas students shows that they are undaunted by the verbal demands of that field. They utilized different strategies for overcoming their language deficiencies such as: avoiding Marketing and other courses which require class presentations, limiting class participation, and forming groups with students that can compensate for their lack of communications skills.

> "I intentionally avoid marketing because there is a lot of presentations, papers and case studies, I'm afraid I can't do it."
> (Hong Kong male in Management)

Language was an issue even for some local born Chinese as English was NOT their first language and many had adjustment problems in the primary grades, especially in Quebec with the added pressure of learning French. Stories were often told how the student went through grades one and two without knowing any English. English was usually easily mastered thereafter. Some students showed no signs of any language problems and actually excel in arts courses. However, the pragmatism of a science career usually prevails, when choosing majors.

Deviant Choices

Parents may allow their children freedom of academic choices and will usually accept fields not totally aligned with their own wishes but this tolerance did not extent to non-professional and especially precarious fine art fields. Deviant careers such as music were either not tolerated ("music was taboo and fun things like dancing were NOT to be taken seriously") or else the expectations for success were high. As one girl puts it; "if I were to be in Music, I'd have to play Carnegie Hall". The few who deviated from the norm against parental wishes were strongly reprimanded. For example, one overseas female student in Music, the "eldest in a Chinese family and expected to go into something

reasonable", had to take extreme measures to pursue her musical ambitions. She deceived her parents by pretending to be enrolled in Science while taking piano lessons, was kicked out of the house when discovered, and finally allowed to pursue Music after her family eventually relented upon her acceptance to the Music program at McGill.

The attempt to represent students in the study from Arts proved difficult and of those interviewed, most were in Social Sciences or a speciality such as Math; none were in Humanities. Often Arts seems to be a transient point, if one fails and is dismissed from a department or is unable to enter the desired faculty. One girl from Hong Kong who chose McGill because the English TOFEL requirements are lower, and whose first preference was Management, ended up in Arts after finding Science difficult:

> "from high school, I came to McGill and started with my Science program, but I find it a little bit too difficult for me but I kept going for three years and on my last year I just switched to Arts.."

This is the same explanation offered by one local born male student in Arts.

> "Why did I choose Arts? I was in Engineering first; my first year was in Chemical Engineering. I didn't like Chemical. I liked engineering but I wasn't doing well either and I switched into Computer Science. I could have switched into Science but it was easier to get into Arts because my grades weren't that good, but I'm going to switch into Science now..(doing math courses in Arts)."

For male Arts students, an Arts degree was a conscious choice and a strategic means en route to either Law or MBA programs.

> "This (Arts) is actually a stop, this is an in-between stop before going to law school..do an undergrad first before applying for law school. We had an understanding (my parents and I). They told me there would be certain fields that were 'good' and I would make a choice in that. They wanted something that was respectable: doctor, engineer, architect, lawyer; it doesn't leave room for much." (Local male in Arts)

One local born male student heading for Law is quite aware of the oddity of being Oriental in Arts and quick to justify that it was not due to a any weaknesses in math or sciences:

> "No, I did not choose the Faculty of Arts to go against everybody else since every other Oriental seems to be in Sciences or Fngineering.."

He also clearly understood that the easiest way to financial security as a minority was in a Science and technical field. To achieve in a liberal arts field where high verbal abilities are required (difficult for both overseas and local students), and where future job security is more tenuous and ambiguous, is recognized as demanding much more ability.

The group that expressed the least pressure to enter a specific career field were overseas female students from Hong Kong. Often an overseas college degree is enough to please their parents. This was observed by a Hong Kong female student in Linguistics whose parents were comparatively lenient in her academic choices:

> "Like some parents, they really tell you what to do and if you don't do that, they really get upset and then they guide you. Those Canadian-born Chinese, I know some of them, the parents, they say: 'oh, you have to be a doctor' and they guide you. They go out with people and they introduce you, 'oh, the uncle is a doctor, you know, how wealthy he is and you have to be one.' They (students) tell you how much pressure they have all along."

Medicine

The case of Medicine may serve to illustrate the pursuit of an independent, professional and prestigious career, especially amongst those from local born families. While the pressure amongst all groups to enter Medicine is intense especially where academic performance is high and the possibility exists, the overt push for this profession and other prestigious fields seemed most prevalent among those

local born from educated backgrounds. The "big dream of Medicine" is a recurring phrase and within a family, there were expectations that at least ONE child would enter Medicine, usually the eldest. Says one local born female, "they want two doctors but since my brother is in Medicine I could be in Architecture." Especially when school performance was high other options were strongly discouraged.

> "The concrete fact was that I would go into Medicine and the fact that I did well in school, they throw it at you,.. my father. That's a good thing, you learn it's a very encouraging thing. I guess they wanted something stable like a secure kind of job. I guess a doctor, especially like when my parents lived in China, a doctor was a very respected profession."
> (Local male in Medicine)

For some, especially those from educated backgrounds, there were conscious attempts to persuade and guide the child into Medicine. The pressure and obligation to enter Medicine if aptitude and ability are present was intense. Of those in other health professions such as Nursing, Medicine was often the original preferred choice; says one student, "I'm in Nursing because its the next best thing to Medicine." One girl chose Physiotherapy because "it was related but not quite Medicine." She explains how, "instead of aiming for 90's, knowing that I just got about mid 80's made me a good student but not so good so that I'd have to be obligated to be in Medicine." This next case from the eldest of four girls whose younger sisters chose Engineering and Business, acknowledges the pressure to go into Medicine as a first child is based on an "inferior complex as foreigners".

> "I think I didn't give myself any choice about what I wanted to go into because I know my sisters after me have no pressure about what to go into. But if I didn't go into Medicine, there would be some pressure to have one of the four daughters go into Medicine because locally here in Montreal it's a big thing to get into Medicine. It's also a big thing to get into medicine directly from Cegep, it's always

> a big, glamorous thing; 'did you hear so and so got into medicine.' If any one of my sisters went into poetry, it would be ok because at the back of my parents' mind they would be thinking, well, if you can't make a living, I can always support her. But if I went into poetry I do think that would have been an issue. The back of my parents' mind it is a worry; they have to have some degree of financial security and the fact that I'm in Medicine, makes them much more at ease."
> (Local Female in Medicine)

This case succinctly illustrates the choice of Medicine as based on a need for stable, financial security, and the need for an independent profession - an investment in human capital that ensures a way out of the ethnic enclaves. It is a function of a minority status and perceived discrimination in the labour market. The preference for Medicine is not only based on wealth and prestige but a very real attempt to pursue an "independent profession" which is immune to external market conditions. This case also highlights the functioning of the family as a social and economic unit; the pressure of the eldest or at least one child to achieve this for the financial security of the whole family, and to a lesser extent for prestige and social respectability.

End Goal Orientation

Finally, with few exceptions, there was rarely an emphasis on learning for its own sake or any aspirations for a "liberal arts education". Many students had a wide range of interests, both curricular and extracurricular, and most did wish to inform themselves in various fields by taking a range of courses to be "well rounded". However, these were considered extraneous, and strict distinct and separate from the aim of university as a means to a career and profession. The pervading view of university was that it is the vehicle to secure financial security and a means to upward social mobility. The means to an end expectations of

higher education is clearly stated by the local born female medical student quoted earlier:

> "What do I want from an education? I told you I'm very narrow-minded. I've always tend to think of things as end goals. I've always wanted to be a doctor and if an education is what will get me to be a doctor, that's what I would do. I don't think I really thought of education itself. I always thought; this is a step that would make me a doctor. I didn't think of education as something that would broaden me as a person and all this baloney. It's always, that's how I'm going to be a doctor and that's where I'm going to go."

3. Gender Differences

Gender distinctions in career choices and academic expectations were found in the qualitative interviews (which contained an equal number of males and females) and they were as expected. Female career expectations were generally lower and their achievement tended to be encouraged indirectly by restrictions of time and activities whereas for males, it was through direct pressure. Though females were expected to do well throughout their school career, there were often limitations placed on their achievement and the assumption existed that security could be found in marriage if one's career failed. A common joke quoted by the females interviewed was: "my parents always joke I could always marry and marry rich." The added pressure on the male to "succeed" as the future breadwinner, and perhaps future caretaker of the aging parents was quite evident. Males were pushed harder and more in the directions of a professional career. For example, among sisters and brothers, both may be pushed to be doctors but "really for the girl, the family thing comes first".

> "...the thing is they have different expectations of us. If we're in Medicine, we're supposed to be doctors but really, the family comes before anything. Whereas for my brother - 'be a doctor, you have to be a doctor!'..."
> (Local female in Economics)

Gender distinctions may be best illustrated by female medical students, who often noted their parents' "traditional" view regarding their choice of Medicine. Of the two female medical students interviewed, one was overtly discouraged by her parents who preferred a more liberal arts or academic field, citing Medicine as a very hard life for women (although they wanted Medicine for her brother). The other case, the medical student quoted earlier, determined and pressured as she was to enter Medicine, at one point was

consoled by her father to give it up because it was a hard life for a girl.

> "...before I got into Medicine, in the final stretch just before you do the interview to get in, I remember I felt so discouraged. I was in total agreement with everyone that I wouldn't get in because I wasn't up there in Cegep. So I remember sitting down and my dad said, 'you don't have to get into Medicine - it's all right, it's easier for a girl to do something else; it's too tough for a girl in Medicine anyways.'..."
> (Local female in Medicine)

Thus, even when expectations and performances were high, gender bias was strong.

The actual finding from the sample was that the females were high achieving and have often chosen male dominated fields, sometimes in spite of their parents. There were many females in various health sciences and in Engineering. The inherent conflict is that while their parents expected them to do well in school, they were also ultimately expected to settle down and have a family. They often expressed resentment at this. Says this female nursing student, "no way, I want to have a career, travel, see the world." (Ironically, more males expressed the desire to start a family as an explicit life goal.) This was especially true of local born females, who often had a stronger need to prove themselves; above and beyond what was expected of them. Often they seemed much more driven, ambitious, and career oriented than their male counterparts and this was especially apparent between brothers and sisters. One male student described how his sister could not handle the pressure and stress of competing with him for four years in Engineering (she skipped a grade) and therefore chose another field at another university instead. For some, their achievement stemmed from self-motivation and a need to prove oneself beyond the lower expectations of them at home compared to their brothers. The following excerpts of local females

students show the prevalence of traditional views on women among some families:

> "In Cegep my mom wanted me to have a three years professional program, get a job and then get married - traditional system. Because I'm a girl and girls shouldn't have too much of an education. The job is stay at home and have kids. She's anxious for me to get some education so I could get a job. Very minimum (education) -just enough to get a job. She wanted me to be a secretary, like a low level job so I could work if I had to but I think her main priority for me is to get marry and have kids. (Local Female in Political Science)

> "My father at first didn't think the girls needed as much education. He's still in the traditional thinking that girls don't need education and that the males are breadwinners so I guess they would expect the boys to go further ahead, career wise. But now my father has changed his mind. My mother changed his mind, she says 'all her kids will go to university' and I'm career oriented too. (Local female in Nursing)

While gender distinctions were evident among all groups, it was most noticeable and clearly stated amongst overseas females. If local born females were driven to succeed, the expectations to "just get a degree" were found only among some Hong Kong females who felt much less pressure to acquire a specific profession. There were many ambitious overseas female students in the sample, but only among the subset of female overseas students was there found a more placid attitude towards professional careers. (A few of them were in the liberal arts with no clear direction.) A possible explanation may be that a Western degree, regardless of the field is generally useful and prestigious in Hong Kong. However, that no male Hong Kong students expressed similar disinterest in academic choices suggests that a gender phenomenon may be at work. Additionally, while all students acknowledged the influence of their parents in matters regarding their education, only female Hong Kong students expressed this most often as a specific need and desire to

please their parents. These females expressed a strong dependence on their parents (or were most willing to admit it), not only for their opinions regarding academics decisions but for life in general.

> "They (parents) have a lot of influence on what I decided to do because I'm quite a dependent person. When I choose my faculty for my university, they have influence on me. Like when they say Chemical Engineering is good so I apply for it without really thinking if I'm interested in it or not. (She was rejected.) I don't know why I applied for Commerce in McGill. It's a general field so after I finish it I can go into whatever business field I like so I have a wide choice. Well, they thought it was a good choice also since I'm not sure what I really want to do. Commerce will be good because it's not really a professional, it's kind of like semi-professional so it's not like Arts and Sciences, at least something practical."
> (Hong Kong female in Management)

Females within most families are quite aware of the preference and deferential treatment given to sons and this was apparent in their dealings with their brothers. However, Hong Kong females seemed to have internalized these gender distinctions and rather than competing with their brothers like local born females, they share in their parents' favouritism. The following excerpt reveals a strong loyalty to the family unit, and the sibling's responsibility not only to their parents but to siblings, especially the males in the family.

> "They treat us the same, we have to go to higher education but with my brother, my mom has a little bit higher expectation because he is a boy, and he has to take care of his wife. So she said he has to study something a bit more useful. She said, 'if you want to go into Arts, fine, but find something you can support your family later on.' My brother wanted to get into Film and Communication but it's hard in Canada because we don't know people. My mom asked him, 'what are you going to do after you get your degree.' That's why I really have to talk to him, tell him to try Management first, then we'll see what happen. My mom will talk to him after. We're not

> forcing him but we want you to start with something that's easier to get a job after he gets out."
> (Hong Kong female in Arts)

Such gender distinctions probably originated from early socialization where differential tutoring styles as well as resources allocated to education were different for daughters and sons. Overseas students in general, had more resources such as tutors and private schools but these also varied by gender. One girl's brother had various tutors (she had none) and was sent overseas to boarding school at thirteen because he was doing poorly in the Hong Kong school system (this is quite common). The following except describes the differences in sponsoring education between females and males:

> "I'm quite different from my brother. He is quite lazy and he hates school work. My parents put a lot of pressure on him - that's really the difference between him and me. When they saw him, nothing else; 'did you do your homework, go study'. Everyday is the same, routine I would say. My mom supervise my brother's homework since he was in primary high school. They help him with all kinds of problems. They didn't supervise me that much because I don't have problems. They suggest I don't spend that much time in the book, to do something else, especially my father. He said 'don't always read your text book, you have to read something else; you have to have a general knowledge about everything, you can't just stick to your book, that's useless.' They didn't go that far for my brother. The first thing they say: 'go study your textbook'..."
> (Hong Kong female in Engineering)

4. Early Socialization

If there was a general expectation that one must do well in school and enter a career-oriented field in university, how was this conveyed in the socialization and upbringing of these students, and what key strategies were implemented to sponsor academic success? The question to explore is whether there was a strong home background of cognitive scaffolding[19] and enrichment or just general high academic expectations? Were the students constantly being reminded, supervised, helped with their homework, and given every opportunity for intellectual development or was high performance an ingrained expectation and the students achieved this on their own initiative? Aside from high academic expectations, as established in the previous section, what did the parents actually do to ensure academic success?

The general findings of this sample uncovered a pattern which along with high expectations of academic success included limited help but verbal reminders, with a strong emphasis on effort and end result in terms of grades attained. Other methods that compensated for lack of direct help was the mobilization of family resources. This included making an example of the eldest and encouraging positive competition between siblings.

Cognitive Scaffolding

Parental help, supervision, and the amount of educational enrichment varied widely probably due to the range of socio-economic background of the sample. On an ascending scale of 1 to 5, most claimed that their parents "sometimes" (3) verbally reminded them but "rarely" (2) supervised or helped with their homework. Few parents had rich scholarly

[19] Term used to define parents' tutoring interactions with their children as used in Mordkowitz and Ginsburg study of Harvard Asian student. (Mordkowitz and Ginsburn, 1987)

backgrounds; one overachieving Dentistry student who read "Times" magazine since he was eight had ordered it himself. In terms of cognitive scaffolding, some parents were actively involved in guiding their children's education but most did little beyond a general high expectation of good marks and did or could not help beyond the elementary years. Some educated mothers actively monitored, tutored and carefully guided their child throughout their school career but most parents had no conception of any school material and just basically "nagged" their kids to do homework. In this group, most would try to help up to elementary levels but were deeply handicapped by limited education and English. Help in math when young was most common but minimal, and not beyond the multiplication tables. In the general overall pattern, even if there was intense tutoring when young, cognitive scaffolding did not extend beyond the elementary years. One female in Engineering remembered how even when there was no homework in elementary school, "my mother wanted me to bring homework home but every time I did, the teacher would get mad." The usual trend (especially among the local group) is the verbal reminder and consistent pressure to do homework but with little aid. Many claimed that "there was actually little they could do to regulate schoolwork", especially for working parents. The general response was "we knew what we had to do; we knew our responsibilities; we just got it done." "I wouldn't do anything stupid like screw up my schoolwork."

> "I worked very hard, always trying to get top marks in the class, it wasn't expected but it was natural. That's one thing for us, our parents never sat down with us and helped us with our homework. I presume a lot of other parents help their children. We were basically on our own; we had to do our homework; we had to study; we had to have our own responsibilities. We go to the restaurant for lunch and always after school to help out, pass time, and just fool around. I guess we did homework at night. It was never immediate but we always had it done.

> They wouldn't check or anything, it was up to us, we knew we had to do it so they didn't force us but we did it anyways. They would never see us doing homework, but they would see the results, report cards, getting back the results of a test because I'm sure even now, they don't know what the test is all about but they just see the marks. That's how they generalize how we were doing."
> (Local female in Education)

> "Well, they're always telling us to do homework, always yelling if we're watching TV or something; 'go to your room and do homework!!' I mean if they sent you to your room to study, there isn't much else to do. They'll turn off the TV and make sure we're not watching - things like that. They were constantly on our backs to do homework. They would always be telling us, and making sure we did it. I guess because they want us to get ahead in life, get a good job later on, and they keep saying that the only way to do it is by a good education. They really couldn't help cause of the English and stuff. I guess when we were young, my mom would help me with Math but that's about it. They really couldn't help, they just made sure I did it.
> (Local female in Nursing)

The importance of setting a high personal standard, and expectation to do the best to one's ability were the important tools given rather than direct help.

> "...The thing is, they say, 'with your capabilities, we know you should be able to do this. If you don't, then it's your fault.' We always argue about like if I don't work; I don't feel like it today, all this kind of stuff but they would say, 'its a waste, but it's your life.' Sometimes they would say, 'how come you got so low marks' and then I would say, 'look at other people, they got below eighties' and then they would say, 'we don't care about other people we know your abilities, so you should be able to do better. It's a waste if you don't use your abilities.'..."
> (Local male in Dentistry)

Many also cited the importance of early discipline and emphasis on school in setting their own priorities and work habits. It appears that strict guidance in the early years later took on a momentum of its own and strong work habits, once instilled, were easily set in motion. Whereas once the

pressure had been from the parents, it was now self-imposed. This was true of all the groups but again, direct help and pressure most often characterized the subset from Hong Kong. They also had the financial resources such as tutors if needed.

> "I think my mom did a very good job because when we were young, she take control and make us have good habits, but later on at a suitable time, she let go. So we learn step by step, and I think she did a good job. We don't really have trouble even though they're not really looking or telling us what to do. We know how to self-discipline, so this is important I think..."
> (Hong Kong female in Science)

> "I would say from grade one to grade six, my mother gave me a lot of pressure because when I finish my class, she just sat beside me and watch me do all my homework. After grade 7 and onwards, usually she just asks me how hard my school work is going."
> (Hong Kong male in Management)

A Marks Orientation

If expectations of success were high, and students were only reminded to do their best and succeed in school without actual supervision or help, the measurement of effort and achievement were grades. The overriding view was that MARKS are the only measurement of progress and the single most important goal regardless of contents learned. In the survey, most claimed that their parents were "often" interested only in report card marks and not content.

> "Report cards were a big thing, it was the only way they could see how we were doing. They were looking at marks, not that much interested in content really; it was the marks that counted." (Local Male in Arts)

Thus from childhood, the emphasis in education has been a task goal orientation in the pursuit of good grades. The lesson learned here from early on in life is that obtaining good grades is the primary responsibility of the children and the means by which to best honour their parents. In the survey, most claimed that doing their best in school was

"often" an act of obedience and respect for their parents. Says one local male architecture student:

> "To please my parents? It would be my grades. That's really the only things that would please them, out of anything else. I guess it would be grades."

