

NO. 93

TOWARD A POLITICAL ECONOMY  
OF THE SOJOURNING EXPERIENCE:  
THE CHINESE IN 19TH CENTURY MALAYA

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ISSN 0129-8186

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1988

ISBN 9971-62-513-X

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*Pariah Capitalism and the Overseas Chinese of Southeast Asia:*

*Problems in the Definition of the Problem*

The phenomenon of pariah capitalism was effectively cast out of the mainstream of sociological attention most eminently through the writings of Max Weber. Perhaps quite rightly so, the pursuit of profit in what he called "adventure capitalism" should not be confused with the ethos of rational calculation peculiar to modern bourgeois capitalism. (Weber 1958: 186, 271) Of course, Weber's purpose in emphasizing this point was dual: first of all to underscore the peculiarity in historical and institutional terms of the lifestyle and ethos intrinsic to modern capitalism and secondly to undermine the theoretical foundations of any attempt to explain such "capitalism" literally in terms of its overt economic behavior. Thus, in casting out "adventure capitalism" and "pariah capitalism" (e.g. the Jews of Europe, the Chinese of Southeast Asia, sometimes referred to as the "Jews of the East" (cf. Landon 1941:40), the Indians of South Africa, etc.) as insignificant sociological problems, Weber saw such phenomena not as historically exceptional or sociologically aberrant in themselves but rather simply as issues *peripheral* to the central theoretical concern of the time, namely the evolution of Western capitalism. To be sure, non-rational modes of capitalistic organization like that seen among the Jews or the Chinese are probably historically as old as the origins of capital itself. However, the embeddedness of the discourse of classical social theory within the context of changing European society unjustifiably excludes the possibility first of all that "pariah capitalism" may be understood as a peculiar historical and institutional phenomenon in its own right and secondly that this phenomenon can be understood in terms of a

broader theoretical model, i.e. as a kind of political economy.

So much has been said about the economic "success" of the overseas Chinese in Southeast Asia in the historical and social science literature that a disordinate amount of energy has been spent upon making a direct link between economic "performance" in the above sense and its roots either in the utilitarian, profit maximizing behavior of the Chinese or in certain functional, social stratificational aspects of the sojourning experience.

At a certain level, it is perhaps possible to contextualize the "adventuristic" pursuit of wealth often seen among Chinese commercial elements to a set of ethical values and routinized lifestyle in a way which is comparable to Weber's analysis of Western rational calculation and the secularization of values pertaining to one's calling and ultimate station in life. For the Chinese, the commercial pursuit of wealth in general was never a respectable livelihood in traditional Confucian society, occupying the bottom rung of an ideal social hierarchy which was to be preceded by the scholarly literati, peasantry, and the artisan class, respectively. Confucian values were not meant to demean the pursuit of wealth *per se* but rather as an *end* in itself. Instead, economic capital in whatever form and obtained through whatever means had to be transformed into social capital, which included the ownership of and the maintenance of continuity on the land, the enhancement of family or clan prestige as well as scholarly achievement. However, all of these values were tied together in a way that defined a distinctive lifestyle and ethos which can be contrasted with that predestined by a Calvinist world view on the other hand, for example. That is to say, there was little in the ethos of the traditional Chinese to give rise to the routinization of rational calculation envisaged by Weber.

The case of the overseas Chinese in Southeast Asia is interesting then

perhaps less so for its "Chineseness" as a cultural entity than for the question of whether there exists something intrinsic to the *sojourning experience* which made it conducive to the kind of economic "performance" normally associated with what has been called "pariah capitalism".

