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Chinese Americans

MORRISON G. WONG

In 2000, the Chinese were the largest of more than 20 Asian groups residing in the United States. A diverse group, both culturally and on the basis of national origins, the Chinese include those born in the United States and who have been residing here for several generations, as well as those born abroad in China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Vietnam, and in other countries and who have been residing here for much shorter periods of time. The history of the Chinese in the United States over the past 150 years is characterized by episodes of prejudice and discrimination; of racism, xenophobia, and exclusion; and, more recently, of contrasting and varying degrees of suspicion, tolerance, or acceptance. This chapter, divided into six distinct but interrelated and intertwined sections, presents a sociohistory of the Chinese in the United States. First, the extent of Chinese immigration and the subsequent discriminatory policies and exclusionary measures are presented. Then, the changing Chinese American family is discussed. The focus of the third section is on an analysis of their educational achievements followed by a discussion of their economic and

occupational adjustments to American society. The unique social structure and problems of Chinatown are the topic of the fifth section. This chapter concludes by looking at the future acculturation of the Chinese in the United States.

IMMIGRATION AND DISCRIMINATORY MEASURES

The Chinese were the first Asian group to immigrate in significant numbers to the United States. Although only 43 Chinese resided in the United States prior to 1850, the discovery of gold in California in 1848 initiated a dramatic and significant influx of Chinese immigrants. In the next three decades, over 225,000 Chinese immigrated to the United States. About 90% of the early Chinese immigrants were males coming from two southern provinces in China—Kwangtung and Fukien (Chinn, Lai, & Choy, 1969, pp 2–4; Purcell, 1965). The push factors of poor economic and social conditions in China—overcrowding, drought, and warfare—encouraged many Chinese to immigrate to a distant country. The discovery of

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gold in California, tales that the streets of San Francisco were lined with gold, and the opening of job opportunities in the western part of the United States provided additional lures for many Chinese to seek their fortune in the United States (Chinn et al., 1969, p. 7; Dinnerstein & Reimers, 1988; Hirschman & Wong, 1981; Kitano, 1991; Lai & Choy, 1971, p. 22; Lyman, 1974; M. G. Wong, 1988, p. 234). See chapter 2 for a discussion of other factors that were involved in the migration of the Chinese to the United States. One factor made all this possible—improved transoceanic travel. It was actually less expensive to travel to San Francisco from Hong Kong than from Chicago (Schaefer, 1991).

Era of Antagonism: 1850–1882

It is commonly believed that, unlike other immigrants, most of the Chinese came to California, or “Gold Mountain” as it was called, as sojourners, expecting to work for a time, accumulate their fortune, and then return home to China to live life at a higher socioeconomic position than when they left. Hence, their orientation toward the United States was not as immigrants but as “birds of passage,” here today and gone tomorrow (Bonacich, 1973; Sung, 1971, chap. 3). Whether

this was or was not the case, it should be noted that this sojourner pattern of migration was not unique to the Chinese but was a common pattern among many European groups (Archdeacon, 1983; Kitano & Daniels, 2001; see Chan, 1984, and E. F. Wong, 1985, for arguments suggesting that the Chinese were not sojourners).

Chinese immigration increased dramatically during the decade of the 1850s and 1860s. From an initial U.S. population of 43 before 1850, 41,397 Chinese immigrated to the United States in the 1850s and another 64,301 arrived in the 1860s. Chinese males outnumbered females by at least a 15 to 1 ratio.

It did not take long before xenophobic and racist attitudes developed among the general population, prompting considerable institutional resistance to this Asian influx. The Chinese were accused of being “dangerous,” “deceitful and vicious,” “criminal,” “coward,” and “inferior from the mental and moral point of view” (Schrieke, 1936, p. 110). Racist legislation was passed in an attempt to restrict or exclude the Chinese from immigrating to the United States. In 1852, California imposed a \$50 head tax on each Chinese passenger who arrived by ship. This legislation was enforced for 20 years before it was declared unconstitutional. In 1855, a capitation tax of \$50

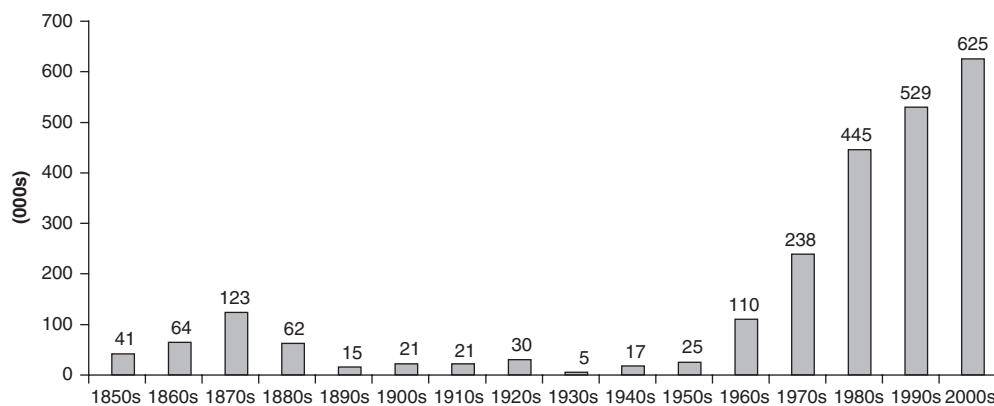


Figure 6.1 Chinese Immigrant Arrivals by Decade

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Homeland Security, 2003.

was required of all passengers who were aliens ineligible for citizenship (i.e., Chinese), but this was declared unconstitutional 2 years later. In 1858, the California legislature passed an act that sought the prevention of further immigration of Chinese to the state. In his inaugural address of 1862, California Governor Leland Stanford pledged that “the settlement among us of an inferior race [meaning the Chinese] is to be discouraged” (C. T. Wu, 1972, p. 106). The New York Times (“Growth of the United States Through Emigration,” 1865) warned:

We have four millions of degraded negroes in the South. We have political passion and religious prejudice everywhere. The strain upon the constitution is about as great as it can bear. And if, in addition, to all the adverse elements we now have, there were to be a flood-tide of Chinese population—a population befouled with all the social vices, with no knowledge or appreciation of free institutions or constitutional liberty, with heathenish souls and heathenish propensities, whose character, and habits, and modes of thought are firmly fixed by the consolidating influence of ages upon ages—we should be prepared to bid farewell to republicanism and democracy. (p. 4)

Similarly, the California Senate opposition to Chinese immigration rested on the argument that

During their entire settlement in California, they have never adapted themselves to our habits, modes of dress, or our educational system, have never learned the sanctity of an oath, never desired to become citizens, or to perform the duties of citizenship, never discovered the difference between right and wrong, never ceased the worship of their idol gods, or advanced a step beyond the musty traditions of their native hive. Impregnable to all the influences of our Anglo-Saxon life, they remain the same stolid Asiatics that have floated on the rivers and slaved in the field of China for thirty centuries of time. (Sandmeyer, 1973, p. 39)

In partial response to this hostile atmosphere of Chinese restriction and exclusion, the

Burlingame Treaty was signed in 1868 whereby China granted tremendous economic incentives and advantages to American merchants and shippers hungry for the China market. In return, the United States was to guarantee the Chinese the right to freely immigrate to the United States (J. Chen, 1980), a guarantee that they would not honor.

During the 1870s, the Chinese population in the United States continued to increase dramatically. By 1880, over 105,000 Chinese resided in the United States, mainly in the far western states. Although the majority of Chinese in the United States resided in California in every census period, their proportion of the state’s population contracted drastically. In 1860, the Chinese made up 9.2% of California’s population; in 1940, they constituted only 0.6% (Kitano & Daniels, 2001, p. 31).

Another common misconception is that the Chinese immigrant arrived to the United States as coolie laborer or as indentured, contract slave labor. For the most part, force and coercion were probably unnecessary as many Chinese were more than happy to have the opportunity to come to the United States to seek their “fortunes.” Not having the means to finance their trip to the United States, the vast majority of them used an ingenious method called the *credit ticket system*. They would borrow money for passage and expenses and obligate themselves to repay double the indebtedness. The persistence of this credit ticket system for almost a century is probably the best evidence that the Chinese were free immigrants (Melendy, 1984, p. 18).

In 1880, the Burlingame Treaty was amended, giving the United States the right to regulate, limit, or suspend Chinese immigration, but not to prohibit it absolutely. This amendment served as a harbinger of more extensive, exclusionary immigration policy.

Era of Exclusion: 1882–1943

Chinese immigration continued to dramatically increase, reaching its peak of 123,201 Chinese immigrants in the 1870s (see Figure 5.1).

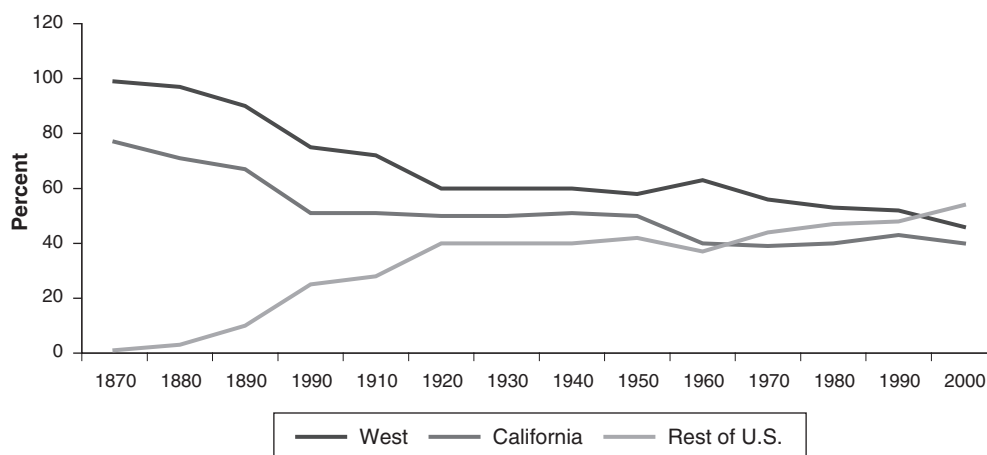


Figure 6.2 Geographic Distribution of the Chinese Population, 1870–2000

SOURCES: Chinese American Data Center, 2003a; Glenn, 1983, p. 38; Lyman, 1974, pp. 79, 159; Melendy, 1984, p. 185; U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1973, 1983, 1991, 1993a.

Anti-Chinese agitation, inspired by real or imagined competition with white workers and perpetuated by racist propaganda, also continued throughout the 1870s (Sandmeyer, 1973; Saxton, 1971). Led by Denis Kearney, the Workingman's Party argued that "the Chinese laborer is a curse to our land, is degrading to our morals, is a menace to our liberties, and should be restricted and forever abolished, and 'the Chinese must go'" (Sandmeyer, 1973, p. 65).

Congress passed the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, the first and only immigration act to specifically designate an ethnic, racial, or nationality group for exclusion from the United States. This act excluded all Chinese laborers, whether skilled or unskilled, from entering the United States for 10 years. All other Chinese entering the United States had to have identification certificates issued by the Chinese government. This act also explicitly denied naturalization rights to Chinese in the United States—making them "aliens ineligible for citizenship."

In 1888, the Scott Act was passed prohibiting Chinese from re-entering the United States after a temporary departure. Passage of these acts resulted in the precipitous decline in Chinese immigration. About half of the 1870s figure, or about 61,711 Chinese, immigrated to the United

States in the 1880s. Chinese immigration was limited to a trickle in the 1890s, with just 14,799 Chinese entering the United States.

Faced with the expiration of the Chinese Exclusion Act, Congress enacted the Geary Act in 1892, continuing the exclusion of the Chinese from the United States for another 10 years and requiring that they carry a certificate of residency on penalty of deportation with no right of habeas corpus bail procedure (J. Chen, 1980; Tang, 1984). In 1902, Congress passed legislation making permanent the exclusionary immigration policies toward the Chinese (Kung, 1962). Although the legislation did not terminate all immigration from China, it substantially reduced it and checked any significant population growth of the Chinese in the United States (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1975, p. 107; Wong & Hirschman, 1983).