Most students have internalized this preoccupation with marks. This is illustrated by the conclusion drawn by a local male student in Education after "being in school for X number of years:"

> "What I've figured to be the main thing about university is, get the grades, get the good marks, because obviously it counts. Get to know a lot of people, be friends with everyone: the teachers, the staff, the students - to have fun. That's the most important thing. Three years of my life, I want to have fun, and I did, and I'm happy."

Only one female student noted that "marks were not an indication of much" although she herself was a good student and had high standards. However, another male Engineering student from Hong Kong commented on the futility and shortsightedness of pursuing only grades. He admitted to being "a little stupid" in just pursuing marks in his first and second year while the "Caucasian" students emersed themselves in applying practical computer knowledge. By the third year they were functional in microcomputers, whereas he would take three times longer than a Caucasian student to type a paper. He believes this single minded pursuit of grades is characteristic of Oriental students:

> "I think that caring only for marks is intrinsic of an Oriental students. But I know this is not correct, cause marks doesn't mean anything, got to learn something, outside the books."

Family Pressure

If direct help was limited, another method to ensure academic success was to elicit the resources of the family unit. Family members pushed each other; the eldest set

academic examples, elder siblings were responsible for helping the younger ones, and parents strongly compared siblings.

The pressure associated with being the "eldest in a Chinese family" was a constant remark regardless of gender (although males probably had added pressure) and coincidentally, there was a disproportion number of firstborn in the sample. Academic example in terms of majors and school performance were set by the eldest. This is exemplified by one female medical student who was so intensely and systematically tutored by her mother that, "it's like writing the exam with all the answers inside my hand;" she "basically had two teachers, one at home and one in school." Her choice of Medicine was strategic: "the fact that [illegible] in medicine makes them much more at ease; if I went into poetry as a first child, I think there would have been arguments." However, her mother's active involvement in her school work and intense tutoring did not extend to her younger three sisters.

> "I think her emphasis was always to make an example of me and once I was on the road, she felt safe that the others would just follow by example. So it is quite obvious that she spent a lot less time with the three younger ones. She never had to do that coaching."

Those who were not firstborn were very much aware that their older siblings were pushed harder in every areas of life.

> "It's easy for me being second, and my brother being third. It must have been pretty tough for my sister, being first because she was the trend setter. My sister's the one who was always pushed. She's the first girl, the oldest. My parents always pushed her very hard; in discipline or punishment wise, they're harder. Instead of just a little verbal reprimanding, they'll get out the old Chinese whip. She's always been a very good student; they didn't really have to push her but they expected it of her you know..."
> (Local Male in Physical Education)

For the overseas students, family pressures seemed especially acute, particularly when older siblings have been academically successful.

> "Growing up - 4 boys in the family. My eldest brother, he's quite smart, he studies very good. He gets his Phd degree in mathematics. I think he influenced me a lot. If he don't get a Phd degree, I may not move to finish my university degree or to try hard to come to Canada. My second and third brother, they're medical doctors. That's why I got to try hard,I have no choice!! Oh, pressure, always pressure around me: from my relatives, from my mom, my dad, my sister-in-law, from my brothers. They don't say anything in words but I can <u>sense</u> the pressure. My Mom, she likes me a lot, she don't want me to come to Canada. When I leave for Canada she tell me; 'my son you have to go, you got to go, you got to finish your university degree otherwise you might get the gap with your brothers,' so I got to come..."
> (Hong Kong male in Engineering)

Sibling comparisons were not limited to birth order and may extend to relatives and other families. The basic intent was to motivate effort to fully develop one's potential with the undermining belief that a strong work ethnic can compensate for any lack of ability. This recurrent theme throughout the interviews may explain why that despite the general high GPA of the sample, most of the students would insist they are not smart, "they just work hard." The students themselves have internalized this work ethic as illustrated by the following excerpt from an overseas female in Physiotherapy with a sister four years younger:

> "They like to compare marks. They'll tell me, 'see your sister is so smart, when you're in grade four, your mark is so and so. Look at your sister, she got nineties.' They want me to work harder, they know that I'm not that smart so they want me to work hard. I didn't like it when I was very young but I don't mind now because I know she was born smart. You can't really compare two persons at the same level. They send me letters, sometimes every semester. When my sister gets her report, my parents would make a photocopy and send it to me. They want me to look at it, 'your sister is so smart, she got a

> scholarship again. So you should work harder, even though you're not that smart and it is possible that you got a scholarship too.' I know that I won't do as fast as my sister but I won't feel guilty. I work hard, nothing more to do and my parents know that too. They sort of changed their attitude. They forced me when I was young, but now they encourage me. When I was young, the pressure is from my parents, now the pressure is from myself."

Despite overt sibling rivalry, there was a clear sense of family unity in all matters concerning education. There existed a corporate responsibility to seeing "everyone" doing well in school and entering university. Comments of "I don't want to compete with my brother, I want him to do well too" were common. Elder siblings were responsible for younger ones and encouraged them to academic success in the same way their parents had once pressured them. This was especially true of local students, perhaps because the parents were too busy working and unable to help out. One local female took on the responsibility herself:

> "My younger brothers and sisters are not so much pushed now because my mother started working but our family push each other. So I push them I guess just like my Mom. If they're lounging around doing nothing, I'd tell them 'go to your room and do your homework.'..."
> (Local female in Nursing)

> "I want them to do well. My parents are always telling us to help each other. Right now, my youngest brother isn't doing that well. My parents told me to help him, drag him into the library."
> (Local female in Management)

Rewards and Reinforcement

Rewards for academic success were neither frequent nor direct. While parents expected much, they offered little direct material rewards or praise for attaining good marks. Reinforcement was more often negative and privileges were taken away if certain grades were not made. If the degree of "cognitive scaffolding" varied and students did homework

and attained good marks on their initiatives, there were some very clear methods of ensuring academic success.

> "We were pushed and its like if we didn't make the grade, there'll be privileges taken away like no TV, you can't go out, they won't give you money if you want it. They won't give you money to go out. If there is a field trip you can't go - it was a give and take depending on your marks, so they always saw our marks and see how we were doing. Obviously if we weren't working hard or studying, our marks will show it.
> (Local female in Nursing)

> "They didn't help me but sometimes they would curse me. I would have done it (schoolwork) but maybe not as seriously. It's not a big deal but when they tell you to, then it's important, plus they cut off your money. When I was fourteen, fifteen, I wasn't working, so I depended on them. If I needed money, then I had to be good, do well in school actually."
> (Local male in Arts)

If there were any monetary rewards, they often come from relatives and not directly from parents. Says one student, "no rewards, the only thing was my aunt or my grandparents. If they see us doing well, they would give us money - twenty bucks, that was a lot." Nevertheless, the importance of academics for the parents and their expectation for success was conveyed in indirect ways, such as bragging to friends and relatives.

> "They would be telling everybody; 'my daughters are at university and winning this award and that scholarship.' Of course when we didn't win anything or doing badly they wouldn't say anything but they're always bragging."
> (Local female in Nursing)

Interestingly, as much as the parents pushed academics and focused on grades, by the time the student entered university, they were much harder on themselves when they failed than their parents.

"I did bad in my first semester, they didn't do anything. They just said its too bad, they know I can do better. I think I was harder on myself than they were."
(Local male in Dentistry)

"They always wanted us to do well. They were proud of us when we did do well. On the contrary, when we didn't do well, it was always we would get it the next time you know."
(Local female in Architecture)

5. Family System

Some clear and distinct patterns regarding the family background of the respondents emerged from the interviews. These findings point to a family system that contained elements highly conducive to academic achievement. There was a range of parental styles and family types, but regardless of whether the home was authoritarian or communicative, the presence of a very strong family structure and commitment of each member to its unity both socially and economically was very much in evidence. Across a spectrum of conservative to more liberal attitudes (surprisingly overseas students had families who were often not traditionally strict or authoritarian), the family as the significant social unit, whether overt or symbolic, was preeminent in the student's life. The family unit contained well-defined roles with responsibilities and obligations of each member in a set structure. The presence of extended family members, rules governing free time, hobbies, extracurricular activities, allowance, and housework were facts that emerged from the sample which illustrate the strength of the family unit. The interviews revealed a very strong family structure, clear rules governing free time and activities that ensured academic success; a secondary emphasis on sports and extracurricular activities; and specific concepts of allowance and housework. These elements converge and reinforce the general consensus echoing throughout the interviews - the pursuit of education is the single most important factor governing family life. A relentless prioritizing of education that pervades all family activities and interactions characterizes the family system.

A Strong Family Structure

Concretely, the index of a strong family structure, and a common denominator of the family backgrounds of all the subjects, was the virtual absence of divorce in the sample;

only 1 out of 32 (and this family background was atypical). Additionally, there were rarely non-related babysitters in the care of the students when young. They were seldom left alone and if they had to be, it was never with strangers. For working parents, an interesting finding among the local group was the presence of a grandparent to fulfil the nurturant role, especially if the mother worked. Other extended family members also served as sources of support and motivation, and there was usually a strong attachment to relatives and extended families even when the family is isolated here and contact involved overseas visits.

> "I never had babysitters. My sister is four years older than I am, so my parents never went out that much cause my dad worked so my mom, my grandmother, would stay home with my sister and I. When she was older, four years doesn't sound much, but she would take care of me. My mother took maternity leave when she had me and my sister but at that time when we moved here, I was living at my mother's aunt. She took care of us, me and my sister when my mom's at work."
> (Local male in Architecture)

In observable ways, family unity was maintained by doing various activities together. Eating together at home or in restaurants were cited most often. The evening meal was especially important; "there used to be a time when we couldn't eat until they were at the table". Some perceived their family as being very close, enjoying each others company, and doing various activities together. There were constant remarks that "the four of us were always together" or "our family is quite introverted, we keep to ourselves, they're very protective". For many students, an ideal way to spend free time and relieve stress from school was to "hang out" with siblings and family, even when their parents gave them much freedom to go out.

> "They were always lenient on what we wanted to do, ever since we were small. We had freedom of going out, staying out late, doing things. Basically we're very close because we lived at home together. We

> eat supper together; it's not like a sort of in and out sort of thing. We watch TV at home but every year we go on vacation together. Even at home every night now, we sort of stick around; either we talk or we watch TV, or we play games."
> (Local female in Education)

Obviously, family cohesion and enjoyment varied qualitatively within the sample. The Hong Kong students often admitted that before they came overseas, they had lived a very sheltered life that was dominated by school and structure extracurricular or family activities.

> "At home (Hong Kong) probably I would talk to my parents and go out with my parents. I don't hang around my classmates there a lot."
> (Hong Kong female in Engineering)

Native born children of restaurant owners often "hang out or help out" at the restaurants and thus the family remains together. However the effect of working parents, especially in restaurant occupations often results in little visibility, especially for the father and comments such as "we saw our parents as much as kids see their working parents" were frequent. Other findings were the absent and non-communicative father who was silent about everything but school and education, and the mother who was the sole enforcer of cultural traditions (morals, values, and "family"). Even among students less than content with their family life, the strong obligation to the family unit and adherence to its rules and responsibilities in such things as corporate meals, spending the little available time together, and limiting outside activities, remained important in the student's life. In all families, the single most important element governing family life was school performance and this priority was clearly stated above all else. This expectation was communicated even when there was little communication between parents and children and little was known about their free time and activities. The

following excerpts from two local female students of restaurant workers show two very different views of family life.

> "We never saw our father much when I was young - he would work from 12 to 12 or whatever so I would be at school or asleep when he got back. My mom was always there, she never worked till recently. We're real together - go out together: outings, trips, go to the zoo or something. We have to eat all our meals together - all meals: lunch, supper and if you're not there for a meal, you're in big trouble! My parents are really into the family thing, I think other than academics, they really pushed for the family, its very important."
> (Local female in Nursing)

> "They don't seem to realize in university, homework is spaced at your own willingness to do it. I see my father once a day, sometimes twice a day; once early in the morning and once late at night and the only thing he says to me is, 'have you done your homework yet?' I don't find I have a lot of interaction with my parents. My mother, I'm a lot closer to and I'm the only child who is closer to her. She encourages us to do homework and watch TV - it's a very sad life.
> (Local female in Economics)

Free Time and Activities

Strong family structure is also reflected in the control and oversight of free time and activities. If there was a lack of direct knowledge regarding the student's activities and free time, their lives still remained controlled to a surprising limit via indirect methods such as restriction of activities, control of allowances, and discouragement of part time work, which limit economic freedom, autonomy and independence. Most importantly, the gauge of marks and schoolwork served to limit free time and activities. Often, activities and pursuit of hobbies were allowed on a barter system with the condition that "marks were kept up" to a standard that was quite high. It was this bartering system that served to maintain "good" marks in school. Generally

though, there was much freedom in activities because school was taken care of.

> "I can do what I want but they always want to know where I'm going in case they want to reach me and things like that. They're just naturally curiously; 'where are you going tonight, who are you going out with.' I never could tell because my marks have never been bad so I never had the problem where my marks were bad and I still wanted to go out. I guess,when my marks were decent (high 70s to 80s), they didn't care where I went."
> (Local male in Engineering)

Most students claimed their parents "questions were natural concerns because they were parents", and they themselves had little to hide. Some parents knew of their children's friends and activities, other had no clue. However, a common parental concern was dating in high school or even university where it was strongly discouraged "so school won't be distracted."

> "I don't know; they say they don't mind my dating in university but every time I go out with somebody they always say, 'well don't let that interrupt your schoolwork!' They were saying that like every day and sometimes I'm not so sure whether they want me to or they don't."
> (Local female in Management)

Though most claimed they were given much freedom, the fact was most students had not really socialized much until high school or even university. Moreover, while insisting they had to the freedom to come and go as they please, a strong internalized conscience of "right" kept the student out of "trouble". Especially for the local born, with working parents who were limited in overseeing their children's activities, the maintenance of strong family structure and the children's ability to "do well in school and be good" without much actual supervision attest to the strength of unspoken duties and responsibilities within the family. One local born female was surprised she "turned out

so good - I don't know why we never took drugs, I had friends who did and I always wondered, how did I miss that?"

> "If we want to go out, we would tell them we're going out and then they would ask what time we were coming back and that's it. As long as we didn't hang out with bad people or what they call bad people; people who smoked, or do drugs and stuff like that. But they know most of my friends, they don't say anything. For myself I don't like smoking so I wouldn't want to hang around with people who did."
> (Local female in Science)

There were a few extreme cases of families where interest and activities were so limited that there was little to do except schoolwork. This is particularly evident amongst some local born females. Restriction of activities left little to do but to "pick up a book", especially for those living in remote regions with little Chinese contacts. Says one female student, "not going out means NOT going out of the yard!".

> "She (mother) didn't like us going out with friends or anything. She didn't even like us going over to people's houses, even Chinese. I don't know, maybe she thought it was imposing. She didn't like us sleeping over, that was definitely out. My sister slept over one time without telling my mom and there was hell to pay. I was always at the house reading, I love reading. She would force me to go out, 'bring your book out and try to get us to get some air' but to go outside means the yard, not outside - like going out with friends to see a movie would be a waste of time and money."
> (Local female in Arts)

Sports and Extracurricular activities

Contrary to the stereotypical image of the unidimensional Chinese with little extracurricular activities or hobbies; there was a wide range of activities among students in the sample. Many of the students were very involved in various hobbies and extracurricular activities in school.

> "If anything, I think I don't work hard enough compared to the average person in my class. Maybe because I'm involved in other activities too,

> extracurricular activities, and I find that I spread my time out more. Sports, society events; planning like society events and things like that."
> (Local male in Engineering)

> "Yeah, my parents would have liked me to get involved at school but sometimes there's just not enough time to do that especially now."
> (Local female in Science)

While some parents did encourage extracurricular activities, there was an implied restriction placed on them. More educated and affluent parents of both the local and overseas group may encourage extracurricular activities and hobbies but always on the condition that it would not interfere with school. Preference was given to cultural activities such as piano and ballet lessons. In most cases extracurricular activities outside these traditional bounds were not encouraged, particularly sports. This was a strong recurrent finding. Those who did sports pursued it on their own without encouragement. One girl had to barter for sports as a trade off for piano lessons. The general feeling regarding extracurricular activities was "they didn't encourage it; didn't disdain it - as long as it didn't interfere with school".

> "We could go out and stuff, as long as we kept our marks up and it didn't interfere with our school work. I was always into sports and clubs. They (parents) didn't mind as long as it didn't interfere with school work."
> (Local female in Nursing)

> "I did a lot of sports. It didn't bother them (parents), but they didn't encourage it. They would prefer that I take time to study rather than exercise. I took up the guitar myself."
> (Local male in Arts)

> "I have always been into sports, but not organized sports because my parents were very against the football team, the baseball team. 'Oh no, you're going to get hurt.' Not until high school that I got into my first team at school, the wrestling team. I liked it so much, every team I joined. They never

> encouraged that, they were afraid that we would get hurt, they had never really encountered because in Hong Kong I guess, they never had any sports in school. They were really busy themselves. They had their jobs, both of them worked - they didn't really have time to really force us into anything or to bring us to games and my grandmother wasn't about to do that so it was basically up to us and we usually found our way, it wasn't a big deal. They never knew about it. If I joined a certain team, I'd figure they knew about it but I never really told them. It wasn't until the awards night you know, for sports, 'you're on the team, really? That's pretty good' and that's it."
> (Local male in Physical Education)

Obvious from the above quote, activities outside academics were given little attention by the parents. Some have attributed this lack of sports and extracurricular activities as conducive to concentration on school work.

> "No that's the thing. As a kid, that was the reason why I could devote more time to my studies because I had nothing (extracurricular activities)."
> (Local female in Economics)

Thus, activities outside academics, though pursued by the sample of students, were acquired not through the encouragement of parents but by their own initiative.

> "I think my parents were more academically oriented. I think they weren't used to the idea of extra-curricular activities; to them, getting good marks equated getting somewhere. I think I picked up the idea of extracurricular activities from the people I met and from the private school I was in. It was a private school that really encouraged extra-curricular activities and since they were all included in my tuition, I felt I had to take advantage of all that so naturally I joined things like computer club, drama, gymnastics."
> (Local female in Medicine)

Economic Control

Finally, the control of money provided an important means to monitor activities, to ensure the student's dependence on the parents, and to delay autonomy. The Hong Kong students

were almost totally financially dependent on their parents and most have never even worked. For those born or raised in Canada, where allowance and part time work is a common concept, economic independence did not differ much from the overseas group. There was usually NO set allowance; money was given as needed, and students were discouraged to work and were never allowed to work during the school term. If there was an allowance, spending habits were often questioned.

> "We didn't have an allowance; our parents would give us spending money when we needed it. We would tell them, we need it for this and they would say Ok. They weren't strict on limiting the amount like five dollars or something. We worked but we didn't get paid for it, in the restaurant when we were younger. That was another thing I found in my family was that we never had to go out and get a part time job during school. A lot of my friends did but it wasn't expected of us to go out and try and find pocket money. I only starting working for myself, just last year outside of growing up."
> (Local female in Education)

> "Well, when I was younger I went out to movies now and then, and my parents would give us money but it was like a treat kind of thing. When we first came here, we were kind of poor so money was tight so we didn't get much of an allowance, and what we did get was special so we really saved it. They would always tell us to save it, for school, for things we need at school, and to save it for university. I didn't work till quite late, about 16, then I worked every summer since. No! never, I was never allowed to work during school - it would interfere with school."
> (Local female in Nursing)

Many students shared the view that to work during school was extraneous to the need for money and was short sighted; most did not start working until quite late. During summer vacations however, many were motivated to work hard. Moreover, the students showed amazing responsibility and maturity in their money management. Money for pleasure and going out was strictly felt to be something unsuitable to ask

of parents. Money for these purposes was made by the students themselves. Says one local born male student,

> "I can't expect my parents to give me money for everything. I don't expect them to give me money to go out. That's just not fair."

Additionally, the later working age of the children limits their autonomy for a longer period of time.

> "I probably started working when I was fifteen or sixteen. After that if we needed more money, we would get some money but you know, basically it was more for us. "Oh good, we don't have to ask for money'; you don't have to tell them what you're using it for..."
> (Local female in Architecture)

Implicit in all family matters dealing with money is that when it comes to education, financial resources are unlimited. The economic priority for education was made very clear and there was little the family would not sacrifice for school. The students were not expected to contribute to household income, their job was to get educated. Additionally, few see the need for money except for pocket cash at this time in life; "well it's true you don't really need the money," says one male student. Thus, ironically while their choice of careers were largely based on finances, the students were willing to refuse the immediate lure of money for future financial gains.

