This chapter seeks to unpack ethnicity through a close examination of ethnic language schools and the ethnic system of supplementary education in the immigrant Chinese community in the United States. It sheds light on the specific ways in which ethnic community organizations contribute to educational achievement.

Ethnic language schools and the development of supplementary education in the immigrant Chinese community in the United States

Min Zhou, Xi-Yuan Li

Past and recent studies have consistently found that ethnicity has varied effects on the educational achievement of immigrant children. These studies show that, even after controlling for parental socioeconomic characteristics and family incomes, Asians outperform non-Hispanic whites who, in turn, outperform blacks and Hispanics by a significantly large margin. Much of the intellectual debate on intergroup differences in academic outcomes centers around two concepts—culture (emphasizing the role of internal agency along with group-specific values, norms, and behavioral patterns as well as the extent to which ethnic cultures fit the requirements of the mainstream society) and structure (emphasizing the...
role of societal stratification and the opportunities and constraints that the system of stratification creates, moving some groups ahead in society while holding back others).

Just how culture and structure interact to affect intergenerational mobility is the crux of the matter. In this chapter, we seek to unpack ethnicity through a close examination of ethnic language schools and the ethnic system of supplementary education in the immigrant Chinese community in the United States. In doing so, we first briefly discuss the theoretical framing of the role of the ethnic community in shaping immigrant children’s development. We then trace the developments of Chinese language schools and other child- or youth-centered ethnic institutions to illustrate how ethnicity can affect an advantageous environment yielding positive academic outcomes. We focus on exploring how ethnic institutions function not only to promote the value of education but also to ensure its actualization. We argue that ethnicity cannot be simplified into either a structural or a cultural measure, but rather it encompasses values and behavioral patterns that are constantly interacting with both internal and external structural circumstances.

Unpacking ethnicity: Community forces, social capital, and the ethnic environment

Existing literature has long recognized the role of the ethnic community in immigrant settlement and adaptation. According to classical assimilation theories, new immigrants, with little English language proficiency, few marketable or transferable skills, and limited information about their new homeland, cluster in ethnic enclaves upon arrival and rely on coethnic networks and social institutions to find housing, jobs, and their way around. But they are expected to eventually move out of the enclave as they achieve socioeconomic mobility. Ethnic institutions are initially instrumental in reorganizing immigrants’ economic and social lives and in alleviating social problems arising from migration and ghetto living. In the long run, however, these institutions either dissolve, fading into merely symbolic significance as no newer groups support them, or act as roadblocks inhibiting assimilation.

In reality, however, the mechanisms by which ethnic communities influence the social mobility of group members and their children are complex and subtle. Because different immigrant groups vary in their initial modes of entry and subsequent societal reception, they vary in their orientation toward their host society, in their coping strategies, and in their abilities to muster and mobilize resources to shape an advantageous ethnic community. Hence, the constituents of ethnic diversity in America are unequal; for some, maintaining a distinctive attachment to an ethnic community can facilitate intergenerational mobility of ethnic group members while for others it inhibits mobility. Native-born African American parents, Latino immigrant parents, or Asian immigrant parents all stress the value of education, and the children of these racial groups all agree that education is imperative in occupational achievement. Yet only Asian Americans as a group seem to have an upper hand in actualizing that value. In our view, what determines a child’s development is not merely parental racial backgrounds and socioeconomic characteristics but also the immediate social environment in which the child grows up. For racial minority groups this social environment is often ethnically specific, manifested in observable neighborhood-based ethnic institutions and in interpersonal relations among those who interact in those institutions.