In 1900, there were perhaps 90,000 Chinese residing in the United States. The Chinese population remained well below this figure for 50 years. The restrictive immigration policy and subsequent Chinese emigration partially explain this population decline. Another factor may be the overwhelmingly male composition of the Chinese population that made up much of the mid-nineteenth century immigration. In 1890, there were 26.8 Chinese males for every female. This sex

Table 6.1 Demographic Characteristics of the Chinese Population in the United States, 1860–2000

<i>Year</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Sex Ratio</i>
1860	34,933	1,858
1870	63,199	1,284
1880	105,465	2,106
1890	107,475	2,679
1900	87,863	1,887
1910	71,531	1,430
1920	61,639	696
1930	74,954	395
1940	77,504	286
1950	117,104	190
1960	236,084	135
1970	431,538	111
1980	812,178	102
1990	1,645,472	99
2000	2,879,636 (Total)	94
	2,433,585 (Alone)	94

SOURCES: Glenn, 1983, p. 38; Lyman, 1974, p. 79, 159; U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1983, 1991, 1993, 2003a, 2003b.

ratio declined steadily and, by 1940, there were 2.9 Chinese males to every female. The very low proportion of Chinese women in the United States meant a much-delayed development of a sizable second-generation Chinese American population and low natural fertility rates (Hirschman & Wong, 1986).

The infamous 1906 San Francisco earthquake and fire destroyed much of San Francisco, as well as most of the municipal recordings, which included Chinese immigration and citizenship records. Hence, a loophole was provided whereby the Chinese could immigrate to the United States. The *slot racket* or *paper son* form of immigration developed. American law provided that children of American-born fathers inherited their father's citizenship. Chinese residents would claim American birth and because of the lack of records, the authorities were powerless to disprove their contention. These American-born Chinese, actual or claimed, would then visit China, report the birth of a son, and thereby create an entry slot. Years later, the slot could be used by a relative or the birth papers could be sold to someone wanting to immigrate. The purchaser, called a paper son, simply

assumed the name and identity of the alleged son. Under the terms of this type of immigration, many Chinese in the United States developed a long-term pattern of sojourning (Glenn, 1983; Kung, 1962; R. H. Lee, 1960, pp. 300–307; Lyman, 1974; Sung, 1971, pp. 95–107; M. G. Wong, 1988; Yung, 1977).

In 1921, Congress enacted legislation denying to alien-born women their husband's citizenship. This restriction imposed especially tragic hardships for American-born Chinese males. Due to the unbalanced sex ratio and the enforcement of antimiscegenation laws, they had been forced to seek wives in China. Later, passage of the Immigration Act of 1924 restricted aliens ineligible for citizenship from entering the United States, making it impossible for Chinese American citizens to send for their wives. Interestingly, their children were admissible. Even Chinese merchants, who previously were able to bring their wives to the United States, were denied this immigration privilege. This law was later changed in 1930 to allow wives of Chinese merchants, as well as those who were married to American citizens before 1924, to immigrate to the United States

(H. Chen, 1984, p. 44; Chinn et al., 1969, p. 24; Sung, 1971, pp. 77–81).

Significant demographic changes in the Chinese population began in the 1920s and 1930s. The population decline that was triggered by the passage of the Chinese Exclusion Act had ended and a small upturn due to natural increase and ingenuity in evading immigration regulations had set in. Between 1920 and 1940, the Chinese American population increased by 25%, from 62,000 to 78,000.

Token Immigration: 1943–1965

Even more significant than the turnaround in sheer numbers was that by 1940, American-born Chinese for the first time outnumbered the foreign-born segment of the community. Nearly 20,000 Chinese American babies were born during this decade, marking the first time in Chinese American history that the most numerous 5-year cohort was persons under 5 years of age (Kitano & Daniels, 2001, p. 40).

The Magnuson Act of 1943 repealed the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, making Chinese immigrants, many of whom had been living in the United States for decades, finally eligible for citizenship. Moreover, in recognition of China's position as an ally of the United States in World War II and to counteract Japan's propaganda campaign to discredit the United States in Asia (H. Chen, 1984), a token quota of 105 persons per year was set for Chinese immigration. Although small, the quota did open the door to further immigration and had an impact on the future formation of the Chinese family in the United States.

Passage of the War Brides Act in 1945 allowed approximately 6,000 Chinese women to enter the United States as brides of men in the U.S. armed forces. In 1946, an amendment to this act put Chinese wives and children of U.S. citizens on a nonquota basis. As a consequence, almost 10,000 Chinese females migrated to the United States in the next 8 years. This influx had a tremendous impact on the demographic structure of the Chinese American community.

The Displaced Persons Act of 1948 gave permanent resident status to 3,465 Chinese visitors, sailors, and students who were stranded in the United States because of the Chinese civil war. This same year saw the California antimiscegenation law declared unconstitutional.

In 1952, the Immigration and Naturalization Act, also known as the McCarran-Walter Act, was passed eliminating race as a bar to immigration and giving preferences to relatives (J. Chen, 1980, pp. 211–213; R. H. Lee, 1956). However, this act was more of a rationalization of existing immigration policy than true reform. The quota system followed the national origins restrictions of the 1924 legislation with continued token quotas for Chinese—105 (Wong & Hirschman, 1983).

The Refugee Relief Act of 1953 allowed an additional 2,777 Chinese into the United States as refugees of the Chinese civil war. The Refugee Escape Act of 1957 protected the paper sons as the deportation requirement was waived under certain conditions. The San Francisco District Office of the Immigration and Naturalization Service received over 8,000 "confessions" of illegal entry during the 10-year amnesty period of 1959–1969, as paper sons sought to legitimate their entry (Melendy, 1984, p. 64).

In the mid-1950s, more than half of the Chinese population was native born. Along with the stranded college students from China, they were becoming increasingly middle class, disassociating themselves from the concerns of the Chinatowns and striving for acculturation into American society (Lyman, 1974, pp. 119–157).

In 1962, a presidential directive was signed permitting refugees from the People's Republic of China to enter the United States as parolees (conditional status). By 1966, approximately 15,100 refugees had entered under this provision. Unlike previous immigration flows, Chinese immigration during the period from 1943 to the repeal of the quota law in 1965 was overwhelmingly female, with approximately nine females for every one male. Most of these women were wives of citizens admitted as nonquota immigrants (Chinn et al., 1969, p. 29; Melendy, 1984, p. 67;

Simpson & Yinger, 1965, pp. 350–351; Yuan, 1966).

1965–Present: Open Chinese Immigration

By abolishing the national origins system, the Immigration Act of 1965 was probably the first immigration policy that practiced the principle of racial equality and the first real immigration reform in over a century. Perhaps the most significant consequence of this act for the Chinese was the dramatic increase in the number of Chinese immigrants to the United States (Boyd, 1971, 1974; Keeley, 1971, 1974, 1975a, 1975b; Wong & Hirschman, 1983). Since 1940, the majority of the Chinese population was native born. However, in 1980, this pattern changed, with two thirds of the Chinese population in the United States being foreign born—a pattern that continues to the present.

A second consequence was its influence on the changing nature of family life of the Chinese in the United States. With its emphasis on family reunification, this act granted each country a quota of 20,000 immigrants per year. Since 1968, when the law went into full effect, approximately 22,000 Chinese have immigrated to the United States each year (M. G. Wong, 1985, 1986; Wong & Hirschman, 1983). Unlike the pre-1965 immigrants who came over as individuals, most of the new Chinese immigrants are coming over as family groups—typically husband, wife, and unmarried children (Hong, 1976). A family chain pattern of migration had developed (Glenn, 1983; P. S. Li, 1977; W. L. Li, 1977; Sung, 1977; Wong & Hirschman, 1983). During the 1970s, over 70% of Chinese immigrants were admitted under the preference system and the proportion of immigrants arriving under the “immediate relative of U.S. citizen” criteria has declined (Wong & Hirschman, 1983).

The Immigration Act of 1965 was amended in 1981 whereby the People’s Republic of China, like the Republic of China (Taiwan), was assigned a quota of 20,000 immigrants. In 1987, the annual quota for Hong Kong was increased from 600 to 5,000 individuals. About 70% of the Chinese

population is first-generation immigrants, the vast majority arriving after 1965 (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1993a).

From 1980 to 1990, the Chinese population in the United States doubled, from 812,000 to 1,645,000. Much of increase in population size is due to the effects of the Immigration Act of 1965 on immigration flows as well as the admission of Chinese refugees from Southeast Asia, particularly from Vietnam after the fall of Saigon in 1975. As discussed in Chapter 11, the invasion of Vietnam by the People’s Republic of China in February of 1979 prompted the Vietnam government to expel all Vietnamese of Chinese ancestry from its borders. These expelled Chinese, many who had never seen China, joined other Vietnamese in the refugee camps in Southeast Asia and were eventually admitted to the United States as refugees. Natural increase was a secondary factor (Kitano & Daniels, 2001).

Changes in legislation may have facilitated the increase in the Chinese population in the United States during the 1990s. When the Chinese government ruthlessly suppressed the prodemocracy student movement at Tiananmen Square in Beijing in 1989, President Bush signed an executive order that allowed about 48,999 Chinese foreign students and visiting scholars to stay in the United States by changing their status to permanent residents (Kwong, 1997; Zhou, 2001).

In 2000, a dramatic increase in the Chinese population is also noted. However, because of the change in the method by which the U.S. Census determined race—allowing the individual to choose as many racial categories as applicable—it is impossible to ascertain the exact number of Chinese. The Chinese population in the United States in 2000 would range from 2,432,585 (Chinese alone) to 2,879,636 (Chinese total)—which includes those who have only Chinese ancestry, Chinese-Asian ancestry, and Chinese and another race ancestry. The foreign-born population constitutes about 64% of the total Chinese population or 64% of the Chinese-alone population.

The ebb and flow of Chinese immigration have greatly influenced the development and evolution

of the Chinese American family. It is this topic to which we turn.

THE CHANGING CHINESE AMERICAN FAMILY

Just as there is no typical American family, there is no typical Chinese family; no single family form which is representative of all Chinese American families. The American family can best be viewed as a product of the complex interaction between structural factors (i.e., restrictive immigration policies and racism) and cultural factors (i.e., Confucian ethics). Because these factors are constantly undergoing change, the Chinese American family is not a static entity, but one that is also undergoing constant changes and adaptations to a changing society.

Traditional Chinese Family

The Chinese American family, both past and present, has its foundation in the traditional family structure of China that was greatly influenced by Confucianism. Encompassing a much broader conception of the family than the nuclear unit of father, mother, and children, the traditional Chinese family included the extended kinship groups and clan members.

The traditional family in China was patriarchal. Roles were clearly defined, with the father and eldest son having the dominant role. Authority passed from father to the eldest son, and all were expected to obey them. Females were relegated to a subordinate position in the traditional Chinese family (Hsu, 1971).

The traditional Chinese family exhibited a patrilocal residential pattern. According to the ideal, grandparents, their unmarried children, and their married sons together with their wives and children all lived in one household. The more generations living under the same roof, the more prestigious the family. Married daughters lived in the household of their husbands' parents. This extended family provided the family with additional laborers needed in an agriculturally based

economy, as well as providing the members with some degree of economic security (Wolf, 1968).

The Chinese system of descent was patrilineal, whereby the household property and land were to be divided equally among the sons. However, in exchange, the sons were to reciprocate by sharing equally in the responsibility for the care and support of their parents in their old age (Nee & Wong, 1985).

The Confucian practice of ancestor worship was greatly emphasized in the traditional Chinese family. It was believed that a Chinese male could achieve some sense of immortality only if his family line was continued (e.g., if he bore sons). Moreover, it was believed that one of the greatest tragedies that a man could commit was to die without having any sons to carry on the family name and perform the ancestor worship ritual of burning incense at his grave.

Filial piety, another Confucian value that was highly cherished, involved a set of moral principles taught at a very young age and reinforced throughout one's life. It consisted of mutual respect to those of equal status and of reverence and obedience toward one's elders. Duty, obligation, importance of the family name, service, and self-sacrifice to the elders are all elements of filial piety (Hsu, 1971; Kung, 1962, p. 206).

The Chinese American Family: 1850–1920

The structure of the traditional Chinese family, as well as Chinese customs and family norms, resulted in migration patterns in which the males left for economic opportunities, even to distant lands for extended periods of time, while the wife and children remained in the home of the husband's parents in the village (Lyman, 1968; Nee & Wong, 1985). This practice had three major consequences. It guaranteed that the emigrating sons would continue to send back remittances to their parents to support them in old age (Glick, 1980). It instilled in the emigrating Chinese a sojourner, rather than immigrant, orientation (Barth, 1964, p. 157; Lyman, 1968; Siu, 1952). Lastly, it ensured a continual bond to the family and the village on the part of the emigrating men (Nee & Wong, 1985).