> "No, they even encouraged me not to work - just to concentrate on my studies; 'your education is more important, it's not like we can't afford to give you what you need.'...."
> (Local female in Science)

> "Their theory is, go to school, get your education. You don't have to work, we'll pay for your education, that type of thing. I'd rather me pay for my own thing but I can't really. I want to get my degree first, then go away, get total freedom. I want to get my degree as quick as possible and then get out but money wise, they gave me whatever I needed. I was pretty lucky."
> (Local male in Architecture)

Housework

The final example of the family system that illustrates the priority given to education and the emphasis on academics is housework or chores. In housework, the division of labour was according to gender, with daughters "feeling responsible" for doing dishes and cleaning up. The most distinct pattern was the lack of concrete, assigned household chores, and the absence of allowance for housework. The children were by in large, officially exempt from housework, although most (females in particular) would pitch in and help out. Amongst children of working mothers, even some males would feel obligated to pitch in. The overriding view was that schoolwork came first, and saying one had homework exempted them from chores 100% of the time although none ever thought to use it as an excuse.

> "It was more just an exercise to discipline us and also to appreciate what was being done for us and how much we were given."
> (Local female in Medicine)

> "Yeah, we dc a lot of house work - we all pitch in. Its really segregated, the typical male/female. The girls do the washing, cooking, cleaning. The boys do things like taking out the garbage, fixing things. It was understood that if we ever had an exam or anything we just didn't have to do our chores. We just had to say that."
> (Local female in Nursing)

> "No chores, no allowances; didn't have to come home and do this and do that. It was ok, let's clean up a bit today and everybody would pitch in. There was no set day and no set chores."
> (Local female in Eduction)

6. Internal Motivations

> "The first would be parents - my parents' attitude and traditional values. I guess next would be my own determination. I want to succeed and I want to go on to school, and again that's passed down.. and friends; since we've been going to school together and we moved up together."
> (Local female in Education)

This was the typical response when the students were asked about factors that influenced their academic careers. (The Hong Kong group also added the pressure of the school system and Hong Kong society rather than any individual determination.) Having already addressed the family and parental influences, we will now address the student's internal motivations and leave school and peer influences for the next section on external environments.

Apart from the influence of family, the students themselves possessed strong internal drives to succeed academically. Factors such as a high personal standard, a fear of failure, and a desire for upward mobility, all generated a strong motivation to hard work academically. Internal motivations consisted of three driving forces: a high personal standard based on a keen sense of competition and commitment to excellence towards a goal, and the willingness to delay instant gratification; a strong immigrant/minority mentality (for the local group) that seeks financial security in the independent professions; and an awareness of parental sacrifice in both life and finances that generates a deep desire and responsibility to fulfil their academic expectations.

The students surveyed are high achievers in the sense that they are task oriented, competitive, and result oriented. Their view of university is strictly utilitarian and as such, they work hard only for end goals. Most like their parents, give a strong personal attribution to "hard work" believing it can compensate for lack of ability ("one

can do anything if one wants to and works for it"). They have set high personal standards for themselves that give little room for failure. They are often willing to forgo present pleasures for future gains. As one student answered when asked why he worked so hard;

> "satisfaction, I wanted to do well. I couldn't stand failing, sometimes it would happen and I would get mad. Not fail a course, but maybe get not so great a mark on an exam. I never failed a course."

A clear goal orientation and strong belief in hard work is especially typical of local students. The strongest sense of competition is exuded by this group and while the Hong Kong group also works hard and intensely, they are less driven by the surrounding environment and less likely to compete with other students. Says one local born female student, "because the fact that my teacher said she would never give it (an A) to me, I had to prove that she would." The following excerpts from local students illustrate the high standard, work ethic, and end goal orientation:

> "First of all, I don't know if I work so hard, people tell me I did but I didn't feel like it. I just did what I had to do. Basically just pass but I did more than that. My personal standard was probably a little too high."
> (Local female in Architecture)

> "I just enjoy the competition. I like my marks better than others. I would've been very upset if my marks were lower than other guys in school cause they don't work as hard, and there's no reason they should get a better mark. I know I put in more time than they did so I felt I deserve a better mark. The important thing is there is a point A you want to reach, and its just a matter of how to get there; after this degree maybe its graduate school or MBA. I want a few years of work experience; sometimes its good to be very good technically, but that doesn't necessary mean you'll move to the top. It takes other things, social skills; people skills - lots of other factors besides just being good; networking, it just depends on which road or path will get you to A faster or you can go higher with. I want to go the highest possible and I haven't decided how."

(Local male in Engineering)

The following case of a male Science student who just entered Dentistry also illustrates a high personal standard which he attributes to his upbringing. His end goal orientation, long term planning, and willingness to working hard now and play later exemplifies the typical response from children of immigrants. His long term goals of family are also typical of the males interviewed.

> "For my parents but I wanted to do well for myself. I always felt pissed off when I didn't do well, same thing for my brother. I'm self motivated but I think it's because my parents motivated us when we were small, they didn't always let us play in the streets. Anything below 85% looks sick, it just doesn't look right. if I get an 84%, it really pisses me off but university it's a different story, anything over A-. It's psychological, you don't want to see Bs. If you want to live a comfortable life, you have to succeed now. That's what my parents always say; to work hard now and play later. When you're established you can do what you want; play what you want, party all the time. I figure around thirty, thirty-five, I should be ready to party, to relax, to be established. Not so much family, but business, career - that sort of thing. I'm 21 now, in 4 year, I'll be out by 25 - 8 years away, get practice going smoother by 30/35. I don't want to have kids too late; want to enjoy my kids while I can - impression of things to come. I'm recently quite focused. Before dentistry, I don't know what to do, now in dentistry, set career; take liberty to think about other things. It's a lot more secure now. There's a lot of drive, insecurity for marks, about the future. The white Canadians don't have to worry. They have generations that are established, a certain amount of wealth, middle class."
> (Local male in Dentistry)

The last part of this quote typifies a key motivation amongst the local group. It is a immigrant mentality and an ethnic minority complex that have instilled feelings of insecurity and inferiority, but which is also a positive motivation to hard work with the end goal of upward mobility. Hence, the need to do well; "better than the others"; "to

prove themselves"; and to "survive in this society." The result of this minority perception is an insecurity expressed through hard work in academics and career choices that would provide future financial security, and hence the pressure towards the independent professions. The students feel a strong need and responsibility to do better than their parents. (By contrast, for the Hong Kong group, pressure came from the larger society in addition to the family, but not from a need for upward mobility.) The following two excerpts from two local female students, one in economics and heading for an MBA and the other in Medicine, illustrate the intense feelings of insecurity.

> "I think it (hard work in school) could be best explained by the fact that we weren't poor but we behaved like we were because my parents were misers and we didn't have any good clothing. We just were basically wearing rags to school and the only way we could hide was in our school work. If that made us different from our class mates, at least that made us smart so that they wouldn't tease or anything because we would have a thing to fall back on - we were smarter than you were."
> (Local female in Economics)

> "Well, I don't think my parents want anything from it (university) for themselves. I think more importantly since finance was always a big question and even now in the back of my parents anxiety, 'will we have food on the table tomorrow?" Something within them that I don't think they can ever let go. Mostly, they want us to have a future ahead of us and to make sure we go to university, get a degree, be educated and that's sort of their promise, their security. It's sort of like a guarantee in a way, that we won't be hungry, that we won't have to suffer, that we won't ever have to worry. I think it's because they felt the inherent insecurity and they've given up so much for us over the years and they want to feel some degree of permanent security. I think they still feel threatened as outsiders and immigrants and as people who don't have a stable job."
> (Local female in Medicine)

Finally, related to this immigrant mentality is a deep understanding of the sacrifices made by parents for their educational opportunities. This is true for all the demographic groups. For the immigrants or children of immigrants, this may include financial sacrifices: working hard to afford private schools; closing businesses and moving to better university locations, or even emigrating to Canada for better educational opportunities. There were quite a few cases of major moves into the city (some of which had included selling businesses) when the children reached university age. The students are fully aware of their parents' hard work in giving them educational opportunities and feel obligated to them. "They're always telling us you don't want to end up working hard in a restaurant, 20 hours a day like us!" The students see themselves as fulfilling the opportunities not afforded to the parents. Most have internalized their parents aspirations and goals and feel obligated in meeting their expectations. They often feel that what their parents want is what they want too. This is obvious when they are asked about pleasing their parents:

> "A good job, status, money, they want us to do better than they did and they say that education is the key to that too. I feel that way too, and I want that. We were ALL expected to do well."
> (Local female in Nursing)

The following three excerpts from local students, two in Medicine and one in Architecture illustrate the understanding and personal responsibility of the students in pleasing their parents in respect to educational success.

> "I think the key factor has to be family support and also another factor is that we were at least financially well off enough to support me that far. I mean even if I had all the emotional support in the world, and no finances, I don't think I would have gotten to where I am."
> (Local female in Medicine)

> "One thing that I learned is.. like my father; I identify with my father, being the only men in the

house. He works hard so I don't want to disappoint him. If I get too lazy. I don't want to fail in his eyes because he works really hard, so I should work hard too. Secondly, he always says, do your best, that's all you can do so I sort of have that attitude too. I try my best. My mother's really sensitive, really Chinese girl - quiet, talks quietly. She works hard but she's very gentle and emotional and that sorts of makes me more compassionate. The way I approach, do things; not to be aggressive or anything. I look at things with quite open eyes. I just open up and I don't have any prejudices when I walk into anything. She doesn't really hate, have biases, just like my grandmother, just be happy. That's how I sort of grew up."
(Local male in Medicine)

"..My parents came from mainland China and they never went to university so it was probably through my brother and myself, that we went to university and got an education seeing that they didn't. I think it's just the emphasis that it's very important to them. I think we grew up knowing that doing well in school was very important to them and as a kid, you want to make your parents happy.

My brother and I, we do a lot for our parents and it's not to say, we're in university for them. We have to be happy too but I think the fact that we've always encouraged a good standard for ourselves, like now for sure we're older and what we do is far beyond their understanding. Sometimes, when I come home after doing something, they won't understand what I've done or what it means even if it's good or bad. I think they have put into us that standard, and it's not for them anymore.

I think it's not them saying what we should be like but just telling us how their childhood was and how they grew up which was very different from how we were brought up. Obviously we have more than what they have...not eating, being very poor. I think I can't understand, even thinking about it.. just knowing that they've gone through that and have survived and they're doing really well. It's just we know their ultimate goal is just to have our lives better than theirs..."
(Local female in Architecture)

For the Hong Kong group, while not motivated by a minority complex, they nevertheless shared the high

expectations of parents and their deep commitment to education. Additionally, even though most come from affluent backgrounds, they are fully aware of the financial cost of their overseas education and feel obligated to "do well." This duty to parents, while implied by the local group is more clearly stated by those from Hong Kong. As one male student from Hong Kong says, "I don't want to disappoint my parents, they have high expectations of me." The following two excerpts will further illustrate the commitment to education.

> "I remember the year I graduate from my high school, I was an Ontario scholar. On prize day, like for each Ontario scholar, they would give a small silver spoon. When I went home, that week-end was Father's Day and I give that spoon to my Dad and he was really, really happy. I have never seen him that happy before."
> (Hong Kong female in Physiotherapy)

> " My dad's father died when he was still studying in Saskatchewan and that's one thing that he's ashamed of. Before his father died, his father told my grandmother not to tell my dad because that would affect his studies, he was almost finishing his Medicine degree. That's why he felt really sad and depressed when he went back (to Hong Kong) and find out his dad passed away.
>
> I think the pressure comes from myself because I think that since my parents like academics I should do well. I feel I should do well because they're spending a lot of money. It's probably much more expensive if I study here than if I study in Hong Kong so sometimes, I feel that since they have spent a lot of money on me I should do well and get good results..."
> (Hong Kong female in Management)

EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT

If the family system was important in motivating the individual, there was much in the external environment that also aided educational success. At the most basic levels, it was the positive influence of peers who were often also academically oriented. Most cited the importance of peer competition, along with parents and their own ambition, as key factors in their academic pursuits. It also became strongly apparent from the interviews comparing the local and Hong Kong group, and even when comparing those in private and those in public schools within the local born group, that the school system itself had a strong effect on achievement behaviour and academic choices. Often, it was the school system that favoured an individual's accomplishments and students were often streamlined into élite classes and consequently performed as expected. Of special significance is the Hong Kong school system which exerts tremendous pressure on the individual to work hard and perform academically. With its routine examination systems, it is very similar to examinations in classical China for entry into the bureaucracy. At another level, this may be compared to the private versus public school system in Quebec and the respective difference in environments in terms of performance and academic standards.

1. Peers

The influence of the external environment begins with school peers. What came across clearly through the interviews was that peer pressure and positive competition were important sources of motivation. This was often attributed to being a major influence in addition to pressure from family. Many cited how best friends would "push each other in friendly competition." Regardless of whether they were Chinese or not, the peers of the students interviewed were also academically oriented. The following excerpts show

the effect of peers, independent of culture, as in both cases none of the peers were Chinese.

> "I worked hard in elementary basically because my parents pushed me so hard. I worked in Junior high and high school too but in college I really slacked off, didn't do any work, any studying, got involved in other things, started going out a lot everynight but now I think I work hard. I was in a rebellious period. I was getting tired of being accuse of being square and a study wart. At Vanier I just partied; got involved in everything, every club, I would just study 2 hrs before the exam. I also hung around with different friends who weren't so academically oriented and my grades dropped (to 75's) and a few midterms that I actually failed and that put me back into shape. My friends in high school were academically oriented and were quite competitive and the ones in college were not. Most of my friends from high school went to another Cegep so that's why I didn't hang out with them."
> (Local female in Nursing)

> "They (parents) said school and education was important. I didn't care that much and they made me do it. But when I got older I thought to myself, this is important. I 'll do well because I want to plus I have some friends, a friend who was in competition with me in the tenth grade, when I switched to a private school. I realized I had to work more; all the other students were good. My friend, he's French; I've known him all my life. We both have the same idea. We both want to do well so we both encourage each other; got to do well, this is my future."
> (Local male in Arts)

2. <u>Quebec Private / Public School System</u>

Extending the peer factor to a different level, private as opposed to the public schools were important in creating an atmosphere conducive to academic success. Among the more affluent local born, there were many who went to private schools. These students often cited private schools as the important factor in their academic progress. It was the atmosphere in private schools that motivated hard work, in

order to "survive and keep up and not look like a dummy," said one student. Private schools were also cited as important in developing extracurricular interests. Most importantly, these students felt a strong responsibility to succeed since their parents had made such great monetary sacrifices when being much less affluent than the families of their school peers. As well, the obvious discrepancy in background and affluence between the first generation of local born and their peers seemed to reinforce the immigrant insecurity and need to achieve financial security and status. Many have noted their lack of identification with these affluent classmates. Again, most peers in the private schools were not Chinese.

> "In high school, when I got in LCC, it was a different story, whole new ballpark. You rolled in from public school, a middle class school environment, and then you're thrown into something like private school, where people are from Westmount, who are paying $5000 a year to get into school and you're thinking my parents put me in here, they're paying $5000 for me to learn something. I think it's time for me stop fooling around... I think another factor would be friends. In high school I hung around friends who were rather intelligent, their family backgrounds were like doctors, professors, engineers and not necessarily because my dad is only a chef or anything. My friends were quite smart and that pushed me to keep going to stay up with them and having them as friends was good because going through LCC was different. It's different than going through public school because you hung around with a group of people who are different; who were really intelligent; who strive to pass examinations and stuff like that and I think that surrounding, with them knowing what to do and them helping me and that type of friendship and the way we did things...I think growing up in that environment and atmosphere really helped me be what I am now...I don't have any Chinese peers in high school, when I started out in LCC in grade five, I was the only one and as the years progressed, in grade seven, two more came in, a couple more came in grade nine, grade ten but I started out as the only one..."
> (Local male in Architecture)

3. Hong Kong School System

Among the students from Hong Kong who have been in Canada less than 6 years, a significant external factor that produced intense pressure for educational success was the Hong Kong school system which ultimately reflects Hong Kong society. Many cited that family pressure aside, the significant push came from the Hong Kong school system and Hong Kong society in general. This was the key factor quoted by all Hong Kong students from Hong Kong.

> "My parents didn't push as hard as the school system in Hong Kong. The teachers always give a bunch of homework to do and they expect you to do well, and to get marks. The things is, the whole society, the Hong Kong society, not just the parents; the school system, they look for people who can really do well in academics."
> (Hong Kong male in Management)

One male Music student, who having been in Canada for 10 years and thus having exposure to both systems, points to the influence of his white friends "to be more relaxed and less tense" about schoolwork. He had experienced more tension in Hong Kong, especially since academics (math and sciences) do not come easily for him. The intensity of schooling in Hong Kong is best illustrated by a typical work day as described by this student:

> "I worked very hard. We have class from 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. every day and then after school I usually study from around 3:00 to 6:00 or 7:00 and then I go home and have dinner. Sometimes I have a break, watch television but not much and most of the time I study from maybe 9:00 pm to 12:00 or 1:00 a.m. - something like that.
>
> The main factors; one of them is my parents, the pressure to keep going and work hard, the second one is from the peer group. When you see everyone work hard around you, you work hard. The third reason is that in the Hong Kong environment, you have to work hard otherwise you can't survive. This is understood by everybody so they work very hard."
> (Hong Kong male in Management)

Admittedly, all those from Hong Kong, with one exception come from educated or at least affluent backgrounds, and so had the privilege of education in a society where education is an expensive commodity. In Hong Kong, wealth provides the opportunity for education. As one girl puts it bluntly, "I went to school because we can afford it." But if ability does not measure up (it becomes obvious in early examinations if grades are not high enough to enter the few very competitive universities), the common practice was to send the students overseas. Thus, these students come into the Canadian school system with the advantage of a strong work ethic and an awareness of the value of education. The differences in school pressure is exemplified by this female student in Physiotherapy: "I studied till 2:00-3:00 a.m. Compare to here, in high school, the first year here was honeymoon, I didn't really work. I gained 20 pounds!"

ETHNIC IDENTITY

In our original discussion of ethnic identity, there were both external and internal measures of identity as indicated by the survey. Although the term "identity" implies a certain level of self-awareness, objective measures were used to isolate those characteristics that were behaviorally Chinese (eg. food, language, customs). Additionally, "Chineseness" was ascertained in the interviews through the subjects own initiative in bringing up the topic. Most did with little prompting.

What arose from the surveys and interviews was a very interesting dichotomy in the definition of ethnicity. There was a strong distinction between those who are behaviorally very Chinese yet unaware of it, and those who are less behavioral Chinese but quite aware of their Chinese heritage, identifying strongly with their Chinese background and/or their visible minority status in Canada. The difference was most obvious when comparing the local and the foreign groups, the latter being behaviorally Chinese but not aware of it as a "distinct" identity. This suggests that perhaps the idea of ethnic identity as first conceptualized is relevant only to ethnic minorities in host countries and that those students from Hong Kong will not necessarily be more "Chinese" in the self-awareness sense, but will be quite "Chinese" in behaviour and in maintaining traditional values. For example, when asked to define Chinese culture, the foreign group were the first to bring up traditional values of family, respect for elders, and work ethic. In contrast, local born students first mentioned characteristics such as food and language, then spoke of cultural values in relation to the larger white society, citing issues such as out-dating and intermarriage. They often expressed their ethnicity within a framework of minority status and perception of discrimination. However, both groups do show an emphasis on

specific cultural traits, the most important being the centrality of the family as a key linkage to Chinese culture.

Finally, those who tend to make the strongest effort to assimilate and "lose" their identity were not first generation Chinese but recent immigrants. Not surprisingly, a few of these cases show the most likelihood of identification with Canadian society and rejection of Chinese heritage.