We frame our study of Chinese language schools and the ethnic system of supplementary education in terms of how these schools create an ethnic environment conducive to immigrant children’s educational achievement. Two theoretical conceptions are of vital relevance: community forces and social capital. Ogba conceptualizes community forces as specific beliefs, interpretations, and coping strategies that an ethnic group adopts in response to its societal treatment. Some racial minority groups manage to turn their distinctive cultural heritage into a kind of ethnic armor and establish a sense of collective dignity that enables them to cope psychologically, even in the face of exclusion and discrimination, by keeping the host
society at arm’s length. Others, however, internalize socially imposed inferiority as part of their collective self-definition. This in turn fosters an “oppositional outlook” toward the dominant group and mainstream institutions, including education. In this case, symbolic expressions of ethnicity and ethnic empowerment may hinder rather than facilitate social mobility.

Community forces shape a particular ethnic environment while also mediating the process of social capital formation in that environment. Coleman defines social capital as a closed system of social networks inherent within a community that promotes cooperative behavior and serves specific needs of its members. Despite heated debates on how social capital should be precisely defined and measured, it is generally agreed that social capital is lodged not in the individual but in the structure of social organizations, in patterns of social relations, or in processes of interactions between individuals and organizations. Portes suggests, “social capital stands for the ability of actors to secure benefits by virtue of memberships in social networks or other social structures.” Community forces dictate the orientation, coping strategies, and corresponding behaviors of different ethnic groups in regard to mobility goals and means of achieving those goals. The ethnic community and its institutions provide crucial sites for coethnic members to rebuild social relations and networks that may have been disrupted through migration. One way to understand how a particular ethnic environment is affected by community forces and social capital is to examine the density and variety of ethnic institutions in a given ethnic community and the extent to which these institutions are oriented toward social mobility.

**Development of Chinese language schools and ethnic systems of supplementary education**

Chinese language schools date back to the late 1880s in the United States. Just like other ethnic language schools in the immigrant German, Scandinavian, Jewish, and Japanese communities, Chinese language schools aimed to preserve language and cultural heritage in the second and succeeding generations. However, unlike other ethnic language schools, early Chinese language schools did not function to facilitate assimilation because of the enactment of the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 and the resulting discriminatory practices against the Chinese.

Prior to World War II there were few women, families, and children living in Chinatowns. These bachelors’ societies had gender ratios of nearly twenty-seven men to one woman in 1890, nine to one in 1910, gradually approximating parity in 1940 with two men for every one woman. The shortage of women combined with the “paper son” phenomenon and other illegal entry of young men stilled the formation of “normal” families and the natural reproduction of the ethnic population. But a small second generation became increasingly visible among the aging bachelors after the 1930s. Like other racial minority children, however, the children of Chinese immigrants were not permitted to attend public schools with white children. As they reached adulthood, few were able to find jobs in the mainstream economy that were commensurate with their levels of education.

It was against this historical backdrop that Chinese language schools emerged and developed, first appearing in San Francisco’s Chinatown in 1884. Early Chinese language schools were mostly private, financed primarily by tuition and donations from churches, temples, family associations, and Chinese businesses. There were also “public” Chinese language schools financed by the Chinese government. Each school was governed by a board consisting of mostly elite members from ethnic organizations and businesses in Chinatown. Schools typically had one or two part-time teachers, instruction was in Cantonese, and classes were held daily for three to four hours in the evenings and on Saturday mornings, usually in the basement of a teacher’s home or in a room inside a family association building. Chinatown’s children attended segregated public schools during regular school hours on weekdays and spent many more hours after school, on weekends, and during summer vacations learning Chinese in ethnic language schools.

Wherever there was a sizable Chinese enclave there was at least one Chinese language school. Chinese language schools were embedded in the organizational structure of the immigrant
community and were the only ethnic institutions serving children. Like other ethnic organizations in Chinatown, earlier Chinese language schools had very little contact with mainstream institutions: the primary aim was to provide the children with a basic education and with cultural and language proficiency. Children attended Chinese language schools in their neighborhoods after regular school as a matter of course, with little questioning. Parents believed that proficiency in the Chinese language was practical for their children because their children’s future options were limited to either returning to China or finding jobs in Chinatowns. Parents also believed that a strong Chinese identity and ethnic pride instilled in the children through Chinese cultural and moral teachings were necessary to help the children cope with racism and discrimination. Though most children lacked enthusiasm and interest, many recognized the practical value of Chinese schooling because their future prospects were largely limited to Chinatowns or China.