Perhaps not unlike other "middleman minorities" extensively documented in the sociological literature (e.g. Blalock 1967:79-184; Bonacich 1973; van den Berghe 1981:137-156), Chinese labor migrants to Southeast Asia, and Malaya in particular, were a very heterogeneous group. Most of them tended to be lower or middle class peasants. The individual peasant was less a trained specialist than a jack of all trades, where skills such as carpentering, bricklaying, and housebuilding earned additional income during the slack agricultural season. But, as a group, the Chinese migrants to Malaya represented all walks of life and occupied diverse niches in Malayan society depending upon employment possibilities and general social conditions. A British historian J.D. Vaughan noted:

The Chinese are everything; they are actors, acrobats, artists, musicians, surveyors, missionaries, priests, doctors, schoolmasters, lodging house keepers, butchers, porksellers, cultivators of pepper and gambier, cakesellers, cart and hackney carriage owners, cloth hawkers, distillers of spirits, hawkers, merchants and agents, oilsellers, opium shopkeepers, pawnbrokers, pig dealers, and poulterers. They are rice spirit shop keepers, servants, timber dealers, tobacconists, vegetable sellers, planters, market gardeners, laborers, bakers, millers, barbers, blacksmiths, boatmen, bookbinders, boot and shoe makers, brickmakers, carpenters, cabinet makers, carriage builders, cartwrights, cart and hackney carriage drivers, charcoal burners and sellers, coffinmakers, confectioners, contractors and builders, coopers, engine drivers and firemen, fishermen, goldsmiths, gunsmiths, and locksmiths, limeburners, masons and bricklayers, mat, kayang and basket makers, oil manufacturers and miners. To which we may add paper lantern makers, painters, porters, pea grinders, printers, sago, sugar and gambier manufacturers, sawyers, seamen, ship and boat builders, soap boilers, stone cutters, sugar boilers, tailors, tanners, tinsmiths, and braizers, umbrella makers, undertakers and tombbuilders, watchmakers, water carriers, wood cutters and sellers, wood and ivory carvers, fortune-tellers, grocers, beggars, idle vagabonds or samsengs, and thieves. (Vaughan 1971:15)

Cross-cutting the diverse occupational interests of these migrants was a common and simple goal: to seize a valuable economic opportunity to make enough money either from wages or through entrepreneurial ventures and bring it back with them to their homeland. Thus, the situation of early Chinese migrants was not only characterized by their occupational diversity but also by their institutional "ephemerality" or "impermanence." From a Malayo-centric perspective, the Chinese tended to capitalize upon the middle strata of the economy which acted as an intermediary link between Malay "subsistence production" and European import-export enterprises and also tended to pursue those occupations which the Malays had neither the intent nor the skill to pursue. From a sinocentric perspective, the efforts of Chinese migrants merely represented an impermanent fixture to Malayan society, a peripheral stream of development which ran parallel to the mainstream of Malayan economic life. As Mills (1960:238) put it, "the Chinese was a 'bird of passage': he did not regard the East Indies as his adopted country but merely as a place of temporary exile."

Moreover, despite the superficial diversity of Chinese laborers who eventually penetrated the Malayan labor market, most of the early migrants were unskilled peasants contracted *en masse* from economically depressed villages in southeastern China who were simply deployed into available occupational niches. The process by which these migrants developed these niches to the point where large-scale, labor-capital efficient enterprises came to dominate a large part of the local economy in the nineteenth century has been the subject of a large scholarly literature. Crudely speaking, there are, as has been suggested at the outset, essentially two kinds of approaches prevalent in the literature which have attempted to explain the "success" of the Chinese in Malaya, the first emphasizing the

economizing, rational behavior of the Chinese and the second stressing the social stratificational aspects of the sojourning experience.

With regard to the first, Maurice Freedman (1959) once attempted to explain the economic sophistication of the overseas Chinese in the handling of money by the widespread existence of and participation in "money loan associations" (標會 or 借會). Lacking modern banks or large credit associations, group organized money loan associations served the function of providing large sums of money for personal investment at low-interest or interest-free rates. Members periodically pooled together a certain sum of money which was lent to other needy members according to fixed rules. There were many names for these money loan associations in China, like "rotating associations" (輪會) or "dice-shaking associations" (搖會), which had complex rules governing the lending, amount and payback of loans. While Freedman cited the role of such institutions in developing a sense of sophistication among the Chinese in the handling of money, Clifford Geertz (1962), in a cross-cultural analysis of rotating credit associations, was even more to the point when he argued that such institutions distinctly represented a "middle rung" in development.