From their arrival in the 1850s until the 1920s, the overwhelming majority of the early Chinese immigrants were men. More than half of the arriving men were single, and those who were not often were separated from their wives for long periods of time. In essence, many Chinese men in the United States were family men without the presence of their wife or family members. Hence, not only did many of the early Chinese immigrants lead abnormal family lives, but one can hardly speak of Chinese family life during this period because there were so few Chinese women (Kingston, 1981; Lyman, 1968; Nee & Nee, 1972; Siu, 1952; Weiss, 1974; M. G. Wong, 1988, pp. 235–236). This bizarre family structure among the early Chinese immigrants has been referred to as the *mutilated family* (Sung, 1967) or *split household* (Glenn, 1983).

The Chinese American Family: 1920–1943

Despite the numerous obstacles to family formation (i.e., imbalanced sex ratio and exclusionary immigration legislation), which resulted in the predominance of the so-called mutilated family, by the 1920s and 1930s, a sizable second-generation Chinese population began to emerge. Many of these early Chinese families consisted of small-producer, immigrant entrepreneurs or former laborers and their first-generation American-born children.

The small-producer family functioned as a productive unit with all family members, including the children, working in the small family business, usually within the ethnic economy. Because of their superior knowledge of English compared to their immigrant parents, American-born Chinese children often played a critical role in carrying out the daily business and domestic affairs of the family (Kingston, 1976; Lowe, 1943; Nee & Nee, 1972; J. S. Wong, 1950). The business was profitable only because it was labor intensive and family members put in extremely long hours (Glenn, 1983; Mark & Chih, 1982, p. 66).

The Transitional Chinese Family: 1943–1965

The liberalization of immigration policies after World War II slowly led to the normalization and

formation of the Chinese families in the United States. It enabled many mutilated families, or split households, to be reunited and encouraged Chinese men to return to Hong Kong in droves to find wives (Kitano, 1991, p. 199).

The stranded Chinese who were displaced by the Chinese civil war in 1948 had family backgrounds strikingly different from the other Chinese in the United States. Well educated, usually with a college degree, their selection of a spouse was based more on individual preferences and love rather than the traditional reliance on or the decision of elders or matchmakers. These former students settled in the suburbs near the universities and research facilities where they ultimately found employment (Ikels, 1985).

In those Chinese families where both spouses were native born, the family pattern approximated the American norm consisting of the husband, wife, and children, and occasionally elderly parents. The parent-child relationship was somewhere between the strict formality of the traditional Chinese family and the high degree of permissiveness of the white American family (Sung, 1967, pp. 162, 176).

The Modern Chinese American Family: 1965–Present

The 1965 Immigration Act had a profound influence on the family life of the Chinese in America. Not only was there a dramatic increase in the Chinese immigrant population, but also most of the new Chinese immigrants were coming over as family units, typically a husband, wife, and unmarried children (Hong, 1976).

The modern Chinese American family can be classified into five major types: old immigrant families, professional immigrant families, American-born Chinese families, new working-class immigrant families (Glenn & Yap, 1998), and biracial/bicultural Chinese families.

The *old immigrant families* consist of the aging segment of the small producer or split household in the United States. Immigrating before 1965, the fathers most likely started out as laborers but were

able to save enough money to own their own business such as a small mom-and-pop grocery store or restaurants. Most are still connected to Chinatown and speak the same Toisan dialect (Glenn & Yap, 1998; E. F. Wong, 1985).

Scholar-professionals constitute the second type of Chinese family—the *professional immigrant family*. The parents of these families were either international students who arrived in the 1940s and 1950s shortly after the Communist takeover of China or those who entered after passage of the 1965 Immigration and Naturalization Act. These families tend to live in the city or in white suburbs, and to be employed not in the ethnic community but in the greater society. Although originally nuclear in structure, the opening up of relations between the United States and China resulted in many families sponsoring their parents for immigration to the United States. As a consequence, an extended family form is developing among this family type (Glenn & Yap, 1998).

The *Chinese American family* constitutes the third family type. It was not until 1940 that the majority of Chinese in the United States were native born. However, due to the increased immigration of Chinese since 1965, the American-born Chinese population represents a significant minority of the Chinese population. Because of differences in the timing of immigration to the United States, there is considerable diversity among this population, ranging from fourth- and fifth-generation American-born Chinese, descendants from the nineteenth-century pioneers, to first-generation children of postwar immigrants. This population tends to be college educated and to be able to find jobs in the general economy, usually commensurate with their high educational achievements. Their housing is usually consistent with their relatively high occupational status and income—in the predominantly white, middle-class neighborhoods and suburbs (Glenn & Yap, 1998, Kuo, 1970; Kwong, 1987; Yuan, 1966). These acculturated Chinese families are more modern and cosmopolitan in orientation and view themselves as more American than Chinese (Huang, 1981; Weiss, 1970, 1974). However, there is a

tendency for these Chinese to be *semi-extended*, or to re-establish a Chinese community in the suburbs (Huang, 1981, p. 123; Lyman, 1974, p. 149).

Not all Chinese families are American born or middle class. A large segment of the population is working class. They have been referred to as the “ghetto” (Huang, 1981), “dual worker” (Glenn, 1983), or the “downtown” (Kwong, 1987) family. Many of these *new working-class immigrant Chinese families* live in or near the Chinatowns in the major metropolitan areas of this country. Because of a lack of facility with the English language and/or the lack of transference of credentials from their country of origin, many experience downward mobility. Both husband and wife are employed in the secondary labor market or enclave economy, in the labor-intensive, low-capital service and small manufacturing sectors, such as the tourist shops, restaurants, and garment sweatshops (Light & Wong, 1975; M. G. Wong, 1980, 1983; Wong & Hirschman, 1983). Husbands and wives are, more or less, coequal breadwinners in the family. However, unlike the small-producer family, there tends to be a complete segregation of work and family life. Moreover, it is not uncommon for parents to spend very little time with each other or their children because of different jobs and schedules (M. G. Wong, 1988, p. 248).

One last Chinese family type is the *biracial/bicultural Chinese family*. Although the Chinese population is predominantly an immigrant population, it has been noted that there has been an increase in interracial marriages among the Chinese in the United States (M. G. Wong, 1989a), particularly among the U.S.-born population. Figure 4.3 presents data on the percentage of Chinese who are married by ethnicity/race of spouse by generation. Looking first at the total Chinese population, one notes that a large proportion of Chinese husbands and wives marry within their group. Chinese husbands (89%) are slightly more likely than Chinese wives (83%) to have Chinese spouses. Chinese husbands are slightly more likely to have spouses who are Asian (bicultural) and Chinese wives are much more likely to have spouses who are white (biracial) compared to

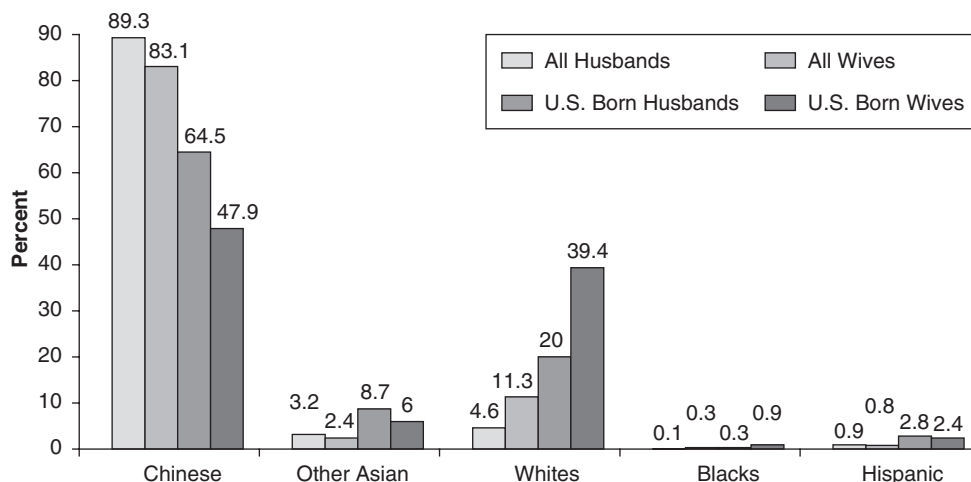


Figure 6.3 Chinese Who Are Married by Race of Spouse, 2000

SOURCE: Le, 2004a.

their Chinese counterparts. However, when one looks just at the U.S. born and/or 1.5 generation (those who have immigrated to the United States younger than 13 years), we find that the U.S.-born Chinese American population has a different marital pattern. They are much more likely to intermarry than the total Chinese population. Only 65% of Chinese husbands have wives who are Chinese and 48% of Chinese wives have Chinese husbands. This is significantly lower than the total Chinese population. U.S.-born Chinese are much more likely to intermarry both ethnically as well as racially than the total Chinese population. Interestingly, when U.S.-born Chinese intermarry, they are more likely to marry interracially with whites than persons of other Asian groups (interethnic) or other racial groups. About 20% of Chinese husbands and 40% of Chinese wives had white spouses.

The 2000 U.S. Census provides us with some insight into the ethnic or racial identity of the Chinese population. For the first time, individuals were able to designate as many racial or ethnic categories as they wished. As a consequence, one is able to ascertain one's racial/ethnic identity, whether it is singular or multiple. In 2000, there

were 2,870,636 individuals who identified themselves as Chinese. Of this group, about 85%, or 2,432,585 Chinese, identified themselves as Chinese only. This makes sense because a large proportion of Chinese are immigrants. Another 5%, or 144,922, identified themselves as part Chinese and part Asian, or bicultural. About 11%, or 302,129 individuals, identified themselves as biracial—Chinese and white, black, or Hispanic. As the U.S.-born population continues to increase, we should expect a continued increase in the number and proportion of Chinese who classify themselves as bicultural or biracial.

Figure 5.4 looks at the marital status of the white and Chinese population 15 years and older by sex in 2000. In general, the total Chinese population as well as Chinese males and females are slightly more likely to have never married and much less likely to be separated, widowed, or divorced compared to their white counterparts. About 55–60% of the white and Chinese populations are currently married. Chinese males are more like to have never married and less likely to be separated, widowed, or divorced compared to Chinese females. Analyses in chapter 4 found that the average size of the Chinese family and the

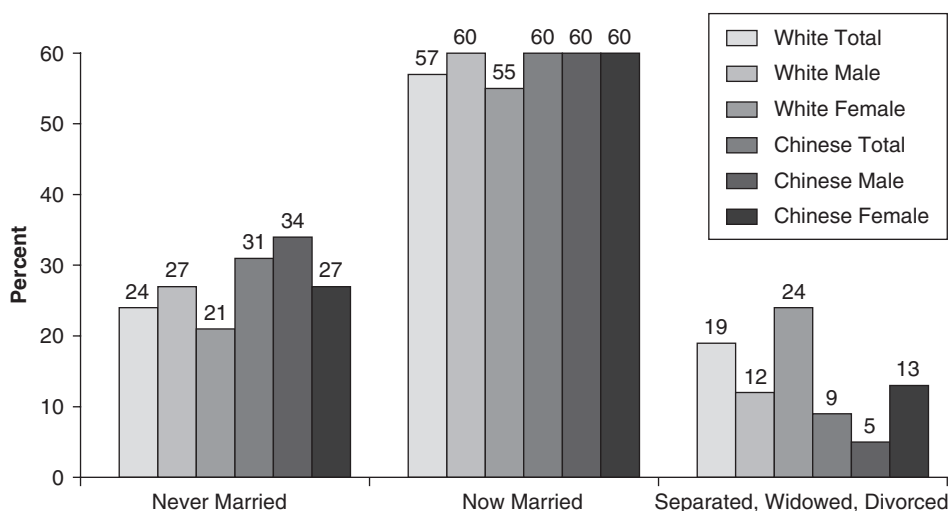


Figure 6.4 Marital Status of the White and Chinese Population, 2000

SOURCE: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2003b, 2003d, 2003e.

percentage in multigenerational families are slightly higher than white families.

EDUCATION

There is no question that the educational achievements of Chinese Americans have been spectacular, far surpassing the educational achievements of whites. The influence of Confucian teaching that promoted family unity, respect for elders and those in authority, industry, a high value on education, and personal discipline may have been the main cause of Chinese Americans' excellence in education (Hsu, 1971; McGrath, 1983; Sung, 1967). Or structural conditions, such as discrimination and selective migration, may have favored the educational progress of Chinese Americans (Hirschman & Wong, 1986).