The repeal of the Chinese Exclusion Act in 1943 marked a new era for Chinese American community development. For the first time in history, immigrant Chinese and their offspring were legally allowed and encouraged to participate in American society and the ethnic community began to reorient itself from sojourning to putting down roots and reinforcing its commitment to socioeconomic integration. Meanwhile, the coming of age of a visibly large second generation resulting from several decades of Chinese exclusion quietly altered the demographic makeup of the bachelor’s society, turning it more and more into a family-centered community. By 1960, the sex ratio had become more balanced and the U.S. born outnumbered the foreign born. Contemporary Chinese immigration, which had accelerated since the late 1970s, brought further demographic changes. By 2000, the Chinese American population had grown to a total of 2,879,636 persons; 58 percent were foreign born, and more than half lived in the suburbs.

The openness in mainstream American society does not automatically guarantee desirable outcomes of economic mobility and social integration. Decades of legal exclusion, social isolation, discrimination, and persistent racial stereotyping have left the Chinese with one practically feasible route for upward mobility—public education. Whereas children’s education was never an issue for survival in a society full of bachelors and sojourners, it has now become an urgent and central issue for immigrant families and the entire ethnic group. Hence, the development of Chinese language schools has undergone cycles of decline, revival, and rapid growth.

Between World War II and the 1960s, Chinese language schools experienced a period of decline due to pressures to assimilate. Immigrant children started to question the necessity of Chinese schooling and the practical value of Chinese language proficiency. Public schools reinforced their wishes by encouraging them to break away from ethnic language schools. The rationale of public education was that ethnic education would impede students’ social and intellectual developments and place too much burden on young minds. Other factors that caused Chinese language schools to decline included the aging of the teachers, who were mostly non-English speaking and slow to adjust to changes; the rigidity of the curriculum and teaching methods; residential dispersion; and the opening of various educational and vocational opportunities outside Chinatown. Thus, going to Chinese school became a burden on the child and a source of parent-child conflict. Nevertheless, under parental pressure, many children continued to attend Chinese language schools, though most dropped out by the sixth grade. Many parents were ambivalent as well; while many wanted their children to learn English and excel in school, they feared that they would lose their children if their children became too Americanized.

**Characteristics of contemporary Chinese language schools**

Since the 1970s there has been a revival and rapid growth of ethnic businesses and institutions in Chinatowns and suburban Chinese communities (referred to as Chinese ethnoburbs.) Chinese language schools and a wide variety of child- and youth-centered ethnic institutions are among the most noticeable development, constituting a comprehensive system of supplementary education.
The National Council of Associations of Chinese Language Schools in 1994 counted a total of 643 registered Chinese language schools in the United States serving 82,675 K–12 students.8

Traditional Chinese language schools located in Chinatowns have been under pressure to change. Today the New York Chinese Schools run by the Chinatown Consolidated Benevolent Association, once the quasi-government of Chinatown, are perhaps the largest child- and youth-oriented organizations in inner-city Chinatowns. These schools enroll about four thousand children annually, from preschool to twelfth grade, in their 137 Chinese language classes and more than 10 specialty classes (such as band, choir, piano, cello, violin, T’ai chi, ikebana, dancing, and Chinese painting). These classes run from 3:00 to 6:30 P.M. daily after regular school hours. Students usually spend one hour on regular school homework and two hours on Chinese language or other selected specialties. The school also has English classes for immigrant youths and adult immigrant workers.9