In a similar vein, others have attempted to underline certain value-orientations motivating economic achievement, such as 1) industriousness, which is marked by a conscientious attitude towards work, 2) frugality, which is expressed by a willingness to limit consumption in the present in hopes of assuring survival and subsistence in the future, 3) discipline, which is inculcated through family authority, along with 4) a heightened appreciation of money. These attributes, which are products of family upbringing and general social conditions, constitutes a kind of ethos which is generally conducive to upward social mobility. As an extension of

value-orientation, G.W. Skinner noted that the differences in the cultural values and personal attitudes of the Thai and the Chinese were essentially a function of a marked difference in social organization. For the Chinese, hard work and thrift not only represented the means by which to elevate one's individual status but also to maximize ties in an extended family system and pay proper homage and respect to ancestors. However, in Thai society, there was no kin responsibility outside the immediate family nor ritual obligation to any ancestral tradition. Thai (folk) religion also emphasized individual merit-making and salvation while condemning excessive concern for material advancement of self and family. (Skinner 1957:93)

In an attempt to translate cultural value directly into economic action, an economic historian of Malaysia Tom McHale (1963) advocated an "ethnoecological approach" to the comparative analysis of economic systems. He based his argument on the hypothesis that economic organization is basically isomorphic with elements of kinship and family structure. Based upon a study of Malay, Chinese and Western commercial enterprises in Southeast Asia, he argued that Chinese economic enterprises tended to be a structural extension of principles underlying a unilateral, family-centered, closed Chinese kinship system. This contrasted with the bilateral, ego-centered, open structure underlying a Western kinship system. Finally, he concluded that such differences help to explain why traditional Chinese economic enterprises tended to rely upon a relatively simple division of labor, operate primarily on low capital resources and be limited in size or scale.

In broad contrast to approaches accenting the economic utility of the Chinese, which would presumably explain their competitive success relative to other ethnic groups, other approaches have on the other hand tended to

emphasize the social stratificational dimension of the kind of sojourning experience peculiar to the Chinese in Southeast Asia and its ramifications for both economic development and socio-cultural assimilation. The classic example often cited in the literature on Southeast Asia is G.W. Skinner's (1960) comparative analysis of the Chinese in Thailand and Java.

In contrasting the different processes of acculturation found among Chinese communities in Thailand and Java, Skinner saw the institutional mechanisms underlying the maintenance of ethnic stratification as the key factor leading to the polarization of ethnic communities in Java on the one hand and the rapid integration of Chinese within the Thai cultural mainstream on the other. While Skinner did not explicitly spell out the ramifications of these contrasting features of the social structures in these two countries for economic development, it is clear that, for Skinner, the closed nature of social mobility along ethnic lines in Java provided certain preconditions for the kind of economic formation peculiarly associated with middleman minorities. In this regard, the theory of middleman minorities as first introduced by Blalock (1967), formalized by Bonacich (1973) and perhaps best exemplified by Light (1972) represents a systematic attempt to articulate the functional relationship between social stratification, a sojourning economy and ethnicity.

As Bonacich (1973:583) put it, one of the principal peculiarities of middleman minorities is the economic role they play. In addition to concentrating upon certain typical intermediate occupations, notably trade and commerce, the "closing of ranks" which marks their relative status between upper and lower strata of their host society predicates, in Bonacich's view, certain other features of their economic operation and choice of occupation. In terms of economic operation or material strategy,

there is a tendency toward thrift and a willingness to suffer short-term deprivation for the sake of long-term gain. In terms of occupational choice or entrepreneurial investment, the key element of such enterprises is liquidity, marked by low capital input and maximum cash flow. These economic tendencies subsequently reinforce the need for communal solidarity in ethnic terms, which in turn, according to Bonacich, plays a part in the efficient distribution of resources and the strict control of internal competition. Similarly, van den Berghe (1981:139-40) added that, in their function as intermediaries in a market economy, middleman minorities owe much of their success to their ability to harness nepotism in the service of capitalism. In this respect, the cultural and physical enclaving of middleman minorities facilitates the extension of nepotism from the extended family to the entire ethnic community. The "homeland orientation" of these sojourners then makes for a self-perpetuating stratified system which both contributes to and feeds upon this kind of middleman economy.