OBJECTIVE IDENTITY

The objective aspect of ethnic identity entails external manifestations and behaviours or cultural traits such as language, food, holidays, and traditions. It also includes involvement in organizations and community institutions, as well as family, friendships, and peers for those growing up in North America. For the subjects interviewed, and the local group in particular, this would be the aspect of ethnicity they first bring up when asked - the food, the holidays, the language. When asked about their Chinese heritage, they would first say, "we eat Chinese food all the time; we know what to expect for holidays; we speak Chinese at home." For all groups surveyed, retention of objective identity in terms of eating Chinese food and practising holiday customs were rated the highest ("frequently" and "often") but involvement in the Chinese media (TV, radio, movies) was low ("rare" or "never"). Thus, at a behaviourial level most still maintained a certain degree of identity to the Chinese culture and it is usually at this level that they would first attribute to "being Chinese". Cultural values and feelings of Chinese identity gets a little "hazy" after that.

> "We eat Chinese food every night practically; we always eat rice. When I cook, it has to be Canadian. I don't know very much Chinese cooking. We only speak Chinese to my mother but we eat Chinese food, we celebrate the Chinese New Years and Christmas. We do the traditions like the red envelopes and how you call it and my mother she does the incense." (Local female in Education)

1. Language

Usage of the Chinese language varied. The highest usage was among foreign students or recent immigrants, and for the local group, the highest retention were by those from educated backgrounds. In most local families, there were

some conscious attempts to teach the ethnic language at an early age, and many have at one point attended (or were forced to attend) Chinese school. While all parents "wished they could keep it", enforcement varied and in Quebec, most did have their "hands full learning English and French so it wasn't a priority". Some families switched to English or reduced emphasis on learning Chinese for school purposes. While some did claim to "speak pretty well for someone born here", most claimed just to understand and speak Chinese (the average response was "occasionally" and "often"). Reading and written comprehension skills were very limited, if not non-existent. Generally, if the student spoke any Chinese, it was usually to their parents who knew little English. Says one local born male student, "they would speak a few words to me and if I understand, I would answer back in English." To their siblings, the students spoke English.

> "It's a given, like we know when the holidays are and we know what we're going to eat that day, because it is a holiday. I probably mix a lot of it right now but as a kid they wanted us to keep using our Chinese. For a time, it was like you can't eat at the supper table unless you speak Chinese. Now, I speak to my brother predominantly in English but with my parents, it's in Chinese."
> (Local female in Architecture)

2. Ethnic Organizations

Participating in ethnic organizations in general is NOT popular amongst this sample. The most frequent response to the question of participation in an ethnic organization or an ethnic sponsored event was "rarely". Only two answered "frequently". This negative response characterized most local born and almost all overseas students. The reasons cited include an "aversion to large groups of Chinese"; a dislike for group distinctions based on race rather than interest or function - "don't believe in them"; and dislike for the Campus Chinese group (MCSS) and their "silly

squabbles" between local and foreign students, as well as their purely social functions and dances rather than anything "cultural or purposeful." These latter reasons were cited by the Hong Kong students as well.

> "I'm a passive member because I don't like the style of the organization. I'm not the person who like those parties style. I got the impression the organization require you, tend to be more party rather than the other affair which is more related to the Chinese student..."
> (Hong Kong male in Social Work)

Many of the students were actually non-active members of the campus Chinese association, which does an intensive recruitment campaign at the beginning of each year. Additionally, some have affiliations with other Chinese groups but are not members in any way but name. This may explain why in the survey, twenty answered "yes" to being affiliated with at least one ethnic organization. The findings suggest that ethnic affiliations and membership may be largely inactive.

Many of the Canadian born or raised students noted their discomfort and even "embarrassment" in the company of other Chinese people and at the behaviour of some Chinese, especially recent immigrants or those students who "would only speak Chinese to each other." Yet, despite their aversion to ethnic organizations, and often in spite of their parents' involvement in them, there seems to be much ambiguity in allegiance and loyalty to one's ethnic group as shown by the following excerpts.

> "We're pretty Chinese. My dad, because he works in Chinatown, he's on the board of directors of chinatown or something, so we're pretty Chinese. My sister - Chinese volleyball team, Chinese Concordia, Chinese McGill all these blah, blah.., all these big parties, so she's in heavy. My mom's in heavy too because of her background. We don't go out of our way. If it's Chinese new year, I won't stay home or anything but we do follow the customs, like not

> eating meat, not taking a shower for that day and we do celebrate Chinese new year and stuff like that.
>
> A lot of people say I'm really against Chinese people. I never thought I was but some people say I really was because I made fun of Chinese people a lot. I make fun of everyone, so it's only fair that I make fun of Chinese people too. In Chinatown, I'm my sister's brother or my father's son, type of thing. They're more known in Chinatown than I am. I don't really get into Chinese organizations. I'm not gung-ho with the idea, we're all Chinese so what, I mean who really cares, getting together, we're all Chinese, what's the big deal?
> (Local male in Architecture)
>
> "No, I don't believe in Chinese organizations. I'm at a crossroads here. I think my beliefs are contradictory because I don't believe Chinese people should always be with Chinese people. I find that that's too confining but I also think that the best thing about the Jewish community is the way that they provided scholarships for the Jewish community; the way that they congregate together, the way that they really feel that they belong in a community. Whereas the Chinese community, all the families in Chinatown have moved away. People just like to live by themselves. They want their kids to marry Chinese people but they themselves do not want to interact with Chinese people or at least that's how I think my parents feel..."
> (Local female in Economics)

A few local born students from the sample were very involved in the campus Chinese organizations. These very active leaders of Chinese groups on campus are quite assimilated and culturally "western", having been born or raised in Canada. Their involvement in Chinese organizations shows signs of a strong symbolic identity to their Chinese heritage, and suggests the workings of a middle class ethnicity. They confessed to feelings of a distinct, inherent "separateness" from white society and noted their discomfort around Caucasians. The following excerpt is from one of the most active students, whose father ironically, had discouraged him from ethnic organizations.

> "Overall I feel more comfortable hanging around, not with Hong Kong-born Chinese but with Canadian- born Chinese who I find I have the most in common with. It's just somehow you feel more comfortable being with them. You feel closer. You can fool yourself or pretend to have fun hanging around with Caucasians but there's always a gap, a feeling that there is a difference, if not the height, physical difference, it's just a general feeling of being out of place. Socially, I have to say that I feel more comfortable with Canadian born Chinese..."
> (Local male in Arts)

An often cited factor in explaining ethnic identity retention is the type of neighbourhood one grew up in. It is generally believed that growing up in an ethnic ghetto will foster stronger ethnic identification. The neighborhood factor when applied to our sample support a middle class ethnicity hypothesis. For the local group, few grew up in ethnic enclaves and many attended ethnically mixed schools. This integration however, had little effect on their association with Chinese friends and organizations. The ethnic neighborhood hypothesis seems to work in reverse. Isolation from other Chinese during childhood seemed to have enhanced ethnic identification at college age. A few females grew up in distinctively French areas (ie. Quebec City) with few Chinese, and developed strong friendship and social ties only when they met other Chinese at college or university. One male student only became active in extracurricular activities after he left the "Anglo-Saxon" middle class private school and met other Chinese at CEGEP. Now actively involved in Chinese associations across campus, he exudes the classic middle class ethnicity case.

> "I've always worked hard, just that in high school, its been more academic, I did less extracurricular. I first became more active when I started CEGEP. I think its because I got along better with the people there so I just started to do more things outside the class. The previous school environment was a private boy school and all the people there were Anglo-Saxon types, upper Westmount. I didn't really enjoy their company so I was just there for school. I didn't

> really do that much with them outside, on the weekends... Actually there were more Chinese in CEGEP and I started having Chinese friends then. In my class (at private school) I was the only Chinese in my grade but in my school there were other Chinese. I felt acutely aware of it but there wasn't really any blatant racism or anything, just that you were different that's all. Well, it just that people would hang out together. The people that were more of the ethnic group kind of hung out together cause we just felt there were more ties. These people from white Anglo-Saxon backgrounds - just their country clubs and skiing weekends to Europe - just couldn't relate to that.
> (Local male in Engineering)

3. Friendships

If the students were reluctant to join Chinese organizations, their personal friendship patterns betrayed their true loyalties. While their parents' friendships and interactions were usually limited only to other Chinese, there was a definite pattern of personal friendships among the students. As expected, Hong Kong Students without exception, preferred the company of other Chinese (from Hong Kong) and communicated with each other in Chinese. Some have first utilized Canadian friends to perfect their English. Those born or raised in Canada are divided into two camps. One group rarely associated with Chinese people while the other group would prefer the comfort and common affinity of Chinese peers. Yet, even within this group, the preference was for the "Canadian Chinese" - those born or raised in Canada. Interestingly, many who did not associate on a regular basis with Chinese people, claiming no regular Chinese friends, and even disliking "Chinese groups", at the same time claimed to have close intimate friends who were Chinese. One girl acknowledged that despite her conscious effort to "avoid knowing only Chinese people," she finds it easiest to establish rapport with another Chinese when confronted with a new social situation. The survey indicated

that as a group, most of the students when teenagers had 1-2 close Chinese friends. These friends also shared similar academic goals and priorities. What does seem significant, even for those with few Chinese friends throughout school, was the large number that knew of Chinese students who did well academically. The following excerpts from local born Chinese students illustrate the contradictory feelings regarding friendships with members of one's own ethnic group.

> "I went to an ethnic school, my friends were Greeks, French; my best friend is Chinese but that's about it, and she moved away. I don't hang out with any Chinese. I know a few, but the people I associate with on a regular basis are not Chinese. I never had one Chinese friend while I went to Vanier. I don't know, I'm not always comfortable with a large group of Chinese. Like if there is one group of Chinese going out, doing something, I don't like to be associated with it."
> (Local female in Nursing)

> "That's one thing that I don't like is the Chinese organizations like the Vanier Chinese Club. I felt really awkward being in a whole room of Chinese, feeling kind of ridiculous, the way they all cluster together. Maybe they're not Canadian-Chinese but it just didn't appeal to me. A lot of my close friends are Chinese but they're more Canadian than Chinese and they didn't have to associate with a group that was Chinese. This other group just spoke Chinese to each other; the whole thing, it was just too much. I felt it was a secluded group; that they didn't want outsiders. I have English and Chinese friends that do mix but I wouldn't want a single group with just one nationality."
> (Local female in Education)

> "It's just happens that my peers happen to be quite academically oriented also. It was peer pressure to continue to do well. It wasn't peer pressure to do drugs or cigarettes. A lot of them were Chinese. If they weren't Chinese they were Asians, East Indian or something."
> (Local male in Arts)

4. Dating

> "What they (parents) want me to do is get good marks, finish school, get a good job, marry an Oriental guy!!"

This was the classic response to questions regarding dating. The strongest feature of objective identity found among the respondents was the degree of out-group dating. If food, language, and customs were first mentioned as "being Chinese", a further probe of cultural values and traditions would almost without exception elicit comments on marriage. Most would claim this to be the definitive aspect of Chinese "culture" and "tradition", and the key element of Chinese identity exerted and enforced by parents. It is at this point that most local born would claim their parents to be still "very Chinese and traditional, something they're insistent on maintaining a certain level of identity."

> "I told you my parents are very lenient about factors like going out. They're not traditional in that a girl has to be home at a certain time. As far as going out with a boyfriend, that they're very traditional. It has to be an Oriental; that's one thing they've said. They've said that straight out; they're still not ready to accept that yet. Maybe my generation, when I have kids, maybe it would be easier but they're not ready yet. I haven't dated a non-Chinese so that value has passed down to me and my brothers because we also feel that way. We're not very comfortable going out with some Caucasian." (Local female in Education)

This was also the strongest point of contention between children and parents. Only 2 in the sample claimed their parents "approved" of out-dating while the rest claimed they "disapproved" or "strongly disapproved". There were variations in the degree of expressed disapproval. For some, "basically, they'll be kicked out of the house, if they ever married a non-Chinese." More educated parents would subtly "suggest" that cultural barriers in a relationship may be difficult to overcome. The degree of displeasure seems to

be expressed the strongest toward females and liberal minded parents tend to profess no preference although they do in fact have one. Surprisingly, parents of the most "Chinese" group, the Hong Kong students, expressed the least concern probably because the possibility of such an event happening was quite remote. Some parents make a distinction between dating and marriage but in general, they consider "dating as pretty serious and the next step before marriage" so dating a non-Chinese is a strong cause for concern.

Most students (23) claimed to have "never" or "seldom" dated a non-Chinese. (But dating in high school was strongly discouraged and seldom occurred anyways.) No parent "strongly approved" of dating a non-Chinese, and of the 2 (males) whose parents "approved", only one actually had a non-Asian girlfriend. Obviously the group who out-group dated the least, in both action and preference, were the overseas group who feels that linguistic and cultural barriers are too great for a successful relationship. "I'm a real Chinese and I need to marry a real one," exclaimed one male overseas student. For the local group, there was a variety of reactions to parental attitudes ranging from "they'll eventually loosen up" to "what can they (parents) do about it?" One girl clearly stated that she would marry a non-Chinese only if her parents were "dead". She had no preference but would do as they expected not for any principle, but because she would "rather not deal with that much screaming."

What is most surprising however, was the large number of the local born students who expressed similar sentiments and were in agreement with their parents, even those low in other aspects of identity. While there were a few (males) who dated only non-Chinese, even those with few Chinese friendships and Chinese organizational ties felt that they themselves would end up with a Chinese mate. One student who considers himself "part French", had only French friends

and dated only non-Asians, would consider allowing his mother to find him a "Chinese girl in Taiwan to marry" if he could not find one here. The students understood and empathized with their parents' point of view on interracial dating and marriage but most felt that if they did choose to date and marry a non-Chinese, their parents would eventually relent. The following are the various responses to the issue of out-dating.

> "They SAY that they wouldn't mind but they'd probably prefer a Chinese. They like to think they're very liberal so they'd say, 'you can marry anyone you like, you're the one that'll be stuck with her!' But at the same time, they want to appear democratic. For them, its very important; they'd prefer a Chinese - someone they'd like, a girl whose parents they get along with, and the whole bit you know....I feel that's the one thing that they're still very Chinese. Dating and things like that, the concept of dating. They feel that dating is the next step before marriage so they take it very seriously...It makes common, practical sense to date someone who is Chinese..just in the sense of understanding family and traditions, culture, and lifestyle...Well, it seems that the Chinese take marriage as much more serious. Its for life thing. In a lot of other cases, marriage is something you do till you get sick of the guy or girl so its a very different emphasis, marriage..."
> (Local male in Engineering)

> "They're like if you ever marry a white guy, don't bother coming back!! I think they say that, but what can they do?? If you marry a non-Chinese person, they'll have to accept you, eventually. I mean especially if you have a family and you have kids. All grandparents love their grandchildren. I think they'll come around..."
> (Local female in Nursing)

> "I was aware I was Chinese around high school. I guess I felt Chinese because couples were pairing off and they were going out and I sort of felt that I was left alone. My parents were always saying; 'you can never go out with non-Chinese people!' But I say,'I don't KNOW any non-Chinese people! There is no one here who is Chinese.' They'd say, 'well you'll meet them eventually when you go to university.'..." (Local female in Management)

5. Early Socialization

In terms of ethnic socialization for those students born or raised in Canada, how much influence did parents have and how much did they encourage retaining an ethnic identity? Findings from the interviews suggest that there was most encouragement in language retention, while participation in ethnic organizations and activities depended on the parents' level of education and the parents' own involvement. Some children of educated parents who were leaders of the Chinese community felt a stronger commitment to the Chinese "cause", but this often did not greatly encourage actual participation in ethnic activities. Among the less educated group, some children of parents who were very active in ethic organizations, were also active themselves, but most rebelled against their parents' activities in Chinatown by staying away as much as possible from ethnic organizations. Apart from language, some parents were also interested in imparting classic, historical Chinese culture, but this generally was futile. Some students were told legends and stories of Chinese heroes who became scholars through hard work, but most encouragement to work hard "because you're Chinese" came from an immigrant sense of insecurity. For the most part the children rejected any official involvement in Chinese associations and benevolent societies, but cultural values and priorities regarding such issues as dating and marriage were maintained. These "traditional" values, by in large, remained intact. The following excerpt shows the discrepancy between objective Chinese identity, and the Chinese values and morals that remained.

> "I used to go to Chinese school. Every opportunity they get, they would point out Chinese history, culture, geography and they rent a lot of Chinese video tapes. They don't force us to watch, just say, 'look this is a Chinese historical aspect.' I really like my parents. They're really loose but they're conservative in some ways, like school, dating, sex, but otherwise they're pretty lenient.

Well, daily behaviour, like you could swear in front of them, that type of thing. You could stay out late, but you just have to call them. You don't need permission, you can do what you want.
Values and morals? She (mother) didn't say about dating but she did say about marriage. She would prefer that I marry an Oriental. He (father) didn't say much; he doesn't say much about these things. I agree with my mother, it makes more sense; not make more sense but it would probably last longer unless you find a perfect Canadian or white or whatever. But Orientals, you have the same backgrounds, the same outlook on life..."
(Local male in Dentistry)

SUBJECTIVE IDENTITY

The subjective aspects of ethnic identity: ideas, images, attitudes and the subjective feelings of belonging to a group varied widely amongst the students interviewed. For the Hong Kong students, being Chinese was so natural that they were often hard pressed to give an answer when asked about their Chinese identity. However, the subjective aspect of Chinese identity was a very pertinent question for those born or raised in Canada and elicited a wide variety of responses. Most would answer the question of nationality as "Chinese" or "Chinese-Canadian". For some, actual feelings of "being Chinese" were somewhat "hazy" while others responded with intense feelings. There was either an ambiguity to being Chinese, "I do what I do; I don't think about being Chinese," or identity was so well defined that they were able to break it down to categories and percentages.

> "I'm still quite Chinese; I'd say about 2/3 Canadianized, 1/3 Chinese,.. family is like half and half...culture, influence, way of thinking, ideas, about everyday aspects of life."
> (Local male in Engineering)

Often the awareness of being Chinese come from parents' constant reminder of their inescapable minority status as a visible minority. This idea is best expressed by the following local born student in Architecture:

> "I'm always aware that I'm Chinese because my parents always remind me. They're always pushing me to meet more Chinese people. They would say, 'you should meet more Chinese people because they're like you,' which is true. No matter where I go, even though I might speak English, French, Portuguese, Italian, whatever, my face will always be Oriental. They would always see me first as being Oriental, than Canadian. I feel what they say is true. I don't agree with stuff like racism, no matter what you do but it's there, you can't hide from it. It's there, no matter how much you disagree with it and I agree with them, in that fact."

1. Self Identity

The question of nationality elicited some interesting responses. When asking students to identify themselves, most would answer "Chinese" or "Chinese-Canadian", even those who scored low on aspects of objective identity. On the questionnaire, most students (22) claimed to be "Chinese" when asked their nationality, followed by "Chinese-Canadian" (5), and "Canadian" (2). Only five students felt "alienated" from their Chinese culture or felt that it was "not at all important". Growing up, most students felt that "being Chinese" was "somewhat to very important", and only five felt that it was "unimportant". Thus, there was always an overt awareness of their Chinese nationality even when the students seemed reluctant to admit it. Some responses were strong and defensive. The following responses show an acute awareness of one's visible minority status in a white society:

> "I would say Canadian. As a matter of fact, I find that a very offensive question. I worked at a bookstore and sometimes, I can't find a book for a person; the book's not in the store. I know the books very well. They would immediately ask, 'what country do you come from?' Well, I don't think that has any bearing on my service to you but 'yes, I was born here, and I resent that question.' I'm deliberately obtuse when they ask what country I'm from. I would just make them feel uncomfortable a bit before I answer because I find that a very, very insulting question.
> (Local female in Economics)

> I think most of the time when they say nationality, they don't mean what citizenship you are, they meant 'you look different, where are you from?' They wouldn't ask you that unless they're wondering why you look the way you do??...I'm just being practical. The way you feel about yourself is affected by how others feel about you. If other people didn't feel that way about me, I wouldn't be acting like that ("Chinesy")...I've always been conscious of Caucasians. Its one of the things in the back of their minds and they say stupid things like, 'I like Chinese food' and like 'where does this come from?' For them its still a novelty..."
> (Local male in Engineering)

2. Discrimination

Feelings of belonging to a group relate to one's perception by non-group members, especially as a visible minority. For the sample interviewed, there generally was a diffuse notion of discrimination (perhaps in the labor market) but most were unwilling to admit any blatant experiences of discrimination. Any situations cited were limited to childhood experiences and while discrimination was believed to have existed, "of course I've been discriminated against," it was also assumed to be indirect and subtle, "I don't feel it directly, I was pretty lucky." Foreign students have noted the subtle discrimination in such things as classroom situations in management where they were excluded when forming groups for team assignments. The following excerpt is a typical comment which acknowledges discrimination not at a personal level but at an abstract, general level. It also expresses the sentiments of many students regarding the perception of Chinese people by the larger society:

> "I don't think I've ever been discriminated against but I do think that people expect Chinese people to be nicer than they would another nationality. I just think they expect Chinese people to be more quiet, to be much more intelligent."
> (Local female in Arts)

Interestingly, while the sample produced evidence of perceived discrimination in the labor market, few students were willing to admit, or had never experienced, discrimination at a personal level.