New Chinese language schools also sprung up in both Chinatowns and Chinese ethnuburbs, started by educated Taiwanese immigrants and then by international students and well-educated professional immigrants from mainland China. The majority of suburban Chinese schools affiliated with the Southern California United Chinese School Association were initially established by Taiwanese immigrants in the mid- to late 1970s. In the early 1990s, the Hua Xia Chinese School was established as a Saturday school in a New Jersey suburb by immigrant Chinese from the mainland. It has now expanded into fourteen branch campuses in suburbs along the northeastern seaboard from Connecticut to Pennsylvania, serving more than five thousand students and shifting its admission to “everyone, regardless of his or her gender, race, color of skin, religion, nationality and blood ties.”10

Similarly, the Hope Chinese School started as a small weekend Saturday school in a Washington, D.C., suburb for professional Chinese immigrant families from mainland China in the early 1990s and has now grown into five campuses in suburban towns in Maryland and Virginia, enrolling more than two thousand students. The community has also witnessed the development of various child- and youth-oriented private institutions, including after-school tutoring centers, college preparation institutes, and music-arts-sports programs, as well as daycare facilities and preschools. These private institutions range from transnational enterprises with headquarters or branches in Taiwan and mainland China to small-scale one-person or mom-and-pop operations. By offering various academic and cultural enrichment programs and after-school care, Chinese language schools and child- or youth-centered private institutions form a sophisticated system of supplementary education accessible mainly by Chinese immigrant families.

Today’s Chinese language schools, both in and out of Chinatown, are distinctive compared to those established prior to World War II. Their primary goal is to assist immigrant families in their efforts to push their children to excel in American public schools, to get into prestigious colleges and universities, and to eventually attain well-paying, high-status professions that secure a decent living in the United States. These organizations reflect the traditional pragmatism of Chinese immigrant families, which is only U.S.-centered rather than China-centered, as articulated in the words of a Chinese immigrant, “I hope to accomplish nothing but three things [in the U.S.]: to own a home, to be my own boss, and to send my children to the Ivy League.” Parents are enthusiastic about sending their children to Chinese language schools not because they think that Chinese is the only thing that is important. Rather, many parents are implicitly dissatisfied with American public schools and believe that Chinese language schools and other ethnic supplementary institutions are instrumental in ensuring that their children meet parental expectations.11

Unlike traditional Chinese language schools, which were relatively homogeneous and rigid in institutional form and governance, today’s schools have become more diverse and flexible. They are either nonprofit (including church, temple, community, or family association sponsored schools) or for-profits (independent enterprises functioning in the same way as other ethnic businesses). Most schools in Chinatowns or Chinese ethnuburbs offer
regular weekday (3 to 6 p.m. daily after school), weekend (Saturday or Sunday half-day), and summer programs (day schools or overseas camps), as well as programs during spring and Christmas breaks (day camps). Scheduling accommodates the needs of dual-worker families living in the ethnic community. Other suburban Chinese schools are mostly half-day Saturday or Sunday schools because families tend to disperse into nonethnic neighborhoods as far apart as twenty to thirty miles.

Schools are mainly financed by student tuitions, but nonprofits are supported by donations and community fundraising as well. nonprofits are free or charge nominal fees. Tuitions in for-profits vary depending on the type of program and enrollment, ranging from $70 to $250, and can be as high as $400 per semester for a typical weekday after-school program or a weekend school program, with extra fees for enrollment in special programs that are offered in the schools. Private lessons range from $10 to $50 per hour. Each school has a principal, a part-time staff, and teachers. It is governed by a board consisting of parents, teachers, ethnic business owners, and community leaders. Members of the governing board also tend to be parents themselves. Nonprofits rely heavily on parents who volunteer to act as teacher aides, chauffeurs to pick up or drop off students, fundraising workers, and even janitors. Such parental voluntarism is also evident in for-profits. Many Chinese schools have parent volunteer associations modeled after the parent-teacher associations in public schools. Parental involvement is direct and intense in Chinese schools, but similar involvement is minimal in U.S. public schools because of language and cultural barriers.