In brief recapitulation, there are several points which can be made about the sojourning experience of the overseas Chinese in Southeast Asia in light of both the literature on Southeast Asia, narrowly speaking, and as an extension of the general theory of middleman minorities within which explicit reference has been made to the Chinese. First of all, there is a clear emphasis upon the utilitarian rationality of sojourning enterprises in terms of ephemerality, occupational liquidity and value-orientation as an optimal set of adaptative strategies underlying a middleman economy. Secondly, ethnic solidarity of the sojourning community is somehow seen to play an active role in galvanizing the economic performance of middleman minorities *vis-à-vis* their host society or dominant ethnic group in a way which produces a self-perpetuating socio-economic system.

The point of the present paper, however, will be to show that both of these assertions put forth in the prevailing literature are simplistic or erroneous in a way which ultimately exposes serious deficiencies in our theoretical understanding of the sojourning economy (or pariah capitalism) both as a general model and as a historically peculiar phenomenon in its own right. Contrary to prevailing approaches, I wish to propose first of all that the social relations of production and exchange characteristic of the overseas Chinese economy in Southeast Asia must be viewed in the context of the wider institutional linkages both *within* and *between* various enterprises, and I argue secondly that these linkages are themselves the result of a long sequence of historical developments which has for the most part been too easily covered up in the history of ethnic relations.

#### *Coolie Immigration and the Rise of Chinese Tin Mining in Malaya*

In many respects, the development of Chinese enterprise during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries follows superficially at least the standard stereotype of the sojourning experience already well-documented in the literature. Chinese involvement in Malay tin mining is a case in point not only for the degree to which it eventually dominated tin production in the local Malay economy but also with regard to its unusual mode of operation *vis-à-vis* Western and Malay enterprises. The historian R.N. Jackson (1963) classified the history of tin mining in Malaya into six periods: 1) The Malay Period (before 1820), 2) The Early Chinese Period (1820-50), 3) The Age of the Great Capitans (1850-80), 4) The Rise of Kinta (1880-1905), and 5) The Growth of Mechanization (1905-20), and finally 6) The Arrival of the Dredge (1920-present). The beginnings of large scale

migration of Chinese labor in Malaya was predicated essentially upon British occupation of the islands and coastal areas of Penang, Singapore, and Malacca. The extension of colonial protection to the Malay States then attracted a large influx of Chinese labor and capital, thereby fostering the first large-scale development of tin mining in the Malay States.

During the Early Chinese Period, Chinese miners adopted two Malay methods of mining: 1) "dulang washing" which attempted to recover tin grains in streams by using a dulang, a large shallow dish, to swirl away lighter particles of sand and gravel and 2) "lampanning" or "sluicing", which involved the digging of channels and ditches then the flushing of water to force heavier tin particles to accumulate at small dams which were strategically built along these channels. The techniques of alluvial mining adopted by the Chinese in Malaya owed little or nothing to mining techniques employed in China (Yunnan and Kwangsi) where ore extraction was based upon shafting and other underground methods, such as the ta-lung (打龍) system. (Ooi 1955:351) However, the Chinese introduced their own digging tools, principally the changkol, a sort of broad, deep hoe and developed a better method of draining excess water from the mine-pit due to the continual erosion caused by "lampanning." This method of draining involved the use of a chain-pump or chin-chia (轉車) connected to a water-wheel. Consequently, the waterwheel was activated by a gravity-induced flow of water. Especially in larger tin fields, a system of water races had to be constructed in order to lead the flow of water from a previous waterwheel and unite it with supplementary drainage water in order to move the waterwheel of another mine situated at some lower level. The construction and maintenance of this hydraulic system linking the mines required centralized management and a pervasive network of control. Work

in this regard was undertaken usually by the secret societies, to which every Chinese capitalist and laborer belonged. (Wong 1965:49)