In 2000, although a much greater proportion of whites than Chinese, 25–64 years, had completed high school, the Chinese population had higher educational achievements at the higher levels of education. The Chinese (52%) were much more likely than whites (29%) to have one or more college degrees. This was particularly true for the native-born Chinese, with 66% of them having a

college degree. Even more dramatic is that the Chinese, regardless of nativity status, were about two and a half times more likely to have a post-graduate or professional degree than the white population—25–26% compared to 10%. The extraordinary educational achievements of Asians have gained the attention of the American public and mass media (Bell, 1985; Brand, 1987; Butterfield, 1986; Divoky, 1988; Doerner, 1985; Lee & Rong, 1988; Shin, 1988; “What Puts the Whiz in Whiz Kids,” 1988; Williams & McDonald, 1987).

The foreign-born Chinese show a higher level of polarization in education than white Americans. Eighteen percent of the foreign-born Chinese did not complete high school compared to 10% of white Americans. Excluding Taiwanese immigrants, 21% of the foreign-born Chinese did not complete high school, while 49% attained a college degree. The class polarization of the foreign-born Chinese largely reflects the patterns of contemporary Chinese immigration. Large numbers of highly educated immigrants have originated from the People's Republic of China and Taiwan over the last 30 years. They include many foreign students from China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan who have changed their status to that of permanent residents after

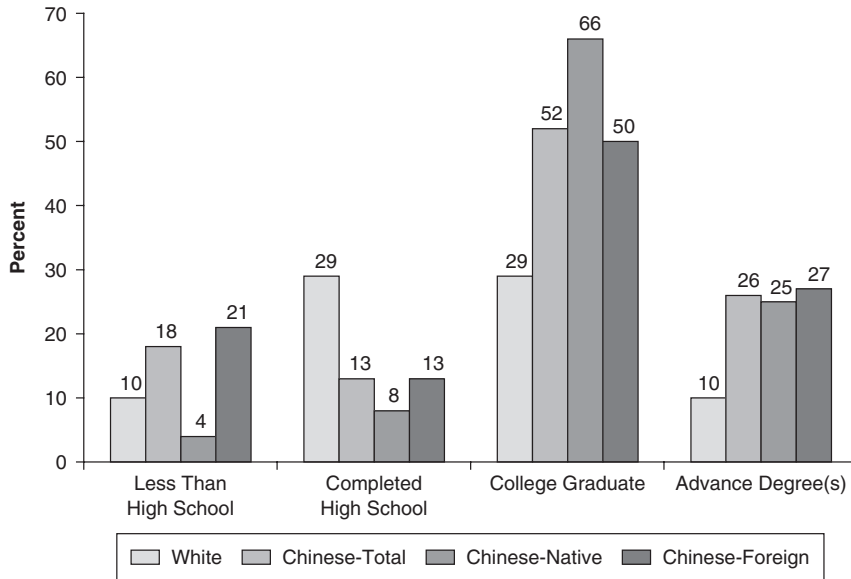


Figure 6.5 Educational Achievement of the White and Asian Population in the United States, 2000

SOURCE: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2003d.

completion of their graduate education in the United States. Taiwanese immigrants in particular are characterized by an exceptionally high educational level, with nearly 80% of Taiwanese men immigrants holding a college degree and 15% a Ph.D. in 2000. However, as previously indicated, many lower-class people have also emigrated from Fujian and other parts of the People's Republic of China. About 29% of the foreign-born Chinese stated that they did not speak English well or not at all compared to only 8% of the white population. The Chinese immigrant community is increasingly becoming two separate communities: one educated and relatively affluent, the other largely uneducated and distinctly nonaffluent.

But U.S. historical censuses also show that the earlier Chinese immigrants had achieved an extraordinary educational mobility by 1930. In 1910, the proportion of Chinese children attending school was significantly below the comparable enrollment figure for white children. However, by 1930, Chinese American children were more likely to be attending school than their white counterparts. Given the continued racism against Asians during

this period, especially on the West Coast (Daniels, 1970; Nee & Nee, 1972), these educational achievements were remarkable. As Chinese Americans encountered a moderate amount of economic success in the postwar era, their educational attainments shot up to record levels. Regardless of the measure, Chinese had levels of education equal to or even higher than whites by 1960, and the advantage continues to widen (Hirschman & Wong, 1981, 1986; M. G. Wong, 1980, 1990).

Negative Factors in the Education of Chinese Students

The high educational achievements of Chinese students are not without cost. The pressure to achieve educationally and to conform to the model minority stereotype has placed an inordinate amount of pressure on Chinese students. The lack of superior academic performance by Chinese students sometimes leads to feelings of guilt that they are personally failing or not living up to parental expectations. This pressure may lead to the use of drugs, mental problems, and/or suicide.

Each year, there are reports from colleges and universities on the West Coast of suicides or attempted suicides by Chinese students (Caudill, 1952; DeVos, 1960; Fischer, 1988; Kitano, 1991, pp. 200–201; M. G. Wong, 1990).

A related problem is the strategy for educational achievement used by many Chinese students, particularly the foreign born. Despite their lack of facility with the English language, many Chinese immigrant students are able to gain entrance to colleges, universities, graduate, or professional schools through a *risk-averse strategy* (Hsia, 1988). For Chinese junior high and high school students, this strategy usually entails an overconcentration in advanced courses in sciences and mathematics and a minimal concentration of English courses. The short-term benefit of this strategy is that their grade point averages go up and their scores on the quantitative section of college entrance examinations are, on the average, higher than white students, which allows them admission into colleges and universities. Sakamoto and Xie in chapter 4 of this volume report that on national aptitude examinations, although the verbal scores for Chinese were similar to whites, the math scores of the Chinese were significantly (three times) higher than whites. When in college, the same risk-averse strategy is employed. By concentrating in such fields as business, mathematics, science, and engineering, the Chinese student is able to gain entrance into graduate or professional schools. Although such a strategy may allow many Chinese students to achieve short-term goals (i.e., entrance into college, graduate, or professional school), their long-term goals may be severely curtailed. Their lack of facility with the English language, whether written and/or oral communication skills, may place an insurmountable barrier to their future socioeconomic and career placement (M. G. Wong, 1990).

Lastly, the recent accusations of unequal treatment, insensitivity, racism, biases in the college entrance examinations, differential admission criteria, and quotas against the Chinese in higher education call into question the sacred belief of equality of educational opportunity.

ECONOMIC AND OCCUPATIONAL ADJUSTMENTS

Since their arrival to the United States in the 1850s, the Chinese have undergone three main periods of wide-scale occupational adjustments. In the first period, a large number of Chinese worked in the mines, on the railroads, and in agriculture. During the second period of isolation, many of the Chinese became self-employed serving their own ethnic community or specializing in occupations that were not competitive with whites. The last period is marked by tremendous socioeconomic advancement. This section will look more closely at these three periods of occupational adjustments.

Early Occupational Adjustments: 1850–1882

Before their arrival to the United States, the perceptions and stereotypes of the Chinese by the American public were negative (Issacs, 1972).

A Chinaman is cold, cunning and distrustful; always ready to take advantage of those he has to deal with; extremely covetous and deceitful; quarrelsome, vindictive, but timid and dastardly. A Chinaman in office is a strange compound of insolence and meanness. All ranks and conditions have a total disregard for truth. (Miller, 1969, p. 83)

In spite of these stereotypes, they were initially welcomed to the United States. Inflation as a result of the gold strikes coupled with the shortage of women in the West enabled the Chinese to find a temporary economic niche. Supplementing rather than competing with whites, they performed jobs such as washing clothes or cooking—jobs considered “women’s work.” However, once they began to compete with white workers, the flames of anti-Chinese agitation became widespread and grew in intensity.

In the early 1850s, the Chinese began to head for the hills in search of gold, mining claims that other miners had abandoned. The meager profits that the Chinese were able to salvage from these

abandoned claims created a sense of increased competition for scarce resources and jealousy among the white miners. Legal and extralegal means were sought to force the Chinese out of mining. A Foreign Miner's Tax was passed in 1852 and many mining districts passed resolutions or ordinances to expel the Chinese from their district (Chinn et al., 1969, pp. 30–32). During the last half of the 1850s, the Chinese were physically expelled from one mining camp after another. Many were robbed and beaten and some were murdered. These crimes were seldom punished because of the laxity of law enforcement and a California Supreme Court ruling in 1854 that stated that no Chinese could testify against a white person. Their supposed threat to American labor became an early issue in the developing hostility (Cheng & Bonacich, 1984).

After the initial gold rush, many Chinese turned to service industries, such as the laundry or restaurant trade, or entered small-scale manufacturing of such items as brooms and sandals. However, even in these occupations, the Chinese were not safe from violence. Notes one Chinese old-timer,

Every Saturday night, we never knew whether we would live to see the light of day. We operated a laundry near a mining camp. Saturday was the night for the miners to get drunk. They would force their way into our shop, wrest the clean white bundles from the shelves and trample the shirts, which we so laboriously finished. If the shirts were torn, we were forced to pay for the damages. One night, one of the miners hit his face against the flat side of an iron. He went away, but we knew that our lives were now in danger so we fled, leaving all of our possessions and money behind. The miner came back with a mob that ransacked our shop, robbed us of the \$360 that was our combined savings and set fire to the laundry. We were lucky to escape with our lives. (Sung, 1971, pp. 44–45)

Some 12,000 Chinese laborers provided the majority of the labor force for the construction of the Central Pacific end of the transcontinental

railroad during the 1860s (Sung, 1971, pp. 29–36). Oscar Lewis (1938) provides us with a glimpse into the lives of these Chinese railroad workers.

Throughout the summer of 1866, "Crocker's pets," six thousand strong, swarmed over the upper canyon, pecking methodically at the broken rock of the cuts, trooping in long lines beneath their basket hats to pour wheelbarrow-loads of debris down the canyon-side, treading precarious paths with seventy bamboo poles, refreshing themselves at intervals with sips of tea kept near at hand in whiskey kegs emptied and abandoned by their white confreres. The Chinese were presently found to be adept at the back-breaking work of drilling and placing blasts, by then a major part of the work, for the upper ridges were scraped clear of soil by the winter deposits of ice.

Track-layers followed close behind the graders, and locomotives pushed strings of flat-cars loaded with construction iron, lumber, explosives, food, drink and more men to the rail-head. Cape Horn, a sheer granite buttress, proved the most formidable obstacle of the year; its lower sides dropped away in a thousand-foot vertical cliff that offered no vestige of a foothold. The indomitable Chinese were lowered from above on ropes, and there suspended between sky and earth, chipped away with hammer and chisel to form the first precarious ledge which was then laboriously deepened to a shelf wide enough to permit the passage of cars. Three years later, when overland trains crept cautiously along this ledge, passengers gazed straight down from their windows into thin air. (Lewis, 1938, pp. 74–75)

With the driving of the golden spike at Promontory Point, Utah, marking the completion of the railroad in 1869, the Chinese turned to other railroad construction projects in the West. The Northern Pacific employed about 14,000 Chinese, and the Southern Pacific's lines, especially in California, were built almost entirely by Chinese labor (Kwong, 1979). During the next 9 years, they laid more than 1,800 miles of track in California (Chiu, 1963, p. 26) as well as in other states (M. G. Wong, 1994).

California farmers primarily relied on casual, seasonal harvest labor and not permanent workers, a pattern that has continued to the present. In the 1870s, the Chinese supplied much of this cheap, unattached labor. By 1880, seasonal farm work was the third-largest Chinese occupation in California, surpassed only by mining and domestic service (Melendy, 1984, p. 49).

In addition to the Chinese contribution to agriculture, tribute is due them for their reclamation work. Thousands were employed in the reclamation of the land upon which much of San Francisco rests (Sung, 1971, pp. 29–36). Moreover, the California Delta of the Sacramento and San Joaquin Rivers were made productive by the levees, drainage ditches, and irrigation systems that were built by Chinese labor (Chiu, 1963, p. 72).

Although excluded from salmon fishing by restrictive legislation by 1880, the Chinese were active in the fishing of sturgeon, shrimp, and abalone (Sung, 1971, pp. 42–57). By 1897, 26 Chinese shrimp camps dotted the shores of the San Francisco Bay (Kim, 1978, p. 3; Melendy, 1984, pp. 52–53; Spier, 1958, pp. 79–81, 128–136).

The Chinese were a dominant force in the cigar industry and played a significant role in the woolen mills. The shift in the clothing industry from home work to a routinized factory system enabled the Chinese to quickly dominate the manufacturing of ready-made clothes. They also provided the essential labor for the San Francisco boot, shoe, and slipper industries (Chiu, 1963, pp. 89–108, 119–128; Chinn et al., 1969, pp. 49–55).