Unlike traditional schools where the teaching of Chinese language and culture was at the core of the curriculum, today’s Chinese language schools have shifted to a more comprehensive, well-rounded curriculum that complements the requirements of public education by grade level and college preparation. Language teaching no longer takes priority in most of today’s Chinese language schools, and Chinese classics have been almost completely removed from the curriculum. Teachers, staff members, and even parents habitually use a mixture of English and Chinese to communicate with the children. Schools now offer a variety of academic and tutoring programs in such subjects as English, social studies, math, and the sciences, as well as in college preparation (including SAT preparation) in addition to the Chinese language. They also offer extracurricular programs such as youth leadership training, public speaking, modern and folk dancing, chorus, music (piano, violin, drums, and Chinese stringed instruments), drama, Chinese painting, calligraphy, origami, martial arts, Chinese chess and Go, and sports (tennis, ping-pong ball, and basketball being the most popular). Some Chinese schools have excellent Chinese language programs (mostly in Mandarin) that aim to assist students in gaining high school foreign language credits and in excelling on the SAT II Chinese language test.

While Chinese language teaching is balanced with other academic enrichment, tutoring, and recreational programs, the focus on moral teaching and the passing on of cultural heritage is more subdué in today’s Chinese schools. When schools are in session, these institutions provide a cultural environment where the children are surrounded by other Chinese and pressured to act (and thus feel) Chinese. Teachers reinforce the values of filial piety, respect for authority, hard work, and discipline. Also, during traditional Chinese holidays seasons, such as the Chinese New Year, the Dragon Festival in the spring, and the Mid-Autumn Moon Festival, Chinese schools participate in celebratory parades, evening shows, and other community events such as sports and choral or dance festivals. Participation in these cultural activities not only exposes children to their cultural heritage, reaffirming their ethnic identity, but also provides opportunities for the children to work closely with their parents and other adults in the community on common projects.

Spillover effects

In essence, Chinese language schools and the ethnic system of supplementary education are designed “by the parents, for the parents,” as one school’s motto says. More often than not, immigrant Chinese parents measure success not merely by their own occupational
achievements but by their children’s educational achievements. If a child goes to an Ivy League college, his or her parents feel rewarded and are admired and respected as successful parents. If their children are less successful, they lose face. In this respect, Chinese schools and the relevant ethnic institutions emerge to respond directly to parents’ desires for success. On the one hand, they produce a community force driving children to attain educational success on their parents’ terms. Flashy names such as “Little Harvard,” “Ivy League School,” “Little Ph.D. Early Learning Center” (a preschool), “Stanford-to-Be Prep School,” “IQ180,” and “Hope Busiban (Tutoring)” are illustrative. Advertisements in the Chinese-language newspapers are full of such promises as to “bring out the best in your child,” “turn your child into a well-rounded superstar,” “escort your child into your dream school,” and “opening the door to UC admission,” which are carefully crafted to attract parents’ attention. On the other hand, these ethnic institutions also provide child care and after-school care for working families. While some of these schools may not have many structured programs, existing simply to keep children under adult supervision, most offer a variety of programs and activities at flexible after-school hours along with drop-off and pick-up services.

The effects extend far beyond after-school services, however. For parents, Chinese language schools provide an important physical site where formerly unrelated immigrants come to socialize and rebuild social ties. Reconnecting with coethnics often helps ease psychological and social isolation. The coethnic ties that are rekindled may not be as strong as the ones that existed in traditional Chinatowns in the past. Nonetheless, they serve as a bridge that connects immigrants to, rather than isolates them from, the mainstream society by making their social life richer and more comfortable. One Chinese parent likened the suburban Chinese school to a church:

We are nonreligious and don’t go to church. So coming to Chinese school weekly is like going to church for us. While our children are in class, we parents don’t just go home, because we live quite far away. We hang out here and participate in a variety of things that we organize for ourselves, including dancing, fitness exercise, seminars on the stock market, family financial management, and children’s college prep. I kind of look forward to going to the Chinese school on Saturdays because that is the only time we can socialize with our own people in our native language. I know some of our older kids don’t like it that much. When they complain, I simply tell them, “This is not a matter of choice, you must go.”