3. Obligation to Group

Overt feelings of obligation towards the Chinese is specific. From the survey, questions of obligation to one's ethnic group in such things as acquiring a job which benefits the Chinese; helping fellow Chinese find jobs; obligation to

Chinese causes, and having their own children marry Chinese and learn to speak Chinese, tended to rate on the lower end of the 4 point scale. Most answered these issues as "somewhat important" (the second lowest on the scale). Thus, in this sense there was little overt feelings of obligation to Chinese people. For example, in terms of jobs, most were ambiguous as to whether they would offer a job first to a Chinese.

> "They (parents) never really pressured me, saying, you have to be good because you are Chinese. They were pressuring me, 'you're Chinese and you have to put that first', that type of thing. They would give me all these examples of people who learned here and go back to China to teach them and stuff like that and they stress the idea; always put Chinese people first...I don't like to say it but no matter what you say, I think everybody is a bit racial in a sense and they always will take a tendency to help, if you're two perfect strangers.. I think if you're Chinese or Oriental, you have more of a tendency to help your own cultural background or whatever. I don't think it was nice of me to say that but I'm not sure if I would do that and right now, I might, I might not." (Local male in Architecture)

Aside from the questions surveyed, the interviews did reveal some interesting feelings of obligations to the Chinese people by both the local and overseas students. The strongest sense of obligation to the group came in the educational arena. Most perceived the Chinese to be limited academically, concentrating in the math and science related fields. They students often commented that this was too narrow a focus and reflected an unwillingness to expand horizons or learn about other things. Some made harsh comments regarding the Chinese emphasis only on marks and not extracurricular activities. For some students, the Chinese upbringing with its emphasis on academics often resulted in delayed social development and this was considered a definite negative aspect of the Chinese culture.

The following excerpt from a local born Arts student, a self-proclaimed "geeky science type", laments being a good student, quiet and cooperative with teachers, but backward in fashion, clothes, and hip culture. "You might work your butt off by rote to get to the top in the class but you wear out-of-fashion clothes, you can only talk about school." He feels a strong need to prove to himself and to the larger society that the Chinese can compete in a non-mathematical field. Group identification here is marginal and symbolic, suggesting a middle class ethnicity at work.

> "Being a member of the McGill Chinese Student Association, you see that it's not what Faculty you're in but what department of Engineering you're in: Civil, Chemical, Electrical, or Mechanical but in a way I feel that it's neat that I'm very rare. It's very rare for an Oriental to consider Law school as a sort of educational or career goal. Essentially it's probably because of communication skills and abilities because a lot of them are recent immigrants and they have a strong background in mathematics so that's why they choose Engineering or Management as their major.
>
> My father stated very clearly he didn't want me to go into science because he himself went into sciences and now that he's hit junior managerial position, he finds that a lack of communication skills are not helpful for his higher career aspirations. He thinks that there's a lack of Chinese people in the field of law or being represented in government or that sort of thing. It's very respectable and he would really accept it. It is supposedly lucrative; it fits all the criteria. In fact he finds it more to boast about, if his relatives' sons or daughters can only get into Engineering or Medical School; you give them a hundred years and can't get out of law school without being completely tortured..."

4. <u>Cultural Values and Morals</u>

The most significant aspect of subjective identity are cultural values and judgements. The values most often expressed as "traditionally Chinese" are: the concept of marriage and family; gender bias for sons; care of the

elderly, and the work ethic. Amongst all groups, the element of Chinese culture expressed the most intensely and most often, is the family. What differentiates the local and foreign students is that while the local students may give a general indication of the strength of the family and parental sacrifices, overseas students would specifically articulate cultural and family characteristics such as hard work and filial piety. The local students would describe the family in terms of the security it offers them as individuals, whereas the overseas group would describe "Chinese family" in terms of what they can do for their parents. Additionally, it was only the local born group who usually expressed cultural values in terms of ingroup dating and marriage. Both groups explicitly connect their family system to something intrinsic to Chinese culture. The following excerpts shows both the differences but also the underlying similarities in the subjective definitions of Chinese identity between the two groups.

> "I know as an Oriental, a big factor is the family value, the whole family lives together and you always stick together; stick up for each other always. I see that in a lot of non-Oriental, that wouldn't be a big factor. Like in Chinese families, the grandparents always live with you at home and they (non-Oriental families) separate. I guess that is my upbringing and I know like in my girlfriend's (Caucasian) home, (I've known them for five years), it's not the same kind of caring. The Chinese mother and father would sacrifice anything for their kids. I mean anything, they would do it right away for you. Like, my father would drive me anywhere. If I told him to get up at six o'clock in the morning and he gets home from work at three o'clock at night, he would get up and drive me to work, let's say or drive me to school or whatever. In another family the mother would say, 'no, go take the bus.' Just these little things, you know or also the mother, the Chinese mother does all the housework; no doubt about it, they do all the cleaning. My mother works (in a factory) in the morning, gets home by six, make supper and after supper she does all the cleaning, housework. She does the stuff until eight, nine

o'clock and then she watches TV, and then she goes to sleep. She has to wake up at six in the morning. Normally Caucasian people, you have to make your own bed, you have to wash the dishes or clean up, you have chores to do and you get an allowance. I never had to do any of that stuff..."
(Local male in Medicine)

"I know the family unit is also a very strong value, that was passed down - you have to be very close. I see us as being different from an English family. They would be out looking for themselves but for Chinese families like mine, we very much look after each other and stay as a family; just keep in close contact every day and we don't move out until we get married. I think those values are very important because I would stress the same thing. I see a lot of friends, they're not as close to their parents and everyone's on their own sort of and you have these French-Canadian families who pay to live in the same house. Whereas for us the parents play the role of caretakers until you're ready to go out on your own..."
(Local female in Education)

Overseas students:

"...for example, for a Canadian, if a guy is around twenty years old they might like to move out, independence right? My family and I don't think that is good for them. I think Chinese family would like to stay together, like living with our parents and grandparents."
(Hong Kong male in Medicine)

"Let's say family point of view, Chinese people have a different point of view like especially when they treat their parents. Usually they don't mind living with their parents, when they get retired because it's their own responsibility to look after their parents. I don't think westerners have that kind of responsibility. I feel this is the difference. Like Chinese parents, my parents think they have their responsibility to support both my brother and me to finish our education, to support us financially in every aspect. I don't think that a lot of Canadian parents do that for their children..."
(Overseas female in Engineering)

"I feel I'm the real Chinese. I have the Chinese culture, I have the Chinese tradition. Even though

> I have the western education I would like to maintain a certain, cultural identity. For example, we respect the parents or as a member of the family, we have to take care of the family and that's why, for example, I would like to live with my parents, rather than the other people in the western culture. For the children after they get independence, they would move out from their parents but for the Chinese family, they prefer the children to live with them. I would have this intention, to live with my parents. I feel a strong obligation to take care of my parents in terms of money or something like that."
> (Hong Kong male in Social Work)

The Hong Kong students also highlighted the strong work ethic of the Chinese, and not just in academics. This was observed by local born students who sees that the overseas Chinese, including foreign students from China, as working much harder than themselves. Finally, most of the students claimed to have learned their work ethic from their parents.

> "Sometimes just the style of living is different. You know the Canadians, they can spent the whole afternoon just sitting in their backyard and just enjoying. For our family, we seldom do this and my mother work very hard even at home, cleaning everything and very seldom does she just sit outside and enjoy herself."
> (Hong Kong male in Management)
> "I think Chinese work harder than Westerners not just academically but like comparing Hong Kong to here. Stores here don't open on Sundays and they close at six during weekdays. In Hong Kong, most of the boutiques and stores stay open until eleven o'clock and they open early in the morning also so actually, Chinese people work harder."
> (Hong Kong female in Management)

Finally, what most of the females interviewed considered to be culturally Chinese is the gender bias given to males. This was noted by most female student concerning their brothers, and their parents preference for sons. One female student described how in her friend's "very traditional Chinese family, only the son could eat the best part of the chicken, the chicken leg." Other female students also

commented on the non-assertiveness stereotype of being Chinese and female.

> "I remember having an interviewer (for med school) tell me that I was too quiet..which was true. He said that was what he expected, from any Chinese girl from a Chinese family and he wasn't surprised by it at all. In my college, we ate in the dining halls. I noticed in my second year that all the Asians sat together and that table was always quieter that the others. I wouldn't say that it was true of everyone but it was true of me. My pre-med advisor told me that if I want to go through three years of med school, I had better learn to speak up. I don't regard it as a positive thing and it's definitely NOT a language problem; some foreign students are more vocal than me. Its definitely personality and not language for me. I was always quiet; I try to avoid class presentations, and I never spoke up in class. It was always a criticism."
> (Local female in Medicine)

5. Ethnic Identity and Education

What then, is the connection between ethnic identity and education? Did any of the students personally feel that their Chinese identity and upbringing helped their academic careers? It was impossible to conclude whether those students with higher levels of Chinese identity had higher academic success. However, it is important to note that often, especially among the local born group, a heighten sense of identity with "being Chinese" was instrumental in creating and sustaining the desire and determination to pursue academic goals. Some students systematically denied the "Chinese" influence pointing instead to individual family backgrounds or to behaviours associated with being an immigrant. However, most did make distinctions regarding the Chinese family, its values and its emphasis on education, especially in comparison to the families of their white peers. It appears that in a very important sense, feelings of ethnic identity may give rise to successful academic behaviour.

Many of the local born students, in particular, were told early in life by their parents that they "had to do better because they are Chinese." It is unclear whether this comment was based on a race bias per se, or due to an immigrant mentality motive and perceived discrimination. Such exclusionist feelings were not always expressed in terms of race, but expressions such as "I feel a need to do better than them" were frequent comments, despite the fact that many students preferred to believe that discrimination did not exist. Identification with being Chinese was also often associated with the stereotype expectations of being a good student, and excelling in math. Many felt they had to do well in math because that's what "normal Chinese" do. Obviously, the students with the strongest sense of a minority status were those born or raised in Canada, and their feelings of Chinese identity are key factors in their

academic efforts. The following excerpts from local born students illustrate how feelings of identity to a minority group stimulate and sustain efforts to achieve in education:

> "My mother's the one with the sermons. You have to do much better. You're Chinese, not French-Canadian; you're not Jewish or something like that. Socially probably not; maybe inside I want to do better than they do. That's what I feel. It seems that they don't care about what they do; my friend (French Canadian) and I call it the lack of vision in life." (Local male in Arts)

> "Like most Chinese families, education is the only thing that you can get ahead on to get a good job and everything and basically you have to. Parents said you have to work twice as hard as Canadian to get the same job because of the fact that they'd rather hire the Canadian than the Chinese for the same job. They say its not obvious but there is that factor. In some cases you might be overlook over somebody that is more, you know whiter." (Local male in Engineering)

> I never felt that way but I think my parents felt that way because they said "because you are Chinese, you have to be better than everyone else because otherwise, they'll look down on you if you're worse than them. If you're better than them, they'll envy you but they'll look up to you." (Local female in Management)

Many females were also warned that they were "doubly cursed" because they were Chinese AND female. The females interview often claimed this identity as a motive to work hard rather than race: "it's because I'm female, not because I'm Chinese." However, both of these are essentially minority mentalities, which with their perceptions of labour market discrimination, elicited ambition in school.

> "They (parents) say, not only are you Chinese but you're a female so its double - you have to do much better than everyone else to get ahead. But I don't think that way like them. Sure there is discrimination but I think if you're qualified, you'll get the job, you'll succeed.

> I look at my white friends from school and their parents are very lax about their school work and

> performance as compare to strict my parents were. If I were in a white family, I probably wouldn't be pushed as hard.
>
> I don't think it has anything to do with Chinese as being poor and immigrants. I mean my mom would say "look at your father, working 12 hours a day and making low pay, "you want to do better than that so you better study hard!"
> (Local female in Nursing)

In general, the students explained their feelings of identity and their motivation to educate themselves by pointing back to their family upbringing. Some suggested that they may not have worked as hard had their family not been Chinese or immigrants. Some seemed to think that an emphasis on education and the Chinese family were intrinsically linked. As one female student stated clearly, "we were told that education made the person."

> "I think because maybe it's the background, the way we were brought up. Like I said, education and success were important factors when I was growing up and you just keep building on that."
> (Local female in Education)

VII. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This thesis began with a review of the literature on ethnic stratification and ethnic inequality in North America, isolating educational attainment as the key variable in differential inter-generational mobility amongst ethnic groups. Research on North American Asians in education points to a distinctively high level of success, hence raising the research question: are cultural forces at work which may influence academic achievement? A brief review of classical Chinese culture argued that the Chinese cultural heritage of a strong family system and a high value placed on education may have had an influence on the educational success of Chinese overseas. Additionally, the chapter on ethnic identity, suggests that behavioral characteristics and subjective feelings of belonging to a group, may have special salience to the Chinese in Canada (as a visible ethnic minority), and can be an analytical tool used to measure and define culture. The background on the history of North American Chinese provides the historical context; for most of the students interviewed, their ancestral and cultural heritage was China. Findings from the qualitative interviews (as well as the qualitative historical analysis in Appendix I) revealed several distinct themes and patterns regarding the academic pursuits and cultural identity of the Chinese. How then do these findings compare to past research? How does this study answer the original research questions regarding cultural influences?

1. McGill Chinese Students and Past Research

How does the present research on McGill students compare to past research on Asian students as presented in the first few chapters? For the most part, the present research findings of this study tended to reiterate findings discussed earlier in the literature review section. The following are comparisons of some findings to past research.

The data presented in Appendix I established a pattern of Chinese students at McGill who were predominately enrolled in Engineering, Science and mathematical fields as opposed to the Arts and Humanities. This trend was as expected and is consistent with past literature on Asian students' academic patterns. The pattern at McGill has been slowly changing over the last three decades and the Chinese are beginning to choose non-scientific majors such as Arts and Education, fields that demand written and verbal communication skills. One possible explanation for this is the decrease in the proportion of foreign students who, due to English deficiencies, tended to gravitate to mathematical and science fields which required little verbal ability.

The qualitative interviews of thirty-two students enrolled at McGill also support these findings. Even among the local group, the students interviewed were more interested in physical and applied science fields, business majors, and any field that was career oriented. There were also indications that students chose science majors, (especially recent immigrants) to compensate for deficiencies in English. Language deficiency was also managed by avoiding courses with verbal and written communication skills, and staying in quantitative fields.

Findings from the interviews also shed light on common perceptions and stereotypes of Chinese students. The assumption that a narrow focus on Science and academics in general, leads to a limited school experience did not necessary apply to the McGill sample. Many students were

involved in extracurricular activities, especially amongst the local group. While some did admit to lacking in communication skills, and in other areas of social development, there were many who were active participants and leaders in extracurricular activities. Additionally a significant few, have chosen non-traditional, verbally demanding fields, Education being the prime example.

Nevertheless, the low verbal ability and the non-assertiveness stereotype of the Chinese may have a bit of validity in our sample. Low verbal abilities may be explained in part by deficiencies in English, especially for overseas students and recent immigrants. However, many local born students also agreed with the stereotypical image of the Chinese as hard working and successful, "model students" who are quiet and "nicer." In particular, there were females who noted the non-aggressive, non-assertive assumption of being a Chinese female.

Finally, previous studies on the home and family background of Asian students are supported by the present sample. High parental expectations, the focus on effort, the underrating of competence, and limited rewards and praise were all found in the sample of students interviewed. The students exhibited a high respect for authority, industry, and self-discipline needed to work hard. They expressed a strong desire and obligation to honor their parents and fulfill their wishes; academic success was regarded as an act of obedience to their parents. A strong family commitment to education that is reinforced by concrete economic priority given to all matters relating to school was very much evident in the McGill sample.

2. Immigrant Mentality vs Cultural Heritage

A key issue explored was the role of culture in explaining the educational achievement of the Chinese. Much of the literature reviewed dismisses the role of cultural heritage, pointing instead to structural factors, in particular the effects of being an immigrant and a minority in North America. The immigrant minority hypothesis attributes the pursuit of education and the choice of professional and applied science fields as a reaction against real and perceived discrimination in the labour market. Hence, the investment in human capital and the "independent profession" provides a means of escape from the ethnic enclaves and ensures future financial security. It also provides future economic security for the parents.

Findings from the sample of McGill students interviewed produced adequate support for this hypothesis. The strongest support is found in the student's expectations for higher education and their motives regarding academic choices. The pursuit of education was clearly a goal by which to obtain future financial security, and a means to upward mobility: "my parents never had an education or had what we had." The example of Medicine clearly illustrates the pursuit of an independent profession, not only for its prestige and financial security but also for its relative immunity against labour market discrimination. Choices of applied Science and Engineering fields, where personal relations and subjective criteria are not as involved in the selection process, also lends support this hypothesis.

The priority given education, both economically and emotionally as presented in the sections under Early Socialization and Family System also point to an immigrant reaction. Many of the local students justified the intense academic pressure characteristic of their upbringing as a parental concern and need for them to "get ahead and survive in a white society." The internal motivating force for these

students is an underlying minority status and the desire for upward mobility.

Upon further examination into the ethnic identity retention of the students, it was found that what many may attribute to "being Chinese" (hard work, need to get ahead) may in actuality be an "immigrant mentality" factor. Identification with being Chinese is expressed through feelings of perceived discrimination and a need to "do better then them." These findings of ethnic identity which are distinctive only of the local born group and not the overseas students lends further support to the immigrant minority hypothesis.

The minority group phenomenon is largely a structural explanation that has as its counterpart in Hong Kong society. Overseas students often expressed how the whole structure of Hong Kong society perpetuates academic success. In this sense, the Hong Kong students are also acting in reaction to their society, which has placed a high premium on success through education.[20]

Thus, if the motivation for academic success is an "inferiority complex" based on a visible minority status, and educational attainment to the independent professions is an economic strategy against real or perceived discrimination, where then does the role of ethnic culture fit it? How does this immigrant effort to overcome structural constraints translate to actual achievement in the educational arena? What are the cultural elements, if any?

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[20] The argument can be made of course, through the processual nature of "culture" that Hong Kong society is in fact "Chinese culture". This will be addressed in the next section.

3. Elements of Chinese Culture

What then are the elements of classical Chinese culture? Were there any cultural remnants that aided the achievement of this group of Chinese students beyond an immigrant's need to succeed? Did the qualitative interviews reveal anything that might be equated to "Chinese culture" as discussed in the literature review section? For this analysis, a look at three themes that emerged from the interviews, and the comparisons made between the local and Hong Kong groups will serve to isolate "Chinese elements."

As noted in the section on classical Chinese culture, and in the review of past studies, a key characteristic of Chinese culture is the strength of the family unit and its centrality in Chinese life. The strong family unit, the well defined roles, the gender differences, the clear duties and obligations governing both children and parents are all factors that characterized both the local and the overseas group in our sample. Students from both groups noted the strength of the family unit and often used its uniqueness to demarcate Chinese and "Western" differences. Yet, how "family" and "Chinese culture" is defined differed in the two groups. For example, while the overseas group would define being Chinese by such things as "filial piety", the local group are much less articulate but would express a similar desire to respect their parents and repay them for their hard work and sacrifice. For both groups, permeating all family life is the emphasis on academic success. Success in education is the principle obligation of the children and provisions of the best opportunities for this success, the principle duty of the parents.