Shifting Occupational Patterns: 1882–1945

The intense racial antagonism against the Chinese culminated in the passage of the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, forcing the Chinese to insulate themselves in Chinatowns, where they involved themselves in occupations that were either geared toward serving their own ethnic community or rejected by or noncompetitive with whites. It is at this time that a major shift in Chinese employment patterns occurred—from urban labor to self-employment in urban service

occupations such as laundries, restaurants, and grocery stores (Chan, 1984, p. 67, 1986; C. C. Wong, 1980). The *New York Illustrated News* (1853, p. 359) described the unique adaptation the Chinese made to the laundry business.

What a truly industrious people they are! At work, cheerfully and briskly at ten o'clock at night. Huge piles of linens and underclothing, disposed in baskets about the room, near the different ironers. Those at work dampening and ironing—peculiar processes both. A bowl of water is standing by the ironer's side, as in ordinary laundries, but used very differently. Instead of dipping the fingers in the water and then snapping them over dry clothes, the operator puts his head in the bowl, fills his mouth with water, and then blows so that water comes from his mouth in a mist, resembling the emission of steam from an escape pipe, at the same time so directing his head that this mist is scattered all over the place he is about to iron. He then seizes his flat iron. It is a vessel resembling a small deep metallic washbasin having a highly polished flat bottom and a fire kept burning continually in it. Thus, they keep the iron hot without running to the fire every five minutes and spitting on the iron to ascertain whether it is still hot.

With Chinese already excluded from entering the country, various ordinances were passed to exclude those Chinese residing in the United States from making a living. A laundry ordinance was passed in San Francisco whereby each laundry employing one horse-drawn wagon was required to pay a \$2 per quarter fee; for those with two wagons, the fee was \$4 per quarter, and those using no wagons paid \$15 per quarter. The Chinese were the only laundry persons who picked up and delivered by foot. This ordinance was subsequently ruled unconstitutional (Melendy, 1984, p. 35). San Francisco prohibited the hiring of Chinese on municipal works and banned the use of Chinese carrying poles for peddling vegetables (J. Chen, 1980, pp. 137–138). In 1880, San Francisco passed the Anti-Ironing Ordinance aimed at shutting down Chinese nighttime laundries (J. Chen, 1980, p. 138; Ong, 1981; C. C. Wong, 1980).

In 1900, almost 7 out of every 10 Chinese were involved in agriculture or in domestic and personal services. The stereotypical occupation of Chinese laundries already employed a quarter of all Chinese men at the turn of the century. Over the next three decades, the proportion of Chinese in agriculture (mostly farm laborers), mining, and manufacturing declined sharply. At the same time, there were corresponding increases in trade and especially in domestic and personal services. Within this last category, the percentage of laundry workers remained at 25%, whereas the percentages of Chinese working as servants and waiters increased to 21% and 10%, respectively (Hirschman & Wong, 1986).

Occupational Patterns: 1945–1990

Between 1940 and 1990, the socioeconomic status of the Chinese in the United States underwent significant changes and improvement. During this period, the American economy was continually expanding, providing economic opportunities for mobility not only for the general population, but also for the Chinese. It is during this period—in the mid-1960s—that the stereotype of the Chinese as a model minority began to gain popularity among the mass media.

Several patterns began to emerge during this period of time, some of which continue to the present. There was a decline of Chinese involved in manual occupations. There was an increase in the proportion of Chinese employed in nonmanual occupations, particularly the professions. In 1970, both native-born and foreign-born Chinese had more than half of their respective populations in nonmanual occupations. Interestingly, the proportion of Chinese involved in professional occupations was double that of whites! The Chinese also had a higher median family income than whites (M. G. Wong, 1980).

In 1990, a greater proportion of native-born Chinese were involved in nonmanual occupations than whites. Moreover, native-born Chinese were almost twice as likely as whites to be involved in the professions (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2003e).

A different occupational pattern is evident for foreign-born Chinese. They exhibited a bipolar or bimodal occupational structure, or the clustering of workers in both high-paying professional occupations and low-paying dead-end service jobs, with relatively few in between (W. L. Li, 1982, pp. 318–319; Sung, 1977, pp. 66–89; M. G. Wong, 1980). Hence, foreign-born Chinese were not only more likely than whites to be involved in the professions, but they were also more likely to be involved in service occupations, such as waiting tables, clearing tables, and washing dishes (Hirschman & Wong, 1981; U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1993b, Table 4).

Why did these occupational patterns emerge among the Chinese during this period of time? Three possible factors may help explain the rise in socioeconomic status among the Chinese in the United States. The first factor is World War II. It was not until the United States became directly involved in World War II that the Chinese in the United States began to experience an accelerated upward trend in occupational status. That China was an ally of the United States and the acute labor shortage of manpower in the domestic scene due to the war created advantageous employment opportunities for the Chinese in the United States. Industries that in the past had seldom hired Chinese (i.e., shipyards and aircraft) began to show an interest in employing Chinese engineers, technicians, workers, and even clerks. Other industries began to follow suit by hiring Chinese to ease their personnel shortages. This lessening of job discrimination led to greater social and occupational mobility of the Chinese in the United States (M. G. Wong, 1980).

The occupational employment and mobility of the Chinese during this period of time would not have been possible if not for the passage of federal legislation in 1943 that provided the opportunity for the Chinese to become United States citizens. Previous to this period, the Chinese were considered “aliens ineligible for citizenship,” and, as a consequence, could not become naturalized citizens, regardless of how long they had resided in the United States. Naturalization gave the Chinese the right to participate in those professional and

commercial activities hitherto denied to them as aliens ineligible for citizenship. Because almost all licensed or certified professions require United States citizenship, eligibility for naturalization was of great importance for the socioeconomic advancement of the Chinese (M. G. Wong, 1980).

Lastly, passage of the 1965 Immigration Act allowed the Chinese to immigrate to the United States in large numbers. Although many of these immigrants were professionals and highly educated, many others were uneducated with a lack of facility with the English language and few transferable skills. As a consequence, a large segment of this population was destined to swell the ranks of the service industry of the Chinatown economy.

Present Socioeconomic Distribution

The Chinese in the United States have been quite successful and, on some socioeconomic

indicators, perhaps even more successful than whites. In 2000, native- and foreign-born Chinese were more likely than whites to be involved in white-collar occupations, particularly in high-skilled or status occupations such as the professions. About 34% of the Chinese held professional occupations compared to 22% of the white population. Even more remarkable is that almost 40% of native-born Chinese were professionals.

The Chinese (18%) are about as likely to be involved in managerial/business positions as whites (16%). Native-born Chinese (22%) are slightly more involved in this occupation than their foreign-born counterparts (17%).

However, many Chinese, particularly the foreign born, are still involved in low-paying service jobs such as waiting tables, washing dishes, and other petty service jobs in hotels, restaurants, and other entertainment activities in the ethnic economy (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1993a, 1993b).

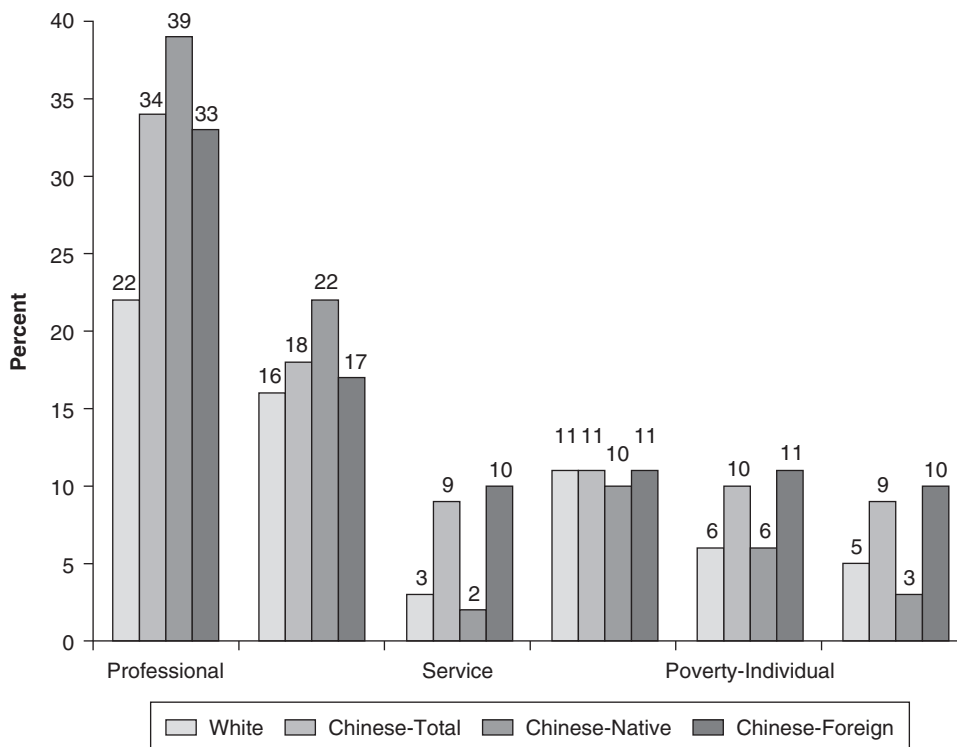


Figure 6.6 Selected Socioeconomic Characteristics of the White and Chinese Population, 2000

SOURCE: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2003e.

Whereas in 2000, only 3% of the white population were involved in food services, about 9% of the Chinese population (10% of the foreign-born Chinese) were involved in this occupational service sector. Only a small proportion of native-born Chinese were involved in food services.

Although foreign-born Chinese earn about the same amount as whites—\$35,000 in 2000, full-time Chinese workers (\$36,900) in general have median earnings about \$2,000 higher than their white counterparts. This earnings advantage is due to the much higher median earnings of the native-born Chinese (\$46,000).

Even more dramatic is that the Chinese, regardless of nativity status, have significantly higher median household and family incomes than the white population. In 2000, the median income for Chinese was \$60,000 (\$72,000 for native-born Chinese and \$57,400 for foreign-born Chinese) compared to \$53,400 for the white population. Even more interesting is that the median family income for Chinese was \$4,530 more than that for whites (\$60,000). Foreign-born Chinese had median family incomes very similar to whites—\$60,720 and \$60,000, respectively, but the native-born Chinese had median family incomes averaging \$29,000 more than the white population, or about \$89,000 in 2000!

One historical distinguishing characteristic of the Chinese in the United States was their much greater involvement in small businesses than other Americans (Hirschman & Wong, 1981; Kim, Hurh, & Fernandez, 1989). Most of these Chinese enterprises were small, family-operated mom-and-pop grocery stores or restaurants that involved several or all members of the family, or small garment factories that subcontracted from major manufacturers. Because labor costs were minimal and relatively small amounts of capital were needed, many immigrants found readily available opportunities in small enterprises. Moreover, owning a small business of one's own provided the immigrant with some sense of financial security and independence, and was viewed as a channel of social mobility, especially if opportunities for advancement within the mainstream sector of the economy were difficult due to a lack of facility of

the English language. However, more recently, in 2000, Chinese (11.3%) were just as likely as whites (11.5%) to be self-employed, or be an unpaid employee.

Chapter 4 presents a detailed description of the labor market characteristics of the Chinese population by gender. Chinese males and females, regardless of nativity status, are more likely to be involved in the professions and have higher earnings than their white counterparts. They also are very similar in their involvement in managerial positions and self-employment. Native-born Chinese males and females seem to earn slightly more per hour than their white counterparts.

Despite the high proportion of Chinese in the professions, there is an absence of Chinese in executive, supervisory, or decision-making positions (Sue, Zane, & Sue, 1985). Moreover, when education and occupation are taken into account, Chinese Americans are actually receiving less than comparably qualified whites (Hirschman & Wong, 1984; Jiobu, 1976; U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 1988; M. G. Wong, 1982). Charges of a glass ceiling continue. Although referring to Asian Americans in general, the following statements could easily apply specifically to the Chinese.

I am of the opinion that most Asian Americans are facing an insurmountable glass wall in the corporate world. As a matter of fact, most of us have given up hoping of advancing up the corporate ladder. The more we think about it, the more frustrated, discouraged, and depressed we become. . . .

Most of us have proved our technical capability. However, many major corporations tend to overlook the non-technical side of many Asian Americans. Corporations pick pigeonholes for us. And what is worse, they believe that we are quite content staying in those technologically airtight pigeonholes. (Liauh, 1989)

One last indicator of socioeconomic well-being (or lack of it) is poverty status. Poverty status can be viewed at two levels—individual and family. At the individual level, the white population is less likely to be in poverty than the Chinese (6% versus 10%).