The earliest known Chinese mining center in Malaya, composed of 200 Chinese miners, was established in Selangor in 1824, which coincided with the cession of Malacca by the Dutch to the British. By 1830, there were approximately 1200 Chinese miners in nearby Negri Sembilan, a number which by 1847 increased to 4600 along with 3400 in the Malacca territory. (R.N. Jackson 1963:41) However, at this time, there were only a few small Chinese owned and operated mining enterprises, as for the most part the tin industries were managed by the Malay chiefs, financed by wealthy Chinese merchants in the Straits Settlements and worked by immigrant Chinese labor with the understanding that the Chinese merchants received all the tin produced. During this early period of growth, with the exception of those immigrants who were able to finance the expenses of their voyage, coolie labor for the tin mining operations were recruited in the ports of south China by coolie-brokers, who worked in conjunction with other brokers in Singapore to pay the expenses of the voyage. The coolies were contracted under the so-called "credit-ticket" system whereby all passage expenses would be later deducted from their wages. In addition, charterers received \$10-15 for delivering a master craftsman, tailor, goldsmith, or carpenter, \$6-10 for a coolie, and \$3-4 for a sickly man. (Blythe 1947:71) Given the rather dirty nature of the whole affair, coolies so recruited were often called "pigs" (猪仔) and the people in charge of the coolie-importing lodging houses were consequently called "pig-bosses" or "pig-herders" (猪仔頭). Moreover, those serving their one-year period of indenture were referred to as sin-kheh (新客) or "new hands" and those who wished voluntarily to serve another term at substantially higher wages were called

lau-kheh (老客) or "old hands". This system of labor indentureship remained intact for the most part with occasional modifications made over time in the content of the contract, and it was not until the passage of the Labour Code of 1912 that it was legally abolished. A general idea of the terms of the work contract can be seen from a report submitted by the Labor Commission of 1890 (*ibid.*:79):

For Mining in Perak and Selangor:

- a) 360 days work
- b) wages of \$2 per year
- c) deduction for passage not exceeding \$22
- d) free food
- e) free mosquito-curtain and clothes
- f) If in debt at the end of the year, he is kept on but on wages of free coolie.

There were many abuses in the system and many coolies were continually kept in debt by advances of cash or provisions, gambling, and through encouragement of opium addiction. Furthermore, they were apparently compelled to work under the impression that they were still legally bound to their employers or towkays (頭家). In fact, workers rarely earned enough money for future savings and as a result became bound for a long period of time to exploitative economic conditions. (see also Yen 1987)

Those who are careful may save in their second year about \$40 or \$50, and they generally begin to trade ... or they return with their treasures to China, where they can live for some years on this sum, or they continue to work in the mines until they have laid up more money. These belong to the exceptions. (1850 report, in R.N. Jackson 1963:2)

The Age of the Great Capitans (1850-80) heralded a great increase in Chinese labor immigration and the expansion of the tin industry. From the 1840's onward following the discovery of new tin deposits, the Malay chiefs found it more to their advantage not only to import Chinese tin miners but also to encourage wholesale development by Chinese-operated enterprises. During this period however, few technological innovations were effected in

the tin-extracting process, such as the abandonment of the use of ditches in favor of lanchut or wooden sluice boxes. (Wong 1965:50) The two major thrusts in the expansion of the tin industry included the Malacca-sponsored penetration of Chinese tin miners into Selangor and the movement of Penang-sponsored miners into Larut in northwest Perak.

More importantly during this period, one began to see a definite pattern of social organization in the Chinese mining settlements. The mining settlements were very closely knit, self-governing, self-regulating communities, united in aim although often mutually antagonistic, as they exercised strong internal discipline and excluded outsiders. By wielding strong control over the activities of its members in the mining operations, these secret societies, each headed by a "Capitan China," rivalled not only each other but also the relatively weak power of the unstable Malay States. Particularly in the larger mining settlements of Selangor and Larut, the Chinese greatly outnumbered the indigenous Malay population. Of the entire Chinese population in the mining settlements, 80% were miners and the rest were tradesmen-blacksmiths, carpenters, vegetable-growers and shopkeepers.