Chinese language schools also serve as an intermediate ground between the immigrant home and the American school. They help immigrant parents (especially those who do not speak English well) to learn about the American educational system. It facilitates their making the best of the system in serving their children without requiring involvement in formal schools and their parent-teacher associations. Through these ethnic institutions, immigrant parents are indirectly, but effectively, connected to formal schools and are well-informed of the specifics crucial for their children’s educational success. The social capital arising from participating in Chinese schools and other ethnic institutions is extremely valuable in serving this particular goal.

Chinese language schools foster a sense of civic duty in immigrants, who are often criticized for their lack of civic participation. In ethnic institutions, many parents volunteer their time and energy to various tasks ranging from decision making, fundraising, and serving as teaching assistants, event organizers, chauffeurs, security guards, and janitors. Parents also take the initiative in organizing community events such as Chinese and American holiday celebrations.

The spillover effects on children are equally significant. First, Chinese language schools and other relevant ethnic institutions offer an alternative space where children can express and share their feelings about growing up in immigrant Chinese families. A Chinese schoolteacher says:

It is very important to allow youths to express themselves in their own terms without any parental pressure. Chinese parents usually have very high expectations of their children. When children find it difficult to meet these expectations and do not have an outlet for their frustration and anxiety, they tend to become alienated and lost on the streets. But when they are around others who have similar experiences, they are more likely to let out their feelings and come to terms with their current situation.
Moreover, these ethnic institutions provide unique opportunities for immigrant children to form a different set of peer group networks, giving them more leverage in negotiating parent-child relations at home. In immigrant Chinese families, parents are usually less restrictive when their children socialize with Chinese rather than American friends. Because they may know the parents of their children's Chinese friends or because they feel they can communicate with the Chinese parents if things go wrong, they are more comfortable with these arrangements. When youth elicit their parents' anxiety and objection, they may use their Chinese friendship network as an effective bargaining chip to avoid conflict. In the case of interracial dating, for example, a Chinese girl may tell her mother that she is studying with a friend from Chinese school while running off with her non-Chinese boyfriend, avoiding an intense confrontation with her mother.

These ethnic institutions also function to nurture ethnic identity and pride among Chinese youth who may otherwise reject the Chinese identity due to pressures to assimilate. In Chinese schools they are exposed to something quite different from what they learn in their formal schools. For example, they recite classical Chinese poems and Confucian sayings about family values, behavioral and moral guidelines, and the importance of schooling. They listen to Chinese fables and legends and learn to sing Chinese folk songs, which reveal various aspects of Chinese history and culture. Such cultural exposure reinforces family values and heightens a sense of "Chineseness," helping children to relate to the Chinese culture without feeling embarrassed. A Chinese school principal clarified that "these kids are here because their parents sent them. They are usually not very motivated in learning Chinese per se, and we do not push them too hard. Language teaching is only part of our mission. An essential part of our mission is to enlighten these kids about their own cultural heritage, so that they show respect for their parents and feel proud of being Chinese."

More important, being in this particular ethnic environment helps alleviate the bicultural conflicts that run rampant in many immigrant families. As Betty Lee Sung observed in her study of immigrant children in New York City's Chinatown, bicultural conflicts are "mod-

erated to a large degree because there are other Chinese children around to mitigate the dilemmas that they encounter. When they are among their own, the Chinese ways are better known and better accepted. The Chinese customs and traditions are not denigrated to the degree that they would be if the immigrant child were the only one to face the conflict on his or her own."