However, much of the difference is due to the much higher poverty rates of the foreign-born Chinese.

Similar findings were noted for the family poverty rates of whites and Chinese. The poverty rate for white families of 5.2% was much lower than that for Chinese families (9.0%). Again, much of this difference can be accounted for by the high family poverty rates of the foreign-born Chinese. The family poverty rate for native-born Chinese (3.2%) was much lower than the poverty rate for foreign-born Chinese (9.7%).

In sum, there are some conflicting and seemingly contradictory findings regarding the socio-economic status of the Chinese in the United States. On some indicators, they seem advantaged (high rates of professionals), and on other indicators, they are disadvantaged (higher involvement in service occupations and higher rates of individual and family poverty compared to whites). However, closer scrutiny of the data suggests that nativity status (i.e., foreign-born status) plays a major role in accounting for these findings.

CHINATOWNS

The residential concentration of Chinese in various cities, states, and regions has not changed much. California still remains, by far, the major state of Chinese residence. About 40% of the Chinese (alone) population resides in California. New York was a distant second with about 18% of the Chinese (alone) residing in this state. Over half

of the Chinese population in the United States resides in these two states. The West Coast still remains a major region of residence for the Chinese. In 2000, six states had 75,000 or more Chinese (alone) residents. These six states accounted for about three fourths of the Chinese population in the United States in 2000.

An enumeration of the metropolitan concentrations of the Chinese (total) in the United States finds that there were 15 cities with over 20,000 Chinese residents in 2000. New York City had the largest number of Chinese with 364,000. Nine of the 15 cities were in California, with San Francisco topping the list in California with 161,000. These 14 cities account for about 35% of the Chinese population residing in the United States.

Fifteen Primary Metropolitan Statistical Areas (PMSAs) have 35,000 or more Chinese residents, with New York PMSA topping the list, followed by Los Angeles-Long Beach PMSA and San Francisco PMSA. These 15 PMSAs account for about half of the Chinese population in the United States.

Another way to look at the residential concentration of the Chinese is by the Chinese percentage of the city or borough's population. There were 14 cities, all in California, in which the Chinese population was greater than 20% of the city's population. Interestingly, the Chinese made up over 40% of the population in two cities—Monterey Park and San Marino, California. They made up over 30% of the city's population in eight other cities, all located in the San Gabriel Valley of southern California.

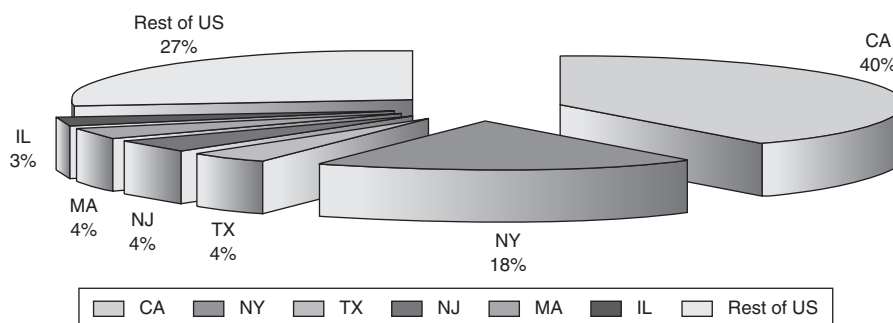


Figure 6.7 States With 75,000 or More Chinese (Alone), 2000

SOURCE: Chinese American Data Center, 2003a.

Table 6.2 Chinese (Total) Population by City or Borough or Primary Metropolitan Statistical Area (PSMA), 2000

<i>City/Borough With More Than 20,000 Chinese</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>PSMA With More Than 35,000 Chinese</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>City/Borough</i>	<i>%</i>
San Francisco, CA	160,947	New York, NY	386,313	Monterey Park, CA	44.6
Queens, NY	147,037	Los Angeles-Long Beach, CA	334,764	San Marino city, CA	44.2
Brooklyn, NY	125,358	San Francisco, CA	218,469	Arcadia, CA	37.1
Manhattan, NY	91,588	Oakland, CA	152,439	San Gabriel, CA	36.6
Los Angeles, CA	73,868	Honolulu, HI	135,464	Alhambra, CA	36.2
Honolulu, HI	68,849	San Jose, CA	122,790	Rosemead, CA	32.6
San Jose, CA	57,974	Boston, MA-NH	74,744	Rowland Heights, CA	32.4
Chicago, IL	34,370	Chicago, IL	72,512	Walnut city, CA	32.0
Oakland, CA	34,253	Washington, DC-MD-VA-WV	68,227	East San Gabriel, CA	31.2
Fremont, CA	31,517	Orange County, CA	61,174	Temple City, CA	30.8
Alhambra, CA	31,099	Seattle-Bellevue-Everett, WA	56,111	Hacienda Heights, CA	25.5
San Diego, CA	27,809	Houston, TX	48,294	Cupertino, CA	25.3
Monterey Park, CA	26,810	Philadelphia, PA-NJ	41,940	San Francisco, CA	20.7
Houston, TX	26,541	Sacramento, CA	37,818	Diamond Bar, CA	20.2
Seattle, WA	22,860	San Diego, CA	36,660		
Sacramento, CA	21,618				
Boston, MA	20,800				
Total	1,003,298	Total	1,461,406		
Percentage of Chinese Population	34.8	Percentage of Chinese Population	50.7		

SOURCE: Chinese American Data Center, 2003b, 2003c.

It is almost axiomatic that where there is a significant Chinese population, a Chinatown can also be found close by. While most people are aware of the Chinatowns in San Francisco, Los Angeles, and New York, it should be noted that there are many Chinatowns located in other major cities such as Boston, Chicago, and Houston, as well as in an increasing number of satellite locations in the suburbs with significant Chinese populations, especially in southern California, such as Monterey Park and the cities of the San Gabriel Valley, and the boroughs of New York. In 1990, about 43% of the Chinese living in the metropolitan areas lived in the suburbs. By 2000, this proportion had increased to 50% (Logan, 2001).

Chinatowns were formed in the later part of the nineteenth century—first in the major areas of Chinese concentration on the West Coast (San Francisco, Los Angeles, and Sacramento), and then on the East Coast (New York, Boston, Philadelphia, and Chicago). Protection from the discrimination and racism of the greater society was the major impetus for the Chinese segregating themselves in Chinatowns. This segregation was also maintained by the exclusion of the Chinese from the larger labor market and by housing discrimination (Yuan, 1963). To a certain degree, the caricature of Chinatown as a society unto itself, with its own system of government, organizational structure, and means of social control was partly true. It is

also true that Chinatowns are a continually evolving social structure that is greatly influenced by internal as well as external factors and relationships with the greater society.

Historical Chinatown Social Structure

The organizational structure of Chinatown had its foundation from traditional China. Chief among such organizations or associations are the clans, the benevolent associations, and the secret societies.

The clans, or *tsu*, are organized along kinship ties and consist of families with common ancestors and those sharing a family name, even if a blood relationship was absent. In the past, the clans provided mutual assistance, a function increasingly taken on by government agencies.

The benevolent associations, or *hui kuan*, are based on the person's district of origin in China. Besides extending assistance to newcomers, the *hui kuan* provided loans and settled disputes among their members. They exercised considerable control over their members.

The associations in the United States were eventually governed by an umbrella group, the Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association (CCBA), popularly known as the Chinese Six Companies, in San Francisco. The Chinese Six Companies had benevolent and protective functions. Its agents met incoming ships, arranged for the initial housing and employment of migrants, organized medical treatment for the sick, arbitrated disputes between individual members, and performed other welfare functions.

They gave me a lot of help. I celebrated festivals and all the Chinese holidays with my Tung Heung Hing Dai (brothers of the same village in China) in my family name association. Before my wife and children joined me here, my family name association was my family. Some of the members, in fact, assisted me when I started my own firm. (B. Wong, 1982, pp. 31–32)

Serving as the community's voice to the greater society, the Chinese Six Companies also came to

exert a very high degree of social control over the lives of the early Chinese settlers.

A third form of social organization that developed in Chinatowns was the secret societies or *tongs*. Some *tong* leaders gained respectability among the establishment, but others were involved in criminal or illegal services such as gambling, drugs, and prostitution, which were prevalent in any sizable Chinese American community. The infamous "*tong wars*" during the 1890s were a result of competition among *tongs* for scarce commodities—narcotics and Chinese women (Dillon, 1962; Light, 1977).

The Chinese just fought each other on the streets. One group of Chinese Tong members on one side of the street fired their pistols at the rival Tong members on the other side of the street in broad daylight. All the pedestrians, Chinese or non-Chinese, had to seek shelter in the stores nearby. Ordinary Chinatown residents were fearful of the Tong Wars. They normally would close their shops and stay at home upon hearing any rumors about any possible outbreak of Tong Wars in Chinatown. Only the members of the rival Tongs were killing each other. It is a sad story. Chinese kill Chinese. What a shame! (B. Wong, 1982, p. 31)

All three types of Chinese organizations performed similar functions, providing mutual assistance and representing their members' interests to a sometimes hostile dominant group. As a consequence, conflicts among them were inevitable. Such conflicts were very violent in the nineteenth century, but in the twentieth century, they were political in nature. Although the old associations have declined in significance, their power and influence within the Chinatown community, especially among the foreign born, is still considerable. Nonetheless, notes one observer,

The CCBA is clearly not representative of the community, nor is it a mediating force among associations. It is a body created by the largest associations; it is arbitrary and non-democratic, and it exists to enable a self-appointed elite to maintain control of Chinatown (Kwong, 1987, p. 92)

Chinatown as a Social Problem or a Social Resource

There are two different sociological viewpoints regarding the economic and social conditions that exist in the Chinatowns of the United States. The first, and probably most common, perspective views Chinatown as a place where the vast majority of residents are exploited by a small business elite or by the greater society. The second perspective views Chinatown as an immigrant enclave that provides the immigrants with economic opportunities that aid in their adjustment to mainstream society. Let us look at the arguments for each of these differing viewpoints.

Much research has proposed that economic survival of Chinatown is dependent on the tourist industry—a dependence that serves as a double-edged sword for the Chinatown residents (Light & Wong, 1975). On the one hand, because slums and violence do not attract tourists, the economic leaders of Chinatown wish to present to the general public an image of Chinatown as a law-abiding and safe place. On the other hand, the maintenance of this image also forces the business leaders to keep the problems of Chinatown quiet and hidden and not seek outside assistance or social welfare. Hence, tourists or casual observers see Chinatown as an area of thriving businesses; a community of exotic sounds, sights, and smells; and a place where one can partake of “real” Chinese cuisine. They do not see that behind this glittering facade is another Chinatown with the wide range of social ills and economic problems associated with other ethnic ghettos (Yoshioka & Dang, 2000).

Housing for many Chinese is old and substandard. Crime is on the increase and the gang problem is becoming increasingly worse (Chin, K., 1996; Postner, 1988). Language insulates many Chinese from the rest of society. Notes one insider,

Chinatown is a ghetto. People there are ignorant about the workings of American society. They don't understand the political system. The other day a senior citizen came here to ask me to help him get his social security check. Although he

had worked in this country for more than 40 years, he has never collected any money from social security since his retirement three years ago. (B. Wong, 1982, pp. 33–34)

Employment under sweatshop conditions is not unusual. Because of a lack of facility with the English language, a high proportion of immigrant men can find employment only in Chinese restaurants and an even higher proportion of Chinese women can find work only in the garment industry. The garment shops are notorious for long hours and meager compensation (Light & Wong, 1975; M. G. Wong, 1983; B. Wong, 1987). There is a lack of sufficient recreational, social welfare, and therapeutic resources in Chinatown. These problems have grown more critical as Chinese immigration has dramatically increased.

Loo (1992), in her study of the Chinese residents in San Francisco Chinatown, found that 81% are foreign born. Most of these immigrant Chinese are trapped in low-paying, dead-end jobs in the secondary labor market. About 95% of the residents that she interviewed believed that they could secure better employment if they were able to speak English, but few had much free time to learn English. She concludes that the larger community has long ignored these persistent problems and that the Chinatown community is very much in need of assistance.