Exploration into the ethnic identity of the students further revealed "Chinese elements". Many students may be "ambiguous" and unclear about being Chinese, but their lifestyles (objective identity), and values regarding such things as intermarriage proved otherwise. Whether they are

aware of or unwilling to admit it, much of their behaviour, obligations and duties, values and judgments are distinctively "Chinese". Others with a higher sense of identity would note differences especially in family and education, further reinforcing the fact that these elements may characterize what constitutes "Chinese culture." That both groups expressed similar ideas, (the overseas more definitive and articulate), and retained similar values does point to something that is "Chinese". It can be argued that variables within the ethnic identification framework do constitute "Chinese culture", particularly those elements which characterize both the local and the overseas students.

Finally, at the structural level of analysis, Chinese culture may be ascertained by drawing parallels between societies. First, classical Chinese education as discussed previously, consisted of Confucian classics and what would be today "a liberal arts education". As such this stands in contrast to the career oriented science and math emphasis of Chinese students today. However, education was the only means to worldly success in classical China. It is also the major means to success in Hong Kong society, as emphasized by many of the overseas students. It is also an important means to success in North America and the easiest route to upward mobility. The high inter-generational mobility among the Chinese via education in North America validates this. In this sense, the structure of these various societies perpetuates the Chinese cultural focus on education. In essence, both groups are driven by similar structural factors. The Hong Kong group by the pressure of Hong Kong society, and the local group by a structure that ascribes them a minority status. These key structural elements produce a drive to success in education as reactionary economic strategies and they may also be included in the definition of "Chinese culture".

It can be argued that all three elements: the strength of the family bond; feelings of Chinese identity; and structural elements that sustain the Chinese value of education, constitute what is "Chinese culture" whether overseas or native born. Culture, as stated earlier is not static but processual and the differences in "cultural" traits between the local and Hong Kong group point to a culture that has adapted itself to North American society. However, similarities between the two groups in essential elements such as family and the high value of education point to something that may be intrinsic. That the focus on education and the strength of the family have proven advantageous in modern North American society suggests the working of a cultural trait that has, by some fate of history, proved to be advantageous to the Chinese overseas.

4. Final Conclusion

This study analyzed educational attainment within a cultural framework. The results show that despite strong structural factors, in particular an immigrant minority hypothesis, it was still impossible to dismiss the effect of a Chinese cultural heritage at work at both the micro and macro levels. True, the structural constraints of a minority status in North America have created the conditions whereby education was the best possible strategy to upward mobility. But this strategy was developed and proved successful because of a family system that was in all ways conducive to educational pursuits, and a cultural heritage that valued education highly.

The argument is not that the strength of the family system, nor its commitment to education, nor a cultural heritage of scholarship is unique only to the Chinese. But rather, the argument is that the Chinese, because they possess these cultural elements, are able to instill in their children the drive to take hold of educational opportunities and succeed. Furthermore, that both the local and overseas Chinese possess such similar traits and values adds to the likelihood that general cultural influences do in fact exist.

APPENDIX I

Historical Context - Three Decades of Chinese McGill Students

The patterns of Chinese student enrollment and achievements at McGill university were ascertained to establish the context for the qualitative interviews and to test generally held assumptions regarding Chinese students' enrollment and achievement patterns. Analysis of enrollment and convocation records in three academic years over three decades provided a rough picture of Chinese students, their choice of majors, places of origin and academic achievements. This profile served to examine the stereotyped image of Chinese students concentrating in science fields, professional schools, and health professions. The academic performance of these students was also explored by analyzing scholarships and honour standings awarded to graduates.

Two data sources were utilized, the McGill Student Directory and McGill Convocation records. Findings from both these sources agree with each other and patterns uncovered point in the same direction.

METHODOLOGY

The data was collected from the Registrar's office and was derived from two major sources; student directories for the school term 1969-70, 1979-80, and 1988-89 (which are based on annual records of enrollment as released by the Registrar), and convocation records for the years 1968, 1978, and 1988.

The Quebec privacy act prevents ethnic origin from being listed on registration records and prevents access to student files of grades. (The only clues to ethnicity are records of foreign students, which list the country of origin.) Identifying Chinese students from official records was therefore achieved by using the distinctive surname method

of choosing a population. The proposed method of picking out Chinese students has been used in previous studies of ethnicity for Jews and some Asian groups.[21] Chinese "sounding" names have special characteristics in that they are monosyllabic, limited, and often include hyphenated Chinese names as middle names. Some Chinese surnames are shared amongst a few other East Asian groups (ie. Koreans and Vietnamese have some similar names to the Chinese) and it was impossible to exclude these students from the sample. However, based on population statistics[22], immigration trends and overseas student patterns[23], it was still likely that the population of students with Chinese sounding names would consist largely of ethnic Chinese. The Vietnamese pose a special problem (although there is not a significant local population until after 1975) in that many are actually Chinese ethnics with Vietnamese surnames. For this reason, the Vietnamese students have been included as well. Thus, the population studied in this section, is more accurately described as "Oriental" (excluding the Japanese) and would include Chinese, Korean, and Vietnamese students. Additionally, this method would have excluded those who have non-Chinese fathers; those who have Anglicized names (names that may also represent Anglo-Saxon groups; eg. LEE and YOUNG); and those Chinese whose surnames were not identified.

Oriental sounding names were chosen from both McGill student directories and McGill convocation records. Both data sources could be used to measure representation and achievement patterns and were therefore analyzed and

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[21] For a discussion of the accuracy of samples using "distinctive Jewish names," see Dashefsky, 1986.

[22] From Canadian Census, 1986 - "Profile of Ethnic Groups"; Statistic Canada, 1989.

[23] From "Term Registration Summaries" (1989-89, 1979-80, 1969-70); Office of the Registrar, McGill University.

compared. Proportions were established by comparing the Oriental population from the directories to official enrolment records released by the Registrar.

Convocation Records

Convocation records list the student, faculty, any awards or honour standings, and the place of residence. Convocation records contain information on academic achievement in terms of awards, class standings, dean's lists, etc. accorded to graduates. In the tabulation of awards, the number of recipients, not awards, were counted. "Awards" in this analysis include distinctions, great distinctions, university scholars, those in honour programs, and any other specific awards as recorded.

Student Directories

The Chinese student enrollment is taken from the student directories of 1969-70, 1979-80, and 1988-89 as printed by the Registrar's office. Directories include name, major, year, and place of residence. Residence is categorized according to whether the permanent address is within Quebec, outside Quebec, or outside Canada. The total enrollment figures by faculty are taken from official records release by the Registrar's Office.

Residence outside Canada is defined as "foreign" students. Although these numbers are probably underestimated (especially amongst Graduate students who tend to list their local addresses), comparison to foreign student records from the Registrar verifies the general trends in foreign student enrolment over the last three decades.

FINDINGS

1. Enrolment and Discipline Trends

Table 1
Enrollment and Discipline Trends - Convocation Records (Spring and Fall)

	1968			1978			1988		
Faculty	Chinese	%	Total	Chinese	%	Total	Chinese	%	Total
B A	2	0.35%	579	15	1.63%	922	15	1.28%	1176
	1.96%			7.32%			7.54%		
B Com	2	2.15%	93	30	8.50%	353	20	6.45%	310
	1.96%			14.63%			10.05%		
B Sc	36	6.12%	588	30	5.24%	572	24	5.17%	464
	35.29%			14.63%			12.06%		
B Sc (Agr)	4	4.76%	84	1	1.23%	81	4	3.85%	104
	3.92%			0.49%			2.01%		
B Sc (Nur)	2	1.83%	109	1	3.13%	32	2	6.67%	30
	1.96%			0.49%			1.01%		
B Eng	17	9.71%	175	54	22.13%	244	31	10.69%	290
	16.67%			26.34%			15.58%		
B Arch	3	11.11%	27	12	17.14%	70	6	15.38%	39
	2.94%			5.85%			3.02%		
Dr. Med/M. Surg.	8	6.50%	123	1	0.66%	151	16	10.46%	153
	7.84%			0.49%			8.04%		
Dr. Dental Surg.	0	0.00%	33	1	2.38%	42	1	2.56%	39
				0.49%			0.50%		
B Sc (PT/OT)	0	0.00%	47	4	6.78%	59	2	3.17%	63
				1.95%			1.01%		
B Ed	0	0.00%	52	6	1.44%	417	4	1.69%	237
				2.93%			2.01%		
B Music	0	0.00%	20	1	1.61%	62	2	3.57%	56
				0.49%			1.01%		
B Theo	0	0.00%	3	1	5.26%	19	0	0.00%	15
				0.49%					
B Social Work	0	0.00%	18	0	0.00%	76	4	4.21%	95
							2.01%		
B Sc (FS)	0	0.00%	47	1	2.78%	36	2	3.17%	63
							1.01%		
Sub Total	74	3.70%	1998	158	5.04%	3136	133	4.24%	3134
	72.55%			77.07%			66.83%		
Grad S & R									
Master	16	6.64%	241	40	9.71%	412	63	7.05%	894
	15.69%			19.51%			31.66%		
Phd	12	11.65%	103	7	5.30%	132	3	1.66%	181
	11.76%			3.41%			1.51%		
Total	102	4.36%	2342	205	5.57%	3680	199	4.73%	4209

Source: Convocation Records (1968, 1978, 1988); Office of the Registrar.

Table 1 shows the convocation patterns for the three years. In 1968, degrees were conferred to a total of 102 Chinese students, distributed over eight schools (excluding graduate studies), and constituted 4.36% of degrees

conferred. Although distributed over eight categories, most of the Chinese students graduated from Science (35.29%), followed by Engineering (16.67%), Graduate Studies (15.69 and 11.76%), and Medicine (7.84%).

In 1978, degrees conferred to Chinese students doubled to 205 and were represented in five more schools, bringing the total to 13. They constituted 5.74% of all degrees conferred from these schools - slightly higher than the last decade. The overall picture of Chinese graduates at the undergraduate level (ie. excluding Master's degrees at 19.51%) showed Engineering taking the lead with 26.47% over Science, which tied with Commerce at 14.63%. (However, Science may have had a higher percentage if combined with other sub-departments such as Agriculture and Nursing.) Architecture rose to take 5.85% of degrees (2.94% in '68), while Medicine dropped significantly from 7.84% to .49%. Arts increased significantly from 1.96% in 1969 to 7.32% in 1978. The increase in Commerce is drastic and significant: from 1.96% to 14.63% of Chinese graduates and from 2.15% to 8.50% of Commerce graduates or under-represented by over a half to over-represented by close to two times. This may reflect the trend of Business schools in general.

In 1988, a slightly lower number (199) of Chinese students graduated and they represented one more school (Social Work), for a total of 14 undergraduate faculties. They constituted 4.73% of degrees conferred from these schools - slightly lower than 1978. The largest percentage of Chinese (31.66%) graduated from the Master's program. Consequently, Chinese Engineering graduates dropped to 15.58% from 1978 and was almost equal to that of Science at 12.06%. Commerce followed at 10.05% (levelling off from '78) and Medicine was next at 8.04%. Arts graduates remained similar to the 1978 of 7.54%.

Over the last three decades, Chinese students graduated from increasingly more faculties, the most significant jump

being from 1968 to 1978. Of significance was the increase in the number of graduates from faculties that required more verbal and written skills such as Arts, Education, Social Work and even Commerce. As expected, Science, Engineering, and to a less consistent extent, Management and the health professions continued to dominate. Yet, as there is an increasing number of faculties from which the Chinese are now graduating, there have also been changes in their distribution in Science and Math oriented fields. Over the decades, Science degrees conferred have declined and in both 1978 and 1988, the number of Chinese Science graduates were just proportionally represented. This was not true of professional and applied science fields such as Engineering. Graduates from the health professions fluctuated over the three years, taking a strong dip in 1978. Commerce graduates rose significantly between 1968 and 1978, then levelling off in 1988. Finally, graduates from Law were missing in all three years.

A striking pattern from the convocation records is that despite increased faculty representation and redistribution among Chinese students, there is consistent over-representation of Chinese graduates in Science and Math related or applied science fields, and under-representation in the verbal fields. For example in 1968, Chinese graduates represented 4.36% of total degrees conferred in all faculties yet they represented 9.71% of all degrees conferred in Engineering and 11.11% of all degrees conferred in Architecture - over twice their proportion. Similarly in 1978, Chinese graduates constituted 5.57% of total graduates but 22.13% of Engineering and 17.14% of Architecture graduates - close to four (3.97) and three (3.07) times their population proportion. In 1988 when Chinese graduates constituted 4.73% of total graduates, Architecture (15.38%), Engineering (10.69%), and Medicine (10.46%) were over-represented by three and two times respectively. Inversely,

Arts graduates were strongly under-represented; by more than 12 times (.072) in 1968; by more than 3 times (.292 and .270) in 1978; and in 1988. However, the absolute percentage did significantly increase, especially from 1968 to 1978 when it jumped by 4.6 times. Finally, in all three years, Chinese graduates from Graduate Studies were generally proportionally or slightly over-represented. The exception were Phd degrees which were 2.44 times over-represented in 1968 but under represented by .35 in proportion to their population in 1988.[24]

These findings from the convocation records are confirmed with little variation by enrolment figures of Chinese students in similar years.

Table 2
Enrollment and Discipline Trends - Student Directories

	1969 - 70			1979 - 80			1988 - 89		
Faculty	Chinese	I	Total	Chinese	I	Total	Chinese	I	Total
Arts	28	0.81I	3449	73	1.90I	3834	120	2.45I	4897
Science	207	6.79I	3048	146	7.86I	1858	199	9.01I	2208
Management	32	5.84I	548	100	8.49I	1178	100	7.99I	1252
Engineering	173	13.86I	1248	268	19.07I	1405	164	13.95I	1176
Architecture	16	8.74I	183	27	16.98I	159	17	11.56I	147
Medicine	27	5.43I	497	18	2.88I	625	43	6.95I	619
Nursing	2	0.66I	302	5	4.39I	114	6	6.59I	91
Rehab Med	4	1.39I	287	15	8.52I	176	19	6.55I	290
Dentistry	9	6.04I	149	8	5.19I	154	12	8.63I	139
Law	1	0.36I	276	4	0.84I	476	4	0.83I	484
Agriculture	6	1.61I	372	4	0.63I	631	6	1.12I	535
Education	4	1.35I	296	9	1.36I	663	19	13.67I	139
Music	6	2.39I	251	10	4.15I	241	18	4.81I	374
Social Work	0	0.00I	43	4	2.40I	167	4	2.45I	163
Religious Studies	0	0.00I	36	1	2.56I	39	2	7.41I	27
SUB TOTAL	515	4.69I	10985	692	5.90I	11720	733	5.84I	12541
Grad S & R	179	7.13I	2511	176	5.56I	3168	333	8.19I	4065
Graduate Medicine				18	2.17I	831	37	5.16I	717
Special				23	2.52I	914	11	7.28I	151
Visiting				3	1.86I	161	16	20.78I	77
Qualifying							4	7.84I	51
GRAND TOT	694	5.14I	13496	912	5.43I	16794	1134	6.44I	17602

(Partial and Diploma students are excluded.)

Source: McGill Student Directory (1969-70, 1979-80, 1988-89); Office of the Registrar.

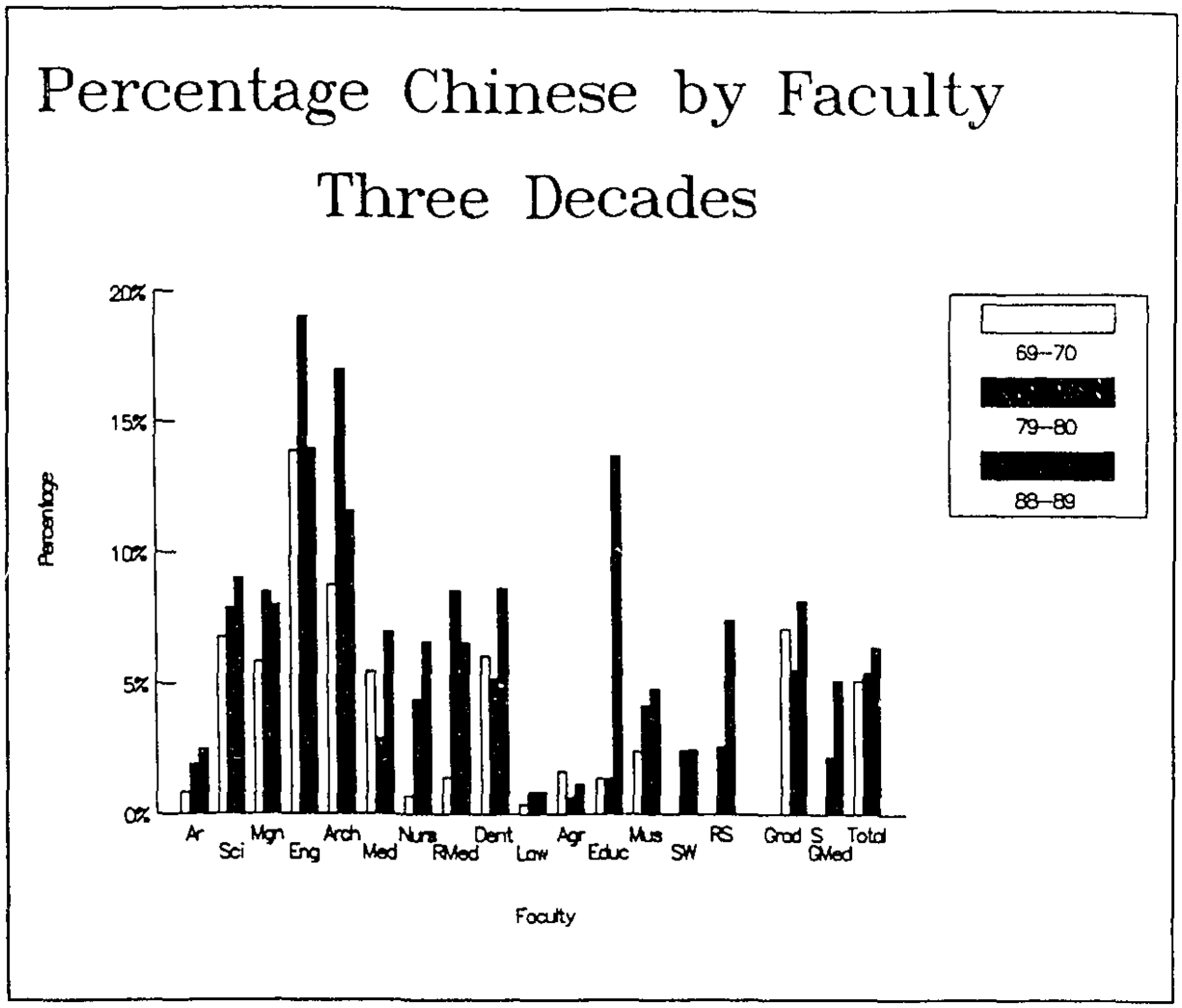
[24] As graduate studies generally contain a high number of foreign students especially at the Phd level, this may suggest a shift in the Chinese student population from foreign to local born.

Table 2 shows the enrolment patterns of Chinese students as taken from student directories. In general, the figures reinforce the finding that Chinese students are representing an increasing number of schools; they tend to be over-represented in Engineering, Sciences and Health professions; but remain under-represented in Arts and fields requiring more written and verbal abilities, although the percentage has increased significantly over the decades. In 1969-1970, at the undergraduate level, 515 Chinese students representing 13 schools (only Divinity is not represented) comprised 4.69% of total students enrolled in these undergraduate faculties. Including Graduate Studies, a grand total of 694 or 5.14% were Chinese. In absolute numbers, Chinese students were found most in Science (207), comprising only 6.79 % of the class, but were proportionally over-represented compared to the percentage of total Chinese enrollment. As expected, they also concentrated in Engineering (173 students and 13.86% of the Engineering class), proportionally over-representing their population by about 2.7 times. Arts, Nursing, and Law contained less than one percent of Chinese students, and when combined, represented 1/16 of total Chinese enrollment.

The 1979-80 figures show a slightly higher number and percentage of Chinese students - a total of 912 or 5.43% and representing all faculties. Social Work, Religious Studies, and Graduate Medicine (residents, interns, etc.) now had Chinese students. At the undergraduate level, 692 or 5.90% of total undergraduate enrolment in those faculties were Chinese. Engineering contained the highest number of Chinese students (268), as well as the highest percentage of Chinese by faculty (19.07%), over-representing the Chinese population by 3.5 times. Architecture followed closely at 16.98%, proportionally over-representing Chinese students by 3 times. Science (146) and Management (100) at 7.86% and 8.49% by faculty were also over-represented by 1.5 and 1.6 times

respectively. The increase in Chinese Management students, both proportionately and in absolute numbers from 1968 is significant - increasing by about 1.5 times proportionally, and more than triple in absolute numbers. Rehabilitation Medicine at 8.52% is also over-represented but Medicine dropped from 1968 in absolute numbers and is now proportionately under-represented by more than half. Arts students showed a significant increase in absolute numbers and percentages, doubling from .81% in 1968 to 1.9% of the class. Yet they remained under-represented by .34 or less than a third of the total Chinese population.