The Rise of Kinta in central Perak (1880-1905) not only signalled the rise of another expanding area of Chinese tin mining enterprises but also took mining out of the hands of a few capitalists by tearing down the unilateral authority of the "Capitan China" and the overt repression which was carried out at lower levels of headmen. Just prior to this period, there was a sharp fall in the price of tin in 1875, then a sharp rise in 1879. An equally sharp fluctuation in the Chinese population followed immediately thereafter. As a result, during the 1880's, a large influx of Chinese labor followed another phase of expansion of the tin industry to meet the now exponentially rising labor demand. For instance, in Perak

from 1879-1891, the Chinese population multiplied from 20,373 to 95,277, and in Selangor from 1884 to 1891 the Chinese population rose dramatically from 28,236 to 50,844. (R.N. Jackson 1961:37) In fact, from 1884 to 1889, the Chinese mining population in Kinta alone rose from 5342 to 44,790.

The Kinta period marked more importantly the rise of new Chinese entrepreneurs who embarked upon independent mining ventures. These enterprises, which tended to be small and adopted liberalized labor policies, ultimately caused many coolies to abscond from former employers and thus forced the large capitalists to effect organizational changes and adopt new labor practices. Two kinds of mining enterprises were developed: 1) the kong-si (公司) or ta-kong (打工) system and 2) the fun (份) or fun-si-ka (份子家) system, which is often also called the "co-operative" or "tribute" system. The nai-chang (泥井) system, which was a system of contractual payment by piece-work, was also an important innovation that followed the development of these two kinds of enterprises.

In the kong-si system, a man with some capital acquired a mining lease, collected together a labor force to work the property and installed the necessary buildings and equipment. He then struck a bargain with an advancer to provide the working expenses. The advancer was normally awarded the right to claim 10% of the tin output, to buy the rest at a percentage off the market rate, to supply provisions to laborers at above-market rates and to buy the mining lease. The original mine owner hired his laborers either on contract work or on monthly wages and only paid them when annual accounts were settled. (Wong 1965:60)

The tribute system was characterized by a distribution of profits among the owner of the mining land, the advancer, and the laborers. Tribute workers were not wage-laborers but rather speculators who risked

their labor for economic gains. They received the balance of the profits which were first distributed among the owner, who installed the necessary buildings and equipment, and the advancer, who monopolized the sale and supply of provisions to the laborers on credit and kept all the accounts.

A small shopkeeper hears of or sees a piece of mining land which he fancies. If it is in private hands, he goes to the owner and offers so much per cent of his output for permission to work; if it is government land, he usually dispenses with his preliminary.

He then builds a kong-si house and collects a number of his own friends and clansmen whom he knows he can trust, and starts them with a small advance each, and they then work on the 10% system; but as the returns are immediate, or at least come in a short time, they very soon see whether the ground will pay or not, and if it does not they stop work and go elsewhere. (F.M.S. Report 1903, R.N. Jackson 1961:85)

The tribute system which probably developed after the kong-si system proved to be popular particularly in the 1890's as it became an operation in which the small investor and the laborer tested their entrepreneurial capabilities. The investor or advancer risked his money; the laborer risked his time and labor.

The nai-chang system was adopted sometime after the development of the kong-si and the tribute systems, and it was merely a wage system whereby a worker would be paid at a contractual rate of so much per chang (30 ft. square by 1 1/2 ft. deep). It provided an alternative for those who risked failure in cooperative ventures, and consequently such laborers were often employed in the kong-si enterprises of the proven, reliable tin districts. Moreover, such piece-labor rates in general proved to be more popular among the Chinese rather than among the Malays or the Indians since they provided an opportunity for supplementary overtime pay and higher rates during those days of bad weather. In contrast to kong-si-kong (公司工) laborers, who tended to be either skilled or experienced and were paid time-wages, the nai-chang workers tended to be unskilled and were mostly relegated to help

the kong-si-kong workers, remove over-burden, carry the earth (hence nai) containing the ore and repair the water races.