The ethnic effect is by no means uniformly positive. Tremendous pressures on the children as well as on the parents to achieve can lead to intense intergenerational conflict, rebellious behavior, alienation from the networks that are supposed to assist them, and even withdrawal from formal schools. A resourceful ethnic environment, however, by exerting similar pressures, can reinforce parental expectations. Children are motivated to learn and do well in school because they believe that education is the only way to escape their parents' control. This motivation, while arising from parental pressure and being reinforced through participation in the ethnic institutions, often leads to desirable outcomes. A nonprofit program organizer summed it up in these words: "Well, tremendous pressures create problems for sure. However, you've got to realize that we are not living in an ideal environment. Without these pressures you would probably see as much adolescent rebellion in the family, but a much larger proportion of kids failing. Our goal is to get these kids out into college, and for that we have been very successful."

Conclusion
Together with other ethnic institutions specializing in academic and extracurricular programs for children, today's Chinese language schools have grown into an ethnic system of supplementary education that is complementary to rather than competitive with formal education. Despite diversity in form, governance, and curriculum, today's Chinese language schools, nonprofit and for-profit alike, compete intensely with one another in offering services to immigrant families that are directly relevant to children's formal public
education. Our study illustrates how ethnic institutions support the
value of education and highlights the important effect of the imme-
diate social environment between a child’s home and formal school.
As a Chinese school teacher remarked, “when you think of how
much time these Chinese kids put in their studies after regular
school, you won’t be surprised why they succeed at such a high
rate.” It is this ethnic environment with enormous tangible and
intangible benefits to the immigrant family that helps promote and
actualize the value of education.

It should be noted, however, that the ethnic resources and social
capital can be effective only to a certain point. While the social cap-
ital ensures that immigrant children will graduate from high school
and get into college, beyond high school it may become constrain-
ing. Many children of Chinese immigrants, for example, limit their
vocational trajectories, tending to concentrate in science and engi-
neering. They may do so not only because their families pressure
them to do so but also because their coethnic friends are taking the
same paths. Unfortunately, after graduating from college they often
lack the type of social networks that would facilitate their job place-
ment and occupational mobility. In this respect, there is much
room for improvement in the existing ethnic system of supple-
mentary education.

Notes

ories. Anthropology and Education Quarterly, 29, 2.


vard University Press.


5. This case study is exploratory. The material presented in this section
draws primarily on observations conducted by the authors at community
events; in private homes; Chinese schools and other private educational
institutions, religious and community-based organizations, and ethnic businesses;
and on main business streets in New York’s Chinatown between September
and October 1994, in Los Angeles’ Chinatown between July 1999 and Decem-
ber 2001, and in Los Angeles’s Monterey Park between July
1999 and April 2003. Random interviews were conducted face-to-face on site
or by phone. Both Chinese and English were used in face-to-face and tele-
phone interviews. All names are pseudonyms to ensure anonymity.

6. Some noted that Chinese language schools dated as far back as the late
1840s, when Chinese laborers started to arrive in the United States in large
numbers. See Fong, J. C. (2003). Complementary education and culture in the
global/local Chinese community. San Francisco: China Books and Periodicals;
America before World War II. In Chinese Historical Society of America (Ed.),
Chinese America: History and perspectives, 2000. San Francisco: Chinese His-
torical Society of America; Wang, X. (1999). A view from within: A case study of
Chinese heritage community language schools in the United States. Baltimore, MD:
National Foreign Language Center, Johns Hopkins University.

7. Ethnurb is a term developed by Wei Li to refer to suburban ethnic
clustering of diverse groups in which no single racial ethnic group dominates.
Los Angeles’s Monterey Park is a typical ethnurb. Li, W. (1997). Spatial
transformation of an urban ethnic community from Chinatown to Chinese
ethnurb in Los Angeles. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Department of
Geography, University of Southern California.


based organizations and families in the adaptation of the younger generation.
In L. Weis & M. S. Seltzer (Eds.), Beyond black and white: New venues, new faces in

http://www.hxes.org/headquarters/organization/b-law.htm


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Understanding the Social Worlds of Immigrant Youth

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