Kwong (1987, 1997) presents a variant of this view, arguing that the Chinese suffer from two forms of oppression—racism of the larger society and the dominance in their own communities of an exploitative economic system, backed by a traditional, informal political order (Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association and *tongs*). Focusing on the latter form of oppression, Kwong documents how this exploitative economic and political system, structured by the capitalist need for an exploitable labor force, is intertwined in virtually every aspect of the lives of the Chinatown residents. As a result, a polarization in Chinatown between the large number of Chinese immigrant workers and the small Chinatown business elites has emerged. The Chinese immigrants are

doomed to perpetual employment in the dead-end jobs of the ethnic economy with wages set by the business elite well below the prevailing legal labor standards.

In the same vein, Lin (1998) describes New York Chinatown's economic development as consisting of two principle circuits. The lower circuit consists of sweatshops and tenements, which are characterized by low-wage jobs, unskilled labor, sidewalk vendors, and slum or overcrowded living conditions. The upper circuit consists of finance and redevelopment enterprises, which are characterized by high-skilled and professional service jobs, capital-intensive redevelopment, transnational businesses (such as banks), and modern tourism.

Ong (1984) points out that because of cyclical and seasonal fluctuations, Chinese laborers in Chinatowns, especially those involved in the restaurant, garment, or construction industry, have a much higher chance of being laid off from their jobs than even those involved in the secondary labor market.

A different position regarding the nature of work and economic and social conditions in Chinatown has been proposed by Zhou (1992). Using the enclave economy model, she argues that the Chinese are not exploited in low-paying jobs, but are, in fact, provided viable employment and business opportunities that they could not otherwise receive outside of Chinatown because of their lack of facility with the English language. These economic opportunities that are provided by the ethnic economy to these first-generation immigrant Chinese, in turn, allow them to get an economic foothold in American society. This plays a major role in facilitating and enhancing the Chinese immigrants' rapid social mobility and economic adaptation. This economic positioning of the immigrants greatly facilitates the rapid social mobility of future generations of Chinese Americans.

Recent Trends

Within the past two to three decades, there have been dramatic demographic, economic, and social

transformations occurring in the major Chinatowns and "Chinese suburbs" in the United States. First, there has been a change in the demographic characteristics of the new Chinese immigrants to the United States. Unlike in the past, when Chinese immigrants to the United States were predominately male laborers seeking their fortune and had an orientation as a sojourner, a temporary guest in a foreign country, the current immigrant stream consists of Chinese families, Chinese men and women and their children, who generally are much more highly educated and much more affluent than either their Chinese predecessors or their white counterparts. Their orientation toward America is marked by a long-term or permanent residential pattern.

Second, there has been a change in the origins of the new Chinese immigrants. Historically, the residents of Chinatown were predominantly from Canton Province in China. While today's Chinatowns are still dominated by the Cantonese culture, the non-Cantonese population (from Taiwan and the People's Republic of China) is rapidly growing and gaining acceptance. Mandarin is now spoken in Chinatown and is the most commonly used language in such newly established Chinatowns as the one in Flushing, New York, and Monterey Park (Zhou, 1992). Recent Chinese immigrants come from three major places of emigration: the People's Republic of China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan. Many of the Chinese immigrants from the People's Republic of China, especially from the rural areas, tend to be relatively poor, with little education, very little English competency, and very few occupational skills. The Hong Kong Chinese are very different from the Chinese from the People's Republic of China. They tend to be urban with a western style of living and a capitalist orientation, have some facility with the English language, have work skills that are easily transferable to the United States, and be much better off economically. The Chinese immigrants from Taiwan, like those from Hong Kong, are affluent, well educated, and skilled, but speak Mandarin and a Fukien dialect, not Cantonese. As a consequence, they tend to stay away from the Cantonese-dominated old

Chinatowns, instead establishing their own satellite Chinese communities, such as those in Flushing, New York, and Monterey Park, California.

Third, there has been a sizable influx of illegal Fuzhounese immigrants arriving to the United States and setting up residence in a three-block area on the outskirts of New York Chinatown. The grounding of the ship *Golden Venture* in the New York harbor in 1993 brought to light the ugly face of the clandestine process of the transport of human cargo. An estimated 25,000 Fuzhounese entered the United States annually between 1991–1994. This means that there were at least 100,000 illegal Fuzhounese residing in the United States in 1994 (Smith, 1996). Recent indicators suggest that the smuggling of Chinese (Fuzhounese) to the United States is an ever-continuing process with major social ramifications. The major concerns for these illegal immigrants are paying off the exorbitant debt owed to the smugglers (*snakeheads*) who brought them illegally to the United States and staying away from kidnappers, who will hold them or their children hostage or even kill them for these unpaid debts (Kwong, 1997).

A fourth trend is the expansion of the old Chinatowns and the establishment of new, satellite Chinatowns in the suburbs. Satellite or suburban Chinatowns tend to arise where there is a large concentration of Chinese close by. In the San Francisco Bay area, suburban Chinatowns have sprung up in Mountain View and San Jose. In the Los Angeles vicinity, Monterey Park is probably the most famous satellite, or suburban, Chinatown. However, concentrations of Chinese and the accompanying Chinese strip malls are located throughout the San Gabriel Valley (i.e., San Marino, Arcadia, San Gabriel, Alhambra, Rosemead, and Walnut) and in Orange County in Southern California, just east and southeast of Los Angeles (T. P. Fong, 1994). Although when one thinks of Chinatown in New York, one thinks of Manhattan, there are two major satellite Chinese communities. Flushing is now known as the Chinatown of Queens and Sunset Park as the Chinatown of Brooklyn (Zhou, 2001). Other areas

of high Chinese concentrations include Woodside, Jackson Heights, Corona, and Elmhurst in Queens, and Sheepshead Bay, Ridgewood, and Bay Ridge in Brooklyn (Zhou, 1992, 2001).

Fifth, the old Chinatowns are no longer the primary or initial destination of residence for the new Chinese immigrants with subsequent geographical mobility to the suburbs at some later point in time. Because of the lack of available housing and the persistent crime and social problems in Chinatown, the higher socioeconomic status and accompanying social and economic capital of the new Chinese immigrants, and the language differences between the People's Republic of China and Taiwan Mandarin speakers and the Chinatown Cantonese speakers, many new Chinese immigrants are bypassing the historical residential stay in the old Chinatown for immediate residence in the middle-class satellite Chinese communities in the suburbs.

There has been a tremendous infusion of foreign capital into the Chinatown community and economy, particularly the satellite Chinatowns. The significant influx of affluent Chinese immigrants from Taiwan and Hong Kong has resulted in tremendous investments of overseas Chinese capital in the form of real estate purchases, establishment of overseas banks, and new construction such as hotels, condos, office towers, and shopping malls, transforming existing Chinatowns from isolated ethnic communities to dynamic, interactive communities with relations with the general community. The influx of capital, especially from Taiwan, also contributed greatly to the development of numerous satellite Chinatowns in the suburban areas, such as Monterey Park and the San Gabriel Valley in southern California (T. P. Fong, 1994) or in Flushing and Sunset Park (Zhou & Logan, 1991; Zhou & Kim, 2003). Hence, it is no accident that because of the visibility of Taiwan money, businesses, and Taiwanese involved in local politics, both Monterey Park and Flushing have, at one time, been referred to as *Little Taipei* (Zhou & Kim, 2003). More recently, because of changing demographics, especially in New York, such ethnic labels are highly contested and the

satellite Chinatowns are referred to as *Chinatown in Queens* and *Chinatown in Brooklyn* (H. S. Chen, 1992; Zhou, 2001).

While such economic developments may be beneficial to the Chinese community in general, they are not without conflict. Kwong (1987) notes that in New York Chinatown, the traditional elites and the new Chinese immigrant elites have engaged in property speculation that benefits the affluent “uptown” Chinese business leaders at the expense of “downtown” Chinese renters and workers, causing a rift between the uptown and downtown Chinese. Differences in political, economic, and social agendas: differences in the vision of the long-term future of Chinatowns in San Francisco, Los Angeles, and Monterey Park: as well as fear of the displacement of local Chinese businesses by these new foreign enterprises have been noted between the long-time or local Chinese American businesses and residents, many of whom are working class, and the overseas Chinese investors who tend to be upper middle-class and focused more on the global economies of Taiwan and Hong Kong (T. P. Fong, 1994; Lin, 1999).

Lastly, the influx of new Chinese immigrants to the suburban areas of San Francisco, Los Angeles, and New York has changed the demographic as well as the political structure of these areas. Nativistic anxiety of a “Yellow Peril” or of an “Asian invasion” and the perceived and/or actual threat of rising property rates, rising crime, non-English signs, or declining local political power and xenophobic hostilities have been expressed by members of the white middle class as well as by other racial and ethnic minorities. In some instances, racial tensions between the Chinese and other racial and ethnic groups have heightened

ACCULTURATION OR PLURALISM?

This last section deals with the future acculturation of the Chinese into American society, a process that is continually being defined and redefined. Historically, the early Chinese did not easily nor were they allowed to assimilate, integrate, or participate in American society. Racism kept them

socially, economically, and politically isolated. Jobs were largely limited to those that did not compete with the dominant group. Whatever opportunities existed for the Chinese were limited to their own communities. Their status as aliens ineligible for citizenship encouraged a sojourner rather than an assimilation orientation and kept them isolated from the political arena. More important, they were identified by the dominant group as physically different, as Chinese, foreigners, and/or outsiders, and, hence, as unassimilable. They were viewed as not 100% Americans.

The demographics of the early Chinese also played a role in the slow rate of assimilation among Chinese Americans. Because almost all of the early Chinese were single males or married but without their wives and families, an American-born first generation—stable families that would move along an assimilation path—was slow in developing.

Moreover, the Chinese in the United States have traditionally exhibited resistance to assimilation. Chinese ethnic communities seem to promote social and cultural exclusiveness and a low level of absorption into the larger society (Lyman, 1968, 1974; Purcell, 1980). Much of this self-imposed isolation is the product of not only their own personal views, but also the social control that the Chinese community organizations had over their “citizens.”

What is the current situation regarding the adaptation of the Chinese into American society? The verdict is still out, with evidence pointing first in one direction and then in the other. There are those who would argue that despite past patterns of insularity, several indicators suggest that Chinese Americans are now slowly moving in the direction of acculturation. There are others who argue that despite some acculturation, the Chinese in the United States continue to experience prejudice, discrimination, and racism. Let us look at the evidence on each side.

There have been some recent indications that American society is more willing to accept Chinese Americans as people and not just as aliens. One indicator of the growing acculturation

of the Chinese in the United States is the geographic dispersion of the Chinese away from the Chinatown areas and into the metropolitan areas and the suburbs. As Chinese children attend suburban schools and develop friendships with white children, as they become more competent in English than in Chinese—in essence, as they become more acculturated—they will probably view themselves as more American than Chinese.

We ABC (American-born Chinese) were ridiculed by the old immigrants as “Bamboo Stick” for not being able to speak Chinese and not being accepted as “white people.” We are not here. We are not there. White people consider us to be inferior to the educated Chinese from China because we lack the “exotic value.” This is the reason why many of us do not want to socialize with the China-born Chinese-American. We are different. Most of us are proud of the Chinese cultural heritage, but due to the pressure to assimilate and the lack of opportunity, we don’t know much about the Chinese way. (B. Wong, 1982, p. 33)

Gradually drifting away from the older generation, the younger Chinese Americans will probably face a clash of generations, identity conflicts, and a lack of ethnic cohesion (S. L. M. Fong, 1965, 1968; Jiobu, 1988). One parent laments,

Raising children does not do any good in this country. They leave when they are grown up. I seldom see them nowadays, with the exception of my youngest son who is running the factory in Chinatown. They are too independent in this country! They are selfish, too! (B. Wong, 1982, p. 32)

However, the suburbanization of the Chinese should not be viewed as total acceptance of the assimilation model. More often than not, the move to suburbia by the Chinese who have acquired professional status has not “melted” them into white, middle-class suburbanites. Rather, suburban satellite Chinese communities have formed, suggesting a cultural pluralistic, rather than assimilationist, orientation (Lin, 1999). Monterey Park provides such an example. In the early 1970s, it was

a Los Angeles suburban town of mainly whites and Hispanics. Now the population is about 45% Chinese, most of them middle class, and a majority of its businesses are Chinese owned (Chinese American Data Center, 2003c; T. P. Fong, 1994; Lemann, 1988). Within its city limits are three Chinese-language newspapers with an international distribution, over 60 restaurants, more than 50 realtors, and numerous service establishments such as Chinese supermarkets, herb shops, bakeries, medical and dental offices, accounting and legal offices, and minimalls housing hundreds of small specialty service and curio shops (T. P. Fong, 1994). (However, such a transition was not without conflict or animosity. When Chinese immigrants first settled in Monterey Park in the 1970s, they were welcomed. Consisting of mainly affluent professionals and engineers, they lived in the better neighborhoods and adjusted quietly to the community. However, in the mid-1990s, the influx of Chinese immigrant businessmen from Taiwan and Hong Kong who invested heavily in land speculation that led to uncontrolled construction and the escalation of property values [and hence, taxes] resulted in considerable tension between the indigenous population and the new Chinese immigrants [T. P. Fong 1994, pp. 48, 173–174].) Chinese families that have, in essence, become “Americanized” still retain some degree of cultural affiliations, if only symbolically—food, a bilingual approach to language, participation in Chinese organizations, and some pressure against mixed marriages (Lyman, 1977; Melendy, 1984, p. 81; Tuan, 1998). In fact, the growth of Chinatowns throughout this country stands as a visible sign of the fallacy of the melting pot theory and reinforces the idea of the United States as a pluralistic society.