The 1988-89 directory showed a total of 1134 Chinese students who comprised 6.44% of all faculties, which was a slight increase from the last decade. This, however, was nuanced at the undergraduate level where the Chinese population, at 5.84%, was almost equal to that of the year 1979-80. By distribution, most Chinese students majored in Science (199) but by proportion, Engineering at 13.95% led in proportional over-representation - about twice the Chinese population. For the first time, the Chinese were over-represented in Education, which, at 13.67% was about two times the proportion of Chinese enrollment. At 120, the number of Chinese Art students was the highest it had ever been in all three years. However proportionately, this figure was still low at 2.45% and under-represented the Chinese proportion by less than 2.5 times, although the percentage had actually tripled the 1969-70 figure. Medicine regained in numbers from 1979-80 and is now proportionally represented but when combined with other Health Sciences (Rehabilitation, Nursing, etc.), this group constituted a significant portion of Chinese enrolments which were proportionately over-represented. Religious studies, under-represented in the previous years, now comprised 7.41% of that faculty.



The graph in figure 1 profiles the pattern of Chinese students in the various faculties over three decades and sums up the data from Table 2. Over the three decades, Engineering contained the highest percentage of Chinese students and Law the lowest. Faculties that showed an increasing percentage of Chinese students were Arts, Science, Nursing, and Music. Management experienced a significant jump between 1969-70 and 1979-80, but the increase in Education between 1979-80 and 1988-89 was even more drastic. Medicine and Graduate studies fluctuated in an inverted

curve, over the three years. Social Work and Religious Studies were not represented until 1979-80.[25]

Summary

Findings from the student directories and enrollment records amplified those of the Convocation records. Both pointed in the same direction and revealed similar trends over the three decades with differences being only one of degree. The enrollment records showed the Chinese to be distributed in more faculties than the convocation records but student directories probably profiled faculty representation more accurately. This was especially true of Law, which had Chinese students in all three years (though few in numbers) but not one graduated in the three convocation years.

In the choice of majors, Chinese students were concentrated in the Science and Engineering fields (including Architecture), followed by Management (strongly evident in the last two years). In Arts, there were numerically a large number of Chinese students but proportionately, they comprised a very small percentage of the Arts faculty although this percentage has progressively doubled in the three terms analyzed.[26] Chinese students were also choosing health professions, especially in the last two decades but this was consistent with, or only slightly above, the proportion of total Chinese students. Finally, along with Arts there has been a steady increase in representation, however minimal, of Chinese students in more verbally

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[25] Social Work was categorized under "Arts" in 1969-70.

[26] In comparing tables 1 and 2, Chinese Arts students convocated at a slightly lower rate than their enrollment level in all three years, which suggests the possibility that perhaps these students were switching out of Arts and not finishing that degree.

demanding fields such as Education, Law, and Social Work. Education in particular had drastically increased in popularity by 1988-89.

Although slowly changing, Chinese students have remained concentrated in fields requiring high mathematical, low written and verbal abilities and this is reflected in their preference for Science, Engineering, and Architecture. They have also preferred professional schools and more recently, even those requiring a greater verbal ability such as Management, Education, and some of the health professions. Medicine and other health professions maintained a consistent above proportion of Chinese students but not exceptionally over-represented as might be expected. In terms of educational achievement, the above average representation in selective professional schools such as Engineering (which requires more stringent entrance standards) may suggest that Chinese students are performing at least reasonably well as a group in comparison to other students.

2. Discussion of Findings

The pattern of academic choices shown by McGill Chinese students may be explained in part by shifting demographics. A look at the students' places of origin (as indicated by place of residence) revealed clues that could explain their academic choices.

Table 3
Place of Origin - Convocation Records of Degrees Conferred (Spring and Fall)

	1968					1978					1988				
	Foreign	% Chin	Chinese	%	Total	Foreign	% Chin	Chinese	%	Total	Foreign	% Chin	Chinese	%	Total
B A	2	100.00%	2	0.35%	579	3	20.00%	15	1.63%	922	1	6.67%	15	1.28%	1176
B Com	2	100.00%	2	2.15%	93	9	30.00%	30	8.50%	353	1	5.00%	20	6.45%	310
B Sc	12	33.33%	36	6.12%	588	6	20.00%	30	5.24%	572	4	16.67%	24	5.17%	464
B Sc (Agr)	4	100.00%	4	4.76%	84	0	0.00%	1	1.23%	81	1	25.00%	4	3.85%	104
B Sc (Nur)	1	50.00%	2	1.83%	109	1	100.00%	1	3.13%	32	0	0.00%	2	6.67%	30
B Eng	15	88.24%	17	9.71%	175	19	35.19%	54	22.13%	244	4	12.90%	31	10.69%	290
B Arch	2	66.67%	3	11.11%	27	2	16.67%	12	17.14%	70	3	50.00%	6	15.38%	39
Dr. Med/M. Surg	8	100.00%	8	6.50%	123	1	100.00%	1	0.66%	151	2	12.50%	16	10.46%	153
Dr. of Dental Surg			0	0.00%	33	1	100.00%	1	2.38%	42	0	0.00%	1	2.56%	39
B Sc (PT/OT)			0	0.00%	47	1	25.00%	4	6.78%	59	0	0.00%	2	3.17%	63
B Ed			0	0.00%	52	2	33.33%	6	1.44%	417	0	0.00%	4	1.69%	237
B Nesic			0	0.00%	20	1	100.00%	1	1.61%	62	1	50.00%	2	3.57%	56
B Theo			0	0.00%	3	0	0.00%	1	5.26%	19			0	0.00%	15
B Social Work			0	0.00%	18			0	0.00%	76	0	0.00%	4	4.21%	95
B Sc (FS)			0	0.00%	47			0	0.00%	36	0	0.00%	2	3.17%	63
Grad S & R															
Master	12	75.00%	16	6.64%	241	19	47.50%	40	9.71%	412	26	41.27%	63	7.05%	894
Phd	12	100.00%	12	11.65%	103	2	28.57%	7	5.30%	132	2	66.67%	3	1.66%	181
Total	70	68.63%	102	4.36%	2342	67	32.84%	204	5.54%	3680	45	22.61%	199	4.73%	4209

Source: Convocation Records (1968, 1978, 1988); Office of the Registrar.

Table 3 contains convocation records of degrees conferred (same as table 1) but includes the percentage of foreign students by faculty. In 1968, foreign students constituted 68.63% of Chinese receiving degrees and represented over half (and often all) of Chinese in all faculties except Science at 33.33%. By 1978, the foreign population had decreased by over a half - to 32.84% of all Chinese receiving degrees. Graduating students were concentrated in the Master's program (47.50%) and in Engineering (35.19%) and constituted all four lone graduates from Nursing, Medicine, Dentistry, and Music.

(In Graduate Studies, the percentage of foreign students decreased significantly from 1968, suggesting perhaps that local Chinese students may now be entering Graduate Studies.) Chinese Arts graduates increased from 2 in 1968 to 15 in 1978 (or from .3% to 1.6% of the class). Yet, while the two in 1968 were both foreign students, only 3 or 20% of the 15 in 1978 had foreign addresses. Arts had one of the lowest percentages of foreign students in 1978, and this was also true in 1988 when the percentage was only 6.67. It is interesting to note that as Chinese representation in Arts increased over the three years, the foreign student population went from being over-represented in 1968 (100% / 68.63%) to being under-represented in 1978 (20% / 32.8%), and even more so in 1988 (6.67% / 22.61%). These Arts graduates may have been local residents, born or raised in Canada and more verbal and proficient in English. By 1988, only 22.61% of Chinese students receiving degrees had foreign residences. This may have represented the growing local population. The foreign population continued to represent a large portion of graduate degrees conferred. (The increase in Phds conferred to foreign students (from 28.57% to 66.67%) may be a result of the influx of Chinese students from China.) At the undergraduate level, the proportion of foreign students in fields over-represented by Chinese (Engineering, Medicine, and to a lesser extent Science) also contained a distinctive proportion of foreign students - 12.9%, 12.5% and 16.67% respectively, although this has decreased from the previous years. Interestingly the Commerce faculty, though over-represented by Chinese students, contained a low percentage (5.0%) of foreign students. This may suggest that the more verbal field of Commerce is still avoided by Chinese foreign students with limited English.

The type of Chinese graduates from Medicine also changed - from all foreign students in 1968 and 1978 (only one

graduated in 1978), to almost all local residents by 1988. The decline in Medicine graduates accompanies this decrease in the foreign Chinese population. This may suggest interesting characteristics of the local student population; perhaps they had yet to attain the qualifications to enter Medicine in significant numbers. The early concentration of Chinese in Medicine may have been a product of selecting bright foreign students.

The Chinese graduating population have shifted from a large majority of foreign students to a majority that claimed Canadian residency. Although foreign students still constitute a large percentage of graduates from high math, low verbal faculties as well as graduate studies, the increase in graduates of schools requiring higher verbal abilities correspond with the increasing proportion of Chinese who are local born or raised and are therefore more proficient in English.

Again, the above findings are reinforced by both sources of data: student directories and enrollment records that contained addresses of students also point to a demographic explanation. Figure 2 below breaks down the enrollment percentages by place of origin for a selection of faculties that cover the math-verbal ability spectrum.

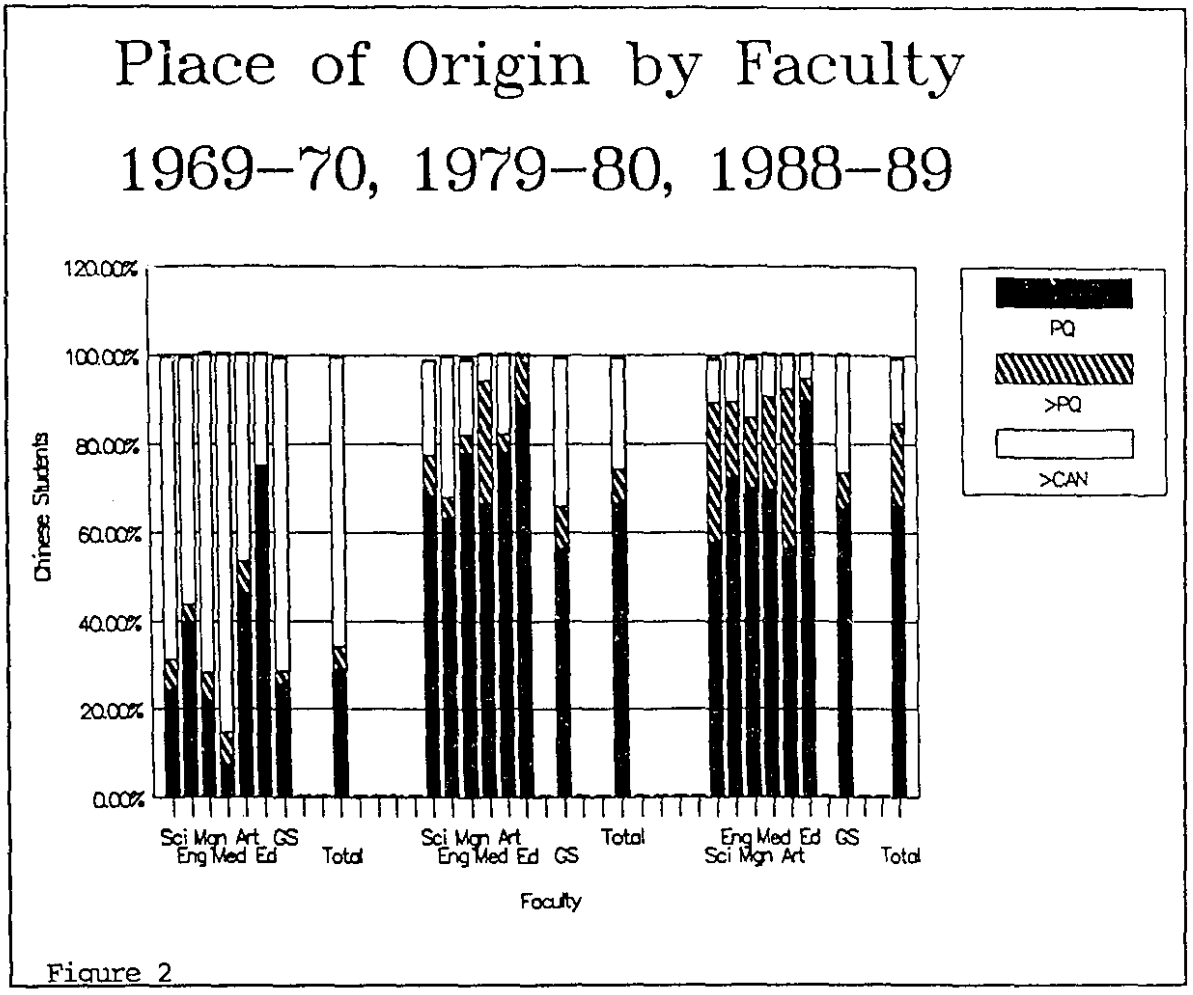

Figure 2

In the 1969-70 school term, students with foreign addresses comprised 63.3% of all Chinese undergraduates and 65.27% of all Chinese students. (An additional 5.33% of total Chinese students were from outside the province of Quebec.) Faculties where students with foreign residences comprised over 50% of the Chinese in that class are Science (68.12%); Engineering (55.49%); Architecture (81.25%); Agriculture (83.33%) - by in large science and math related fields. Foreign students also constituted the majority of graduate Chinese students - 70.95%. By the 1979-80 school term, students with foreign addresses dropped significantly to 24.13% of Chinese undergraduates or 25.11% of all Chinese students. Yet, they continued to make up a large proportion

of math/science fields over-represented by the Chinese; Science (21.23%); Engineering (31.72%); and Architecture (51.85%), although this had decreased compared to the 1969-70 term. The increase of Chinese students in Management from 1969-1970 corresponded with a significant decrease in the proportion of foreign students - from 71.88% to 17.0%, and may suggest that this verbally demanding field is less attractive to foreign students. Graduate studies also constituted a smaller proportion of foreign Chinese - 33.52% from 70.95% in 1969-70.[27]

By the 1988-89 term, the foreign population had declined to 8.87% of the undergraduate Chinese and 14.29%[28] of the grand total. As in the other two years, the foreign population is concentrated in Graduate Studies but those faculties with the highest proportion of Chinese students; Engineering, Education, Architecture and Science contained a much lower percentage who are foreign students - 10.37%, 5.26%, 5.88%, and 9.55% respectively.

The low percentage of foreign students in Education (5.26%) which was significantly over-represented by the Chinese (by twice their proportions) suggests that students in this verbally demanding field were probably local Chinese. In Arts, the increase in Chinese representation is paralleled by a decline in the percentage of foreign students by almost half each year - from 46.43% to 17.81%, to 7.50% by the 1988-89 term. Less drastically, this trend was also characteristic of Management but a still significant

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[27] This may be a function of the way residence is listed. As long term students, graduate students often tend to list their Montreal address as permanent residence.

[28]. Based on foreign student registration records which contains lists of countries from which Chinese students are most likely to originate, the grand total may be closer to 35%. However, the undergraduate estimate stays the same as most of foreign students are in graduate studies.

percentage of foreign students (13.0%) in 1988-89 poses an interesting dilemma; Management may be popular with these students but how were they coping with the language demands? The indications are that the increase in Arts and verbally demanding fields may be attributed to local residents who were more likely to make this choice due to their proficiency in English. The steady increase in representation, however minimal, of Chinese students in more verbally demanding fields (Education, Arts, Law, Social Work), corresponded with the decline of foreign students overall and in these faculties in particular.

Summary

Both convocation records and student directories show that the pattern of Chinese students concentrating in science and math related fields may in part be explained by demographics. As the composition of the Chinese student population changed from a foreign majority to a local majority, the representation in more verbal fields increased.[29] The concentration in math and science may be seen as function of language proficiency and probably, a desire for a career related field. The more verbal fields as represented in the later years probably consisted of those Chinese born or raised in Canada. This general trend over the three decades is consistent with the population and immigration demographics of the Chinese in Canada as well as foreign student trends.[30]

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[29] The composition of the foreign group have also changed, from one consisting mostly of Hong Kong students at the undergraduate level to one containing a majority of graduate students from China. (Registration Summaries, Office of the Registrar, McGill University.)

[30] A methodological note: The shifting demographics may not be real, but may be a result of changes in the way (or which) residences are recorded. However, an analysis of official foreign student registration records (which contains

3. Achievement

Chinese students are over-represented in math and science fields, but how are they actually performing? The fact that they are over-represented in professional fields such as Engineering, Architecture, and health professions, indicates a higher than average level of achievement as professional schools have more stringent entrance requirements. However, entrance into these select faculties indicates little of their performance within them. One way to ascertain achievement within faculty is by the number of awards accorded to Chinese students as indicated in convocation records, relative to Chinese enrolment in these faculties.

Table 4
Achievement - Awards as listed in Convocation Records of Degrees Conferred (Spring and Fall)

	1968						1978						1988					
	Chin Awd	% of Tot Awds	Tot Awds	Tot Chin	%	Tot Grad	Chin Awd	% of Tot Awds	Tot Awds	Tot Chin	%	Tot Grad	Chin Awds	% of Tot Awds	Tot Awds	Tot Chin	%	Tot Grad
B A	1	0.70%	142	2	0.35%	579	6	1.52%	394	15	1.63%	922	4	1.05%	382	15	1.28%	1176
B Com	0	0.00%	13	2	2.15%	93	9	9.78%	92	30	8.50%	353	4	4.44%	90	20	6.45%	310
B Sc	3	1.60%	188	36	6.12%	588	9	3.78%	238	30	5.24%	572	7	3.61%	194	24	5.17%	464
B Sc (Agr)	4	6.78%	59	4	4.76%	84	0	0.00%	54	1	1.23%	81	3	6.12%	49	4	3.85%	104
B Sc (Nur)	0	0.00%	1	2	1.83%	109	0	0.00%	9	1	3.13%	32	0	0.00%	8	2	6.67%	30
B Eng	2	6.67%	30	17	9.71%	175	8	21.62%	37	54	22.13%	244	2	3.70%	54	21	10.69%	290
B Arch	0	0.00%	4	3	11.11%	27	0	0.00%	15	12	17.14%	70	0	0.00%	17	6	15.38%	39
Dr. Med/M. Surg.	0	0.00%	13	8	6.50%	123	1	3.45%	29	1	0.66%	151	3	9.68%	31	16	10.46%	153
Dr. of Dental Surg.							0	0.00%	3	1	2.38%	42	0	0.00%	8	1	2.56%	39
B Sc (PT/OT)							0	0.00%	8	4	6.78%	59	1	10.00%	10	2	3.17%	63
B Ed							1	5.56%	18	6	1.44%	417	0	0.00%	17	4	1.69%	237
B Music							0	0.00%	25	1	1.61%	62	2	5.56%	36	2	3.57%	56
B Theo								0.00%	6	1	33.33%	3						
B Social Work													1	5.56%	18	4	4.21%	95
B Sc (FS)													1	2.63%	38	2	3.17%	63
Sub Total	10	2.22%	450	74	4.16%	1778	34	3.62%	938	157	5.22%	3008	29	2.94%	952	133	4.26%	3119
Grad S & R																		
Master	0	0.00%	2	16	6.64%	241	0	0.00%	2	40	9.71%	412	1	2.63%	38	63	7.05%	894
Phd	0	0.00%	39	12	11.65%	103	2	5.13%	39	7	5.30%	132	1	1.61%	62	3	1.66%	181
Total	10	2.04%	491	102	4.81%	2122	36	3.68%	979	204	5.74%	3552	30	2.85%	1052	199	4.74%	4194

Source: Convocation Records (1968, 1978, 1988); Office of the Registrar.