By 1903, 223,600 Chinese were engaged in tin mining in the Federated Malay States (Perak, Selangor, Rahang, and Negri Sembilan). Of these, 6,337 were actually engaged in the tin mines, and the rest were employed in cutting timber, crushing stone, washing tin, smelting, and other trades connected with the industry. Of the mine workers, 65,656 worked under contract, 29,015 worked for wages, and 91,666 worked on tribute. (F.M.S. Report 1903, quoted in R.N. Jackson 1961:87)

During this period, one saw the crystallization of the organizational pattern of the Chinese mining enterprise and consequently the rapid (though momentary) decline of Western-operated tin enterprises which were unable to compete on the same level of efficiency. There may be several reasons for this "success". Productivity of Chinese labor is an often quoted reason which by implication raises the problem of bureaucratic efficiency and effective sizes of Chinese and Western enterprises.

Experience has shown that Chinese working in their own methods and with their own countrymen can make handsome fortunes in tin mining. But their systems as regards cost of management are eminently economical. There is little doubt that a Chinese manager on \$25 a month will get better work out of his men than an English overseer on ten times that sum. Weighted by heavy payments to promoters and so on, and by the cost European staff, the foreign company starts in tin mining in competition with the Chinese at an enormous disadvantage, and there is little ground for surprise that company after company struggles and fails. In the present stage of exploration in the Malay Peninsula there is no proof of the existence of any mines which can be worked so as to return a profit on a very large capital under a highly paid European staff. (Annual Report of the British Resident Selangor 1889 after the failure of the Rawang Tin Mining Co., Ltd., the last survivor of the European managed companies, see Blythe 1947:84-85)

However, Chinese mining enterprises functioned almost wholly upon credit. Accounts were settled every six months or at the end of the year, at which time profits or wages were distributed from the balance. Sources

of capital were always limited, the extraction process was heavily labor-intensive and it also depended little upon some light machinery. Yet the capital input involved in starting and maintaining a Chinese mine was ridiculously small in contrast to that of Western enterprises.

In 1880, the capital cost of opening a mine worked by 600 laborers, with no Western machinery, and a productive life span of five years, was estimated at \$4272 or about the cost of a Gwynne centrifugal pump. About 30% of the bill went to pay for the construction of crude buildings and warehouses, 15% for drainage installations and mining equipment, 12% for dressing apparatus and smelting works, and 43% for collecting and importing a labour force of 600 men. (Wong 1965:63)

On the whole, the evolution of tin mining technology followed directly from the availability of resources and the cost benefits involved in the actual extractive process. For the most part until the early 20th century, one had only to exploit surface tin deposits which did not necessitate any large-scale mechanization. For reasons cited, the European practice of experimenting with labor-saving heavy machinery proved in the short run to be wasteful and costly. However, it was not until the exhaustion of surface tin deposits and the gradual focus upon underground mining that Western mining enterprises began to become competitive again. The arrival of the dredge in Perak in 1912 and Selangor in 1918 signalled the slow decline of Chinese mining enterprises in Malaya. The dredge, which could exploit far deeper deposits, presented difficulties in obtaining capital which the Chinese could not overcome. Furthermore, clannishness and regionalism in the respective Chinese enterprises hindered the possible merger of these operations into limited liability companies or joint-stock companies which would have been able to raise the necessary capital.

In short, the Chinese tin mining enterprise was indeed by intention an ephemeral economic creation which could have easily been dismantled or shifted from one region to another without much loss. From an ecological