Another possible indicator of the acculturation of the Chinese family is the recent dramatic increase in the incidence of interracial marriages, particularly with whites, among the younger generation (Barnett, 1963; Burma, 1963; Kitano & Yeung, 1982; Simpson & Yinger, 1965; Staples & Mirande, 1980; Weiss, 1970; M. G. Wong, 1989a; Yuan, 1980). Currently, approximately 22% of all marriages among the Chinese are with white

partners (B. Lee, 2003; M. G. Wong, 1989a). Although this may be viewed as solid evidence of the diminishing of social boundaries between the Chinese and the larger society and that racial appearances, at least for the Chinese, do not seem to be a sufficient barrier, such a conclusion may be premature. There is some resistance on the part of the Chinese to intermarriage, and the prevalence of intermarriage among the Chinese is still considerably lower than among European groups, whose outmarriage rates range from 50% to 80% (Alba & Golden, 1986). There is also some resistance on the part of whites. A recent national survey of the attitudes of Americans toward the Chinese in their midst found that one quarter (24%) of Americans would disapprove if a member of their family married an Asian American (Chinese), and one in six (17%) would be upset if a substantial number of Asian Americans (Chinese) moved into their neighborhood (Committee of 100, 2001). (It should be noted that this survey found that attitudes toward Chinese Americans were largely identical to those toward Asian Americans in general—suggesting that prejudice against Chinese Americans is a subset of broader prejudice against Asian Americans). Hence, the Chinese have a considerable way to go before being fully accepted as social equals. Whether the social boundaries between the Chinese and white population will continue to crumble, only time will tell.

There may also have been some positive changes in the attitudes of “Americans” toward Chinese immigrants. In October of 1992, Congress enacted the Chinese Student Protection Act. In the wake of the massacre of the students who demonstrated for democracy in Beijing’s Tiananmen Square in June of 1989 and the subsequent imprisonment and mass executions of student leaders, this law enabled some of the 21,000 foreign Chinese students who were in the United States in 1994 and did not want to return to China to obtain permanent residence (Kitano, 2001, p. 51).

Additionally, the Committee of 100 report (2001) found that, on the positive side, a great majority of Americans believed that Chinese Americans have strong family values (90%), are as

honest as other businessmen (77%), are as patriotic as other Americans (68%), and place a higher value on education than do most other groups in America (67%). At the same time, this study also noted that Americans held some negative attitudes or stereotypes toward Chinese Americans (and Asian Americans), believing that China will be a future threat to the U.S. (68%) and having unfavorable impressions of the Chinese government (61%), and believing that Chinese Americans passing on secret information to China is a problem (46%), were more loyal to China than to the United States (32%), have too much influence in the United States’ high technological sector (34%), and always like to be at the head of things (32%). They also found that a significant proportion of Americans said they would be uncomfortable having an Asian American (read *Chinese*) as President of the U.S. (23%), would disapprove if someone in their family were to marry an Asian American (read *Chinese*) (24%), and would be upset if a substantial number of Asian Americans (read *Chinese*) moved into their neighborhood (17%).

There will always be constant reminders that total social acceptance by the dominant group has not been obtained. Notes one Chinese American physician on being a stranger to these shores,

My parents run a Chinese restaurant. They were from the Old World 40 years ago and speak mostly Chinese at home and at the restaurant. Their lifestyle is Chinese-culture oriented. But I was born in the U.S. 27 years ago. I grew up with other White Americans and was educated in grade school, high school, college, and medical school in this country. I know more about the history, culture, and language of the U.S. and have thoughts that I am no different than other White Americans. Now that I am out of school practicing my profession as a physician, I definitely feel that people treat me like an ethnic and a member of another racial group. I am reminded that I am Chinese although my orientation and lifestyle are more American than Chinese. I have little knowledge about Chinese history, language, or culture. I am a U.S. citizen.

Yet, I am treated as if I am not equal to other Americans. (B. Wong, 1982, p. 79)

Racial slurs, job tensions, and sporadic acts of violence all reinforce the idea that the Chinese are considered by their fellow citizens as strangers from a different shore—not quite 100%, or “real” Americans (Siao, 1990; Takaki, 1989; U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 1986; M. G. Wong, 1989b, 1993; Zinmeister, 1987).

In an interesting study by Tuan (1998) of third- or higher-generation Chinese Americans (and Japanese Americans), she found that many Chinese Americans do not see themselves as completely accepted by mainstream America despite their high educational attainment, socioeconomic background, and high degree of acculturation and structural assimilation. Many felt marginalized, excluded, and felt that white Americans perceived them as outsiders or foreigners, regardless of how long they (or their families) had resided in the United States. In their private lives, they had the option of selecting what part, if any, of their Asian culture they wished to retain or practice, but in their public lives, the social expectation, due to their racial visibility, was that they were Asian and were expected to be highly ethnic—speak Chinese, eat Chinese food, know and practice Chinese traditions, and so on. Questions such as “Where were you born?” or comments such as “You speak English very well” reinforce the view that these native-born Chinese Americans are not quite 100% Americans. In essence, they felt that they were “forever foreigners.”

During the past two decades, three major incidents reinforce the belief that the Chinese in the United States were not totally accepted by the general public—that they continue to be viewed with suspicion, as having displaced loyalties, and as unfair competition.

The first incident occurred in Detroit in June of 1982. Vincent Chin was a 27-year-old draftsman who was out with friends celebrating his upcoming wedding. Two white autoworkers, Ronald Ebens and his stepson, Michael Niz, taunted the group, blaming them for the loss of

auto jobs in the Detroit area due to the intense competition from Japanese automakers, despite the fact that Chin and his friends were Chinese, not Japanese. Upon leaving the bar, a fistfight erupted and a chase ensued. Ebens and Nitz eventually caught up with Chin and clubbed him to death with a baseball bat. Ebens and Nitz eventually received 3 years' probation and fines of some \$4,000 each on manslaughter and second-degree murder charges. Such a miscarriage of justice galvanized not only the Chinese community, but also the Asian American community (Espiritu, 1992; Zia, 2000). The Asian American community lobbied nationwide with Congress and the Justice Department to reopen the investigation. After a civil rights investigation by the FBI, a federal grand jury indicated Ebens and Nitz on two counts of violation of Chin's civil rights. Ebens was found guilty and sentenced to 25 years in jail. However, his conviction was subsequently overturned on appeal in 1986 (Lin, 1999; F. Wu, 2002; Zia, 2000). As long as Chinese are considered “not fully American,” and as long as there is economic uncertainty in the United States as well as increased globalization and its accompanying tensions, the probability of hate crimes directed against Chinese will remain high (Lin, 1999; M. G. Wong, 1993).

During Clinton's re-election campaign in 1996, the media did much to fan the flames of bias and stereotyping against Chinese fundraisers for the Democratic Party, perpetuating fears of the Yellow Peril taking over the U.S. Presidency and an urgent call for campaign finance reform (T. Lee, 2000; Lee & Hahn, 1998; Wu & Nicholson, 1997). With the controversy known as *Asia-Gate*, the national media focused considerable coverage on the allegations of illegal fund-raising and improper behind-the-scenes influence-peddling by former Democratic National Committee fundraiser John Huang, Little Rock restaurateur Charlie Yah-lin Trie, Johnny Chung, Maria Hsia, and Eugene and Nora Lum and the people that they solicited. This media attention quickly overshadowed the significant, positive inroads in the political arena made by Asian Americans. For example, by 1998, more than 300 Asian American

and Pacific Islanders were elected to office. For example, Oregon elected Taiwan-born David Wu as its first Taiwan-born Chinese American U.S. representative to Congress, and Washington elected Gary Locke, its first Chinese American governor—despite the fact that the Chinese made up only a small percentage of the voters in these two states.

Such media attention may have contributed to the belief in questionable political reliability and loyalty of persons of Chinese ancestry. It is commonly believed that individuals of Chinese ancestry—whether recent arrivals or residents of the United States for several generations—are more loyal to China than to the United States. This belief played an instrumental role in the campaign of leaks to the press accusing Dr. Wen Ho Lee, a naturalized American citizen who was born in Taiwan and was a nuclear scientist at the government's Los Alamos National Laboratory, of spying for the People's Republic of China. Lee was subsequently fired in March 1999 and finally indicted later that year on 59 separate counts of "mishandling classified information." He was denied bail and forced to wear leg shackles and chains while imprisoned. In September of 2000, after serving 9 months in solitary confinement as a dangerous threat to national security, the federal prosecutors dropped all but one charge against Lee and, as part of a plea bargain, released him with time served. The judge in the case severely reprimanded the government "for embarrassing our entire nation" with spying allegations that could not be proved and issued an unprecedented public formal apology to Dr. Lee for the gross miscarriage of justice meted out against him by the executive branch of the government (Lee & Zia, 2003; F. Wu, 2002). This incident and similar incidents, such as the downing of the American spy plane in Hainan, China on April 1, 2001 and the arrest of its crew, and the subsequent call by several radio disk jockeys nationwide to boycott Chinese restaurants and send Chinese Americans back to China or hold them as prisoners in the United States (Ginsberg, 2001), served notice to many other Chinese Americans that depending on the political, economic, or social

situation, their loyalty to the United States can be quickly called into question with dire consequences, regardless of how long they have lived in the United States or their citizenship status.

In conclusion, because of their visible racial characteristics, many Americans continue to see Chinese Americans as somehow not fully American, as "outsiders," even though their ancestors may have been in the United States for several generations. Although they may speak only English and have no ties to China, they are perceived as different, as "strangers from a different shore." No matter how Americanized they become, no matter how similar to whites in values, aspirations, mannerisms, or actions, Chinese Americans will always be perceived as different. Ethnic identity and consciousness among Chinese Americans, therefore, regardless of the extent of their acculturation, are not likely to fully disappear.

CONCLUSIONS

The history of the Chinese in the United States during the past 150 years has been marked with episodes of individual and institutional prejudice, discrimination, and racism, and of isolation and exclusion from all that American society had to offer. They were discriminated against and excluded from the jobs that they undertook or pursued. They were isolated in Chinatowns and segregated from the greater society by various laws that prevented their participation in the political, judicial, social, economic, and educational institutions of American society. Finally, they were excluded from entering the United States in 1882—a policy that remained virtually in effect for approximately 80 years, until the passage of the 1965 Immigration Act. Despite this pervasive racism, the Chinese have continued to adapt to American society. As a group, their socioeconomic status has improved and, on some indicators, such as education, occupation, and income, exceeds the achievements of whites, although there are great discrepancies between the foreign-born and the native-born Chinese. Moreover, despite such improvements, the Chinese still have a long way to go before full equality is

achieved with the dominant group. Indicators such as intermarriage rates and societal attitudes suggest that the acculturation of the Chinese to American society is slowly taking place. However, acculturation is a two-way process. Studies suggest that a significant proportion of Americans are still resistant to the full assimilation of the Chinese into American society. Although the decade of the 1980s may be viewed as a decade of considerable progress on the part of the Chinese in American society, it will probably be also known as a decade when anti-Chinese antagonism and violence began to re-emerge. The 1990s decade saw a continual escalation of suspicion of, distrust of, and accusations of disloyalty toward the Chinese, whether as alleged spies of nuclear secrets for China or as allegedly attempting to buy political influence in the Clinton administration. The Chinese serve as convenient scapegoats for the economic, political, or social woes that affect American society. As we enter the twenty-first century, the future of the Chinese in American society is uncharted, seemingly dependent on the political, social, and economic circumstances in the United States and on the emerging and sometimes precarious relationship between the United States and the People's Republic of China.

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