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list of countries of origin) over the past three decades supports the theory that the Chinese foreign student population is in fact decreasing.

Table 4 contains awards received by Chinese students and total awards received by graduates by Faculty. Only faculties with Chinese graduates were included. (Awards here are defined to include any awards or scholarships listed, first or second class honours or distinctions, and the honours program. The number of recipients, NOT awards were counted.) In 1968, of the 102 Chinese graduates, 10 (9.8%) received some form of award or honours standing. However, this was low proportionately, as 23.13% (491/2122) of all students received awards. The Chinese received only 2.04% of total awards but made up 4.8% of the graduates - under-represented by more than half (.424). Most Chinese awards went to Science fields and Engineering, faculties with a high percentage of foreign students.

In 1978, a higher number (36 or 17.65%) of Chinese graduates attained awards but it was again low compared to the overall percentage of recipients (979/3553 or 27.56%). Proportionally, they were still under-represented (by .64), a little less than 1968 but were still receiving only 3.68% of total awards, while constituting 5.74% of the total graduates. The largest number of awards went to Commerce and Science, followed by Engineering and Arts. By faculty, they were attaining their share of awards in Arts, Commerce, Engineering, and Phd programs and significantly more then their proportion in Education (5.56% of awards but 1.44% of faculty). With the exception of Arts and Education, these faculties contained a distinctive number of foreign students, though much lower than 1968.

In 1988, a slightly lower number (30 or 15.08%) of Chinese graduates received awards but there was still a 10% gap compared to total recipients (1052/4194 or 25.08%). The Chinese were still under-represented; they constituted 4.7% of total graduates but only 2.85% of total awards (similar to '78). Science had the most Chinese award recipients (but under-represented), and Arts, Medicine, and Phd programs were

proportionately represented while Agriculture and Education (again) were over-represented. Chinese award winners were under-represented in Commerce, Nursing, Engineering (.345), Architecture, and Masters programs.

Within the Chinese population, the 15.08% (30/199) jumps to 21% (28/133) if graduate studies (with 66 or 62% foreign students) is excluded. Contrary to other two years, this may suggest that local students were now receiving awards. Chinese award recipients may no longer be limited to bright foreign students (usually concentrated in graduate studies.) That the number of awards received by Chinese graduates have increased numerically, at least at the undergraduate level (when foreign students have decreased over the decades) suggests that local students may be performing better than their foreign counterparts of the past years.

The findings show a general pattern of the Chinese NOT receiving their share of awards in proportion to their population at McGill although they did at times excel in certain faculties. In certain years awards tended to be concentrated in the Science and Engineering fields although at other times, they were significantly under-represented (eg. Engineering in 1988). Inconsistencies in the three years failed to produce a distinct pattern of award recipients.

However, the concentration of Chinese awards in Science and Engineering fields in the first two years also corresponded with the high percentage of foreign students, who were by selection a bright cohort, and were probably the ones winning the few Chinese awards. This does not hold true for 1988 which had the lowest number foreign students. Comparing only the Chinese, the percentage of awards actually increased when Graduate Studies (where most of these foreign students are concentrated) is excluded. Either the foreign students were no longer as bright or the local students were performing much better in their faculties.

The above findings are somewhat unexpected and may be problematic due to possible methodological and conceptual problems. First, this method of ascertaining achievement (by counting through convocation records) is crude and there may have been mistakes in the counting procedure. However, if this mistake is repeated on all three years, the pattern should be unaffected. Secondly, the definition of awards may have been too broad. To include all specific awards as well as first and second class standings (university scholars) along with honours program may have diffused any obvious trends and distinctions. For example, Chinese students may not for numerous reasons be strategically enrolled in honours programs. Thirdly, the definition of awards may have changed over the years, and it is therefore difficult to establish a pattern. Finally, different faculties may have different criteria for awards, and the Chinese may not be winning specific awards that take into account criteria other than GPAs, verbal skills being the best example. In this sense, factors such as social discrimination may come into play.

The above results on achievement are NOT conclusive due to the possible research flaws outlined above. However, if methodological problems cannot explain the results, the findings may suggest other characteristics of Chinese achievement. They may be achieving in the sense that they have entered university, often in a selective professional faculty but once in, they do not perform at the top of the class. As well, their actual or perceived lack of social and verbal skills undermines their ability to win awards not solely based on GPAs. A final hypothesis raised by the finding that the percentage of Chinese receiving awards has increased as the foreign population decreases, is the possibility that it is local Chinese students who perform well once in a the faculty, and not the overseas Chinese.

4. Summary and Discussion

The findings from McGill convocation records, student directories, and registration records, for the most part, confirm general findings of Asian students in past studies. Previous studies have shown Chinese students to have higher quantitative rather than verbal abilities and that they are more interested in physical, applied sciences and business occupations (Sue and Kirk, 1972). Analysis of academic majors confirmed the view of Asian students as preferring quantitative and physical science fields such as Science, Engineering, and Architecture. They are also preferring professional fields over generalist programs. Previous studies also suggest a concentration in health professions and business schools. Chinese representation in Medicine at McGill did not confirm these findings of strong over-representation. When combined with other health professions (Rehabilitation Medicine, Nursing, Dentistry), there was over-representation but only in recent years. However, Management was a strong choice for Chinese students especially in the years of the last two decades but this may reflect the general popularity of business school in general. As expected, fields requiring strong verbal and written communication abilities were not generally preferred by Chinese students. Nevertheless, the last three decades have seen a shift in this trend, and though still proportionately under-represented, Chinese students in these fields have multiplied significantly.

Important demographic shifts within the Chinese student population may offer some clues to their academic behaviour. The population has shifted from one consisting of largely foreign students to one with a local majority. Correspondingly, more verbally demanding faculties have experienced significant increases in Chinese enrollment; Arts enrollment has doubled in each of the three years and enrollment in Education has skyrocketed in the last two

years. A profile of the origin of Chinese students by faculty shows a clear pattern of concentration of foreign students in quantitative fields such as Science, Engineering and Graduate Studies. It was postulated that low verbal ability as a consequence of language deficiency would limit academic choices to quantitative career fields. As expected, when language was no longer a problem, the more local Chinese population with their proficient English were able to expand into verbally demanding fields previously untouched by the Chinese such as Arts and Education. However this remains only a partial explanation and does not explain the quantitative orientation even among local born or the business preference of many foreign born. (The quantitative over verbal orientation of Asian students in past research was evident for ALL generations of Asian Americans.)

The analysis on achievement and performance as defined by awards accorded to Chinese students produced unexpected and nonconclusive findings. As a group, the Chinese were not receiving their proportional share of awards. There is a possibility that once accepted in professional schools, the Chinese do not perform well, and those that do are more likely to be local born. However, due to probable conceptual and methodological problems, no concrete conclusions can be made.

The above quantitative findings suggest a particular pattern of academic behaviour among Chinese students that may be a function of language, background and place of origin. The reasons behind this behaviour needs to be addressed and a qualitative exploration into the academic behaviour of these students should shed light into the above findings.

APPENDIX II

Questionnaire

Subjects were given a questionnaire to complete at the end of the interview that contained demographic questions, family background questions and scales on ethnic identity retention and family environment. Some questions were taken directly from Sue and Zane's 1985 study, others were derived from their background/demographic section and questions on academic goals, choice of majors, GPA scores, and course load.

The ethnic identity scale is based on a 1979 Toronto wide area study of 2300 subjects on ethnic identity retention conducted by Professors Isajiw, Breton, and Reitz of the University of Toronto. It includes external or objective identity, internal or subjective identity, and ethnic socialization. External identity includes measures of knowledge of ethnic language; participation in ethnic group functions; practice of ethnic traditions; eating of ethnic foods; and having friends of own ethnicity. Internal measures include subjective assessment of ethnic identity; feelings of obligation and support towards group employment, needs and causes. Finally ethnic identity involves the respondents' socialization experiences while growing up: the language used at home; attendance of ethnic school; type of neighbourhood; and degree of out-of-group dating.

Demographic Information

A. Name (Optional) _____(1) male (2) female

B. Age_____ Year of birth_____ Marital Status: _____

C. Faculty, Department and Year: _____

D. Place of birth:

Myself_____
Father_____ Grandfather_____ Grandmother _____
Mother_____ Grandfather_____Grandmother _____

E. Year of Entry (you) into Canada if applicable _____

F. Ages of your brothers and/or sisters and their profession (if student, please indicate major)

1. _____ Age:_____ Profession_____
2. _____ Age:_____ Profession_____
3. _____ Age:_____ Profession_____
4 _____ Age:_____ Profession_____

G. Parent and Adult Siblings' Highest level of education completed:

	Father	Mother	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
Graduate degree (eg. M.A., Ph.D.)	8	8	8	8	8	8	8
College degree (eg. B.A., B.S.)	7	7	7	7	7	7	7
Partial College/technical diploma	6	6	6	6	6	6	6
High School or Equivalent	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Partial High School	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Some junior high school	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
1-7 years of school	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
No formal education	1	1	1	1	1	1	1

H. Compared to most Caucasian Canadians born in Canada (and Canadians born in Quebec), how well can you and your parents speak English / French?

	Myself English	Myself French	Father Eng/Fren		Mother Eng/Fren	
Better	5	5	5	5	5	5
As Well	4	4	4	4	4	4
Slightly Worse	3	3	3	3	3	3
Much Worse	2	2	2	2	2	2
Can Hardly speak	1	1	1	1	1	1

I. Compare to most Chinese who were born overseas and speak your dialect, how well can you and your parents speak your Chinese dialect?

	Myself	Father	Mother
Better	5	5	5
As Well	4	4	4
Slightly Worse	3	3	3
Much Worse	2	2	2
Can Hardly speak Chinese	1	1	1

J. List the Chinese dialects you and your parents can speak fluently?

Myself	Father	Mother
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

K. What percentage of your present friends are Asian and Non - Asian?

Myself	Father	Mother
_____% Asian	_____% Asian	_____% Asian

L. To what degree did difficulty with the English Language influence your choice of a major?

(1) Not at all (2) Slightly (3) Moderately (4) Very Much

M. To what degree did your parents' preference for a certain area of study influence your choice of a major?

(1) Not at all (2) Slightly (3) Moderately (4) Very Much

N. To what degree did financial consideration (eg. more employment opportunities, better salary) influence your choice of a major?

(1) Not at all (2) Slightly (3) Moderately (4) Very Much

O. To what degree did the status or occupational prestige of a certain job influence your choice of a major?

(1) Not at all (2) Slightly (3) Moderately (4) Very Much

P. To what degree did your personal interests influence your choice of a major?

(1) Not at all (2) Slightly (3) Moderately (4) Very Much

Q. If you based your decision of selecting a major solely on your personal interests, what would that major be?

_____

R. What are your plans upon graduation or completion of your degree? _____

S. How many courses are you taking this semester? _____

How many courses did you take last year? _____

T. What was your GPA last year (or term if U1)?

(1) <=2.0 (2) 2.0-2.4 (3) 2.5-2.9 (4) 3.0-3.4 (5) 3.5=>

U. On average, how many hours/week do you spend studying? ____

V. Parents present occupation and income:

	Father	Mother
Occupation	_____	_____
	(1) full-time	(1) full-time
	(2) part-time	(2) part-time

Previous occupation and income (if immigrants to Canada):

	Father	Mother
Occupation:	_____	_____
	(1) full-time	(1) full-time
	(2) part-time	(2) part-time

W. Gross FAMILY Income:

1) Less than $20,000
2) $20,000 - $40,000
3) $40,000 - $60,000
4) $60,000 - $80,000
5) $60,000 and more
6) Refuse

Ethnic Identity Scale

A. What is your Mother Tongue (first language learned) if not English?

_____(include dialect).

B. If English is your mother tongue or preferred language, how well do you know your Chinese language/dialect?

	Not at all	a little	passable	fairly well	very well
understand	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Speak	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Read	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Write	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)

C. How often do you speak the Chinese dialect you know?

(1) never (2) rarely (3) occasionally (4) often (5) everday

D. Of your present closest friends, how many are Chinese?

(1) 0 (2) 1 - 2 (3) 3 (4) 4=>

E. Are your Chinese friends similiar to you in terms of background; immigration and socialization experience, knowledge of Chinese language, etc.?

(1) not at all (2) somewhat (3) fairly similiar (4) very similiar (5) Not applicable

F. To your Chinese friends, you speak mostly

(1) English (2) Chinese (3) Not applicable

G. How often do you participate in ethnic (Chinese) group functions? (eg. picnics, concerts, rallies, dances, parties, public lectures)

(1) frequently (2) often (3) sometimes (4) rarely (5) never

H. Do you take advantage of ethnic group sponsored facilities? (eg. vacations resorts, summer camps)

(1) frequently (2) often (3) sometimes (4) rarely (5) never

I. Do you belong to or have affliation with at least one Chinese organization. (eg. club, community center, church, etc.)

(1) Yes (2) No

J. For the following items, please indicate whether you do them

(1) Frequently
(2) Often
(3) Sometimes
(4) rarely
(5) never

I watch Chinese programs on TV_____
I listen to Chinese radio programs_____
I read Chinese newspaper, magazine, periodicals_____
I listen to Chinese music_____

	I	My Family
I eat Chinese food on holidays	_____	_____
I eat Chinese food at other times	_____	_____
I practice Chinese religious/ non-religious customs	_____	_____
I retain Chinese artistic objects at home	_____	_____

K. When asked my nationality, I usually say....

(1) Chinese
(2) Chinese - Canadian
(3) Canadian - Chinese
(4) Canadian

L. My Chinese identity is...

(1) not at all important to me
(2) somewhat important to me
(3) fairly important to me
(4) very important to me

M. I feel _____ my Chinese culture/heritage.

(1) alienated from
(2) slightly connected to
(3) fairly close to
(4) very close to

N. Please indicate how important the following items are to you.

(1) extremely important
(2) fairly important
(3) somewhat important
(4) not at all important

The type of job I get should benefit the Chinese as well as myself._____
I should help fellow Chinese find jobs._____
If I were to hire, I would get Chinese people into good positions._____
I feel obliged to support special Chinese causes and needs___
My children will marry someone who is Chinese._____
My children will learn the Chinese language._____

The following questions pertain to when you were "growing up" (ages 6 - 18). Please answer according to the period you think were your most formative years.

O. At home, my parents spoke to me in.....

(1) Chinese only (2) Chinese usually (3) Chinese and English (4) English usually (5) English only (9) other

P. I spoke to my parents in...

(1) Chinese only (2) Chinese usually (3) Chinese and English (4) English usually (5) English only (9) other

Q. I attended Chinese language school while growing up.

(1) never (2) once or twice (3) a few yrs. (4) most of my childhood (5) Not applicable

R. While growing up, being Chinese was _____to me.

(1) very important (2) fairly important (3) somewhat important (4) unimportant

S. As a teenager, _____ of my closest friends were Chinese.

(1) none (2) 1-2 (3) 3

T. I have _____ dated a non-Chinese.

(1) never (2) seldom (3) occasionally (4) often (5) always

U. My parents _____of my dating a non-Chinese.

(1) strongly disapprove (2) disapprove (3) has no preference (4) approve (5) strongly approve

V. While growing up (if in North America), I knew of _____other Chinese families in my neighborhood.

(1) none (2) a few (3) a fair number of (4) quite a few (5) only

Family Environment

A. To what extent did your parents or family pressure you to do well in school?

1) Not at all 2) somewhat 3) it was a generalized understanding 4) it was a strong and consistent pressure

B. To what extent is an university education encouraged in your family?

1) not at all/discouraged 2) indifferent 3) prefered/a nice suprise 4) a general understanding/expectation 5) a must/not even an option

C. The folloving questions refer to your school years. Please answer:

1) never
2) rarely
3) sometimes
4) often
5) always
6) Not Applicable

My parent(s) insisted verbally that I do homework._____
My parent(s) supervised my studying time._____
I was verbally reprimanded when I did poorly in school._____
I was punished when I did poorly in school._____
I was praised for doing well in school._____
I was rewarded for doing well in school._____
I was reprimanded to do even better when I did well in school._____
My parent(s) always knew about my schoolwork; courses, subject material, etc._____
My parent(s) helped me with my school work._____
Older siblings helped me with my school work._____
My parents(s) were only interested in my report card marks._____
I was told to do well in school because I was Chinese._____
My parents supervised my free time._____
My parents always knew what I was doing with my time._____

I felt I had to do well in school because I was Chinese._____
I felt I had to do well in school because I was a minority._____
Most of my Chinese peers achieved in school._____
Most of my Chinese peers went to university._____
The Chinese organizations and clubs I was acquainted with placed a strong emphasis on education._____
I respect my parents and do the best to obey them._____
Doing my best in school was an act of obedience and respect for my parents._____

APPENDIX III

Profile of Sample

CASE	SEX	AGE	MAJOR	BIRTH PLACE	FATHER B.P.	MOTHER B. P.YR.	ENTRY	GPA	INCOME	MOTHER TONGUE
1	F	22	B A (POL SCI)	QUEBEC	CHINA	CHINA	1965	2	2	TOISANESE
2	M	25	B ENG	HONG KONG	CHINA	HONG KONG	1983	3	6	CANTONESE
3	F	19	B SC	HONG KONG	CHINA	CHINA	1988	4	2	CANTONESE
4	M	22	B ENG	TAIWAN	TAIWAN	TAIWAN	1968	5	4	MANDARIN
5	F	20	B COM	CANADA	CHINA	CHINA	0	4	6	TOISANESE
6	F	19	B SC (P.T.)	FRANCE	VIETNAM	HONG KONG	1969	5	3	CANTONESE
7	M	21	MEDICINE	HONG KONG	CHINA	CHINA	1985	5	3	CANTONESE
8	F	22	B ENG	CHINA	CHINA	CHINA	1985	5	6	MANDARIN
9	M	22	MEDICINE	MONTREAL	CHINA	CHINA	0	5	2	TOISANESE
10	M	19	B A (ECON)	MONTREAL	TAIWAN	TAIWAN	0	4	5	MANDARIN
11	F	20	B SC (P.T.)	HONG KONG	CHINA	CHINA	1985	5	6	CANTONESE
12	F	23	B A	HONG KONG	MACAU	TAIWAN	1982	4	6	MANDARIN
13	F	22	B COM	HONG KONG	MACAU	HONG KONG	1985	0	4	CANTONESE
14	F	22	B ARCH	MONTREAL	CHINA	CHINA	0	4	4	CANTONESE
15	M	25	B SW	HONG KONG	CHINA	VIETNAM	1988	4	1	CANTONESE
16	M	23	B PHY ED	HONG KONG	HONG KONG	HONG KONG	1968	5	4	CANTONESE
17	F	20	B SC NURSING	MONTREAL	HONG KONG	CHINA	0	4	2	TOISANESE
18	F	23	B MUSIC	TAIWAN	TAIWAN	TAIWAN	1984	5	3	MANDARIN
19	M	24	B COM	HONG KONG	CHINA	CHINA	1983	3	2	CANTONESSE
20	M	19	B ARCH	MONTREAL	CHINA	CHINA	0	5	6	TOISANESE
21	F	21	B A (ECON)	CANADA	CHINA	CHINA	0	4	2	CANTONESE
22	M	20	B MUSIC	HONG KONG	HONG KONG	CHINA	1980	4	1	CANTONESE
23	F	22	B ENG	MONTREAL	CHINA	CHINA	0	3	3	TOISANESE
24	F	21	B EDUC	MONTREAL	CHINA	CHINA	0	4	5	CANTONESE
25	M	22	B ENG	CANADA	CHINA	CHINA	0	4	1	CANTONESE
26	F	21	MEDICINE	TAIWAN	CHINA	CHINA	1987	0	3	MANDARIN
27	M	20	B A (MATH)	QUEBEC	CHINA	CHINA	0	2	6	MANDARIN
28	F	21	MEDICINE	SWITZERLAND	CHINA	CHINA	1973	5	4	MANDARIN
29	M	21	B COM	HONG KONG	CHINA	CHINA	1986	4	2	CANTONESE
30	M	20	B A (POLI SCI)	TAIWAN	TAIWAN	TAIWAN	1971	4	4	TAIWANESE
31	F	19	B SC (AGR)	MONTREAL	CHINA	CHINA	0	4	2	CANTONESE
32	M	21	DENTISTRY	TAIWAN	CHINA	CHINA	1970	5	4	MANDARIN

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