perspective, tin mining existed only insofar as tin resources, given certain technological preconditions, existed to be exploited. After all, the main components of the Chinese tin mining enterprise, capital, which was supplied by the capitalist entrepreneur, and labor, which was supplied by Chinese migrant laborers, were in essence ephemeral elements. On the one hand, during the early development of tin extraction in Malaya, in which mining for the first time was effectively transformed from a part-time "subsistence" activity to a full-time market-oriented activity destined for export, the Chinese entrepreneur began as an "outside" agent in operating the mining enterprise by supplying the necessary working capital and labor in return for the finished product (minus a certain percentage as tax revenue for the Malay chiefs). Later on, even when the Chinese entrepreneur undertook full-scale operation of these enterprises, the capital input was low and the total risks were thus low. On the other hand, Chinese migrant labor was equally impermanent and shifting. The laborers, most of whom were male and separated from their immediate families in China, had absolutely no intention of settling there. They merely attempted to save enough money to return to their homelands and live off their accumulated fortunes. The demographic figures alone in this regard demonstrate this fact. For example, in Perak in 1891 there were only 669 Chinese females to every 10,000 males, and in Negri Sembilan the ratio was found to be 369:10,000. As late as 1911, the ratio between males and females was 28:1 among the Chinese estate population. (Li 1955:79)

However, in the long term, ephemerality in economic or other terms is an insufficient cause in explaining the "success" of these enterprises, much less the creation of ethnic solidarity. As can be witnessed in the evolution of Chinese tin-mining in Malaya, the total social phenomenon

peculiarly associated with the kind of pariah capitalism described above goes far beyond the simplistic characterizations of a middleman minority economy. On the one hand, in terms of the *material forces of production*, only the technological deployment of labor and capital followed the dictates of the model of a middleman economy. More importantly on the other hand, it was the *social relations of production* peculiar to the Chinese enterprise that not only set it apart from its Western and Malay counterparts but also constituted the basis for its perpetuation as an institution as a whole. In the early history of Chinese tin mining dominated by secret societies and financed by wealthy commercial elements, the success of the system could have been attributed just as easily to its liquidity as to its ability to exploit a pool of indentured labor. The laborer was bound to his employer by an elaborate system of debt-credit that began with the the infamous credit-ticket system. Indentureship was maintained by continued credit, gambling and opium addiction, and in this regard the strong control exercised by secret societies functioned less to inculcate the illusion of ethnic enclaves than to reinforce the social conditions of labor which were intrinsically crucial to the performance of the system. As the contractual arrangements of labor evolved partly in conjunction with the introduction of new, small-scale enterprises, only those who were able to escape these bonds by paying off debts and taking up small-scale occupations or other forms of self-employment (i.e. like Bonacich's (1973:586) idealtypical family store) provided the point of departure and minimal qualifications for economic success and upward mobility. In other words, it was the ability to break away from the various forms of debt-bondage found in these ephemeral, exploitative enterprises which dictated the need for industriousness, frugality and

discipline as a set of underlying values rather than *vice versa*. Thus, it goes without saying that the "system", much more than simply being Chinese in appearance, was made possible by a mechanical division of labor or mode of production which clearly recognized no ethnic boundaries. A parallel case in point is the example of Chinese agricultural enterprise in Malaya.

### *Chinese Shifting Agriculture in a Sojourning Economy*

The development of Chinese shifting agriculture in Southeast Asia is noteworthy not only for its omission in the literature on middleman minorities but also for its being even more clearly an ephemeral creation, as there was no such tradition of Chinese agriculture at all.

Perhaps more so than in the case of tin mining, the ephemeral intentions and pursuits of the Chinese in shifting agriculture manifested themselves quite explicitly. The most important crops grown in Chinese shifting cultivation in the nineteenth century, pepper, gambier and tapioca, were particularly suited to the needs of the Chinese. Pepper vines are fully grown after four years but are not fully bearing until about seven years; they give good crops for up to fifteen years and remain profitable up to the thirteenth year. Gambier, used primarily in tanning leather as a dye for silk and as a chewing substance, grows to maturity in about a year and a half, and crops may be gathered every four to six months for ten years or more. Tapioca, grown from six-inch long cuttings from a stem of a mature plant and planted shallowly in the soil, may be harvested after twelve to eighteen months.

Tapioca and gambier in particular produced quick returns following maturity, required little capital input, little technical skill and little

maintenance outside of periodic weeding and were thus adaptable to most kinds of tropical localities. Pepper, although requiring more labor input, more skill in maintenance and a longer period of maturation nevertheless as a general rule was planted simultaneously with gambier in the same plot. The ratio of pepper to gambier was usually 1:10. The quicker-maturing, continuously-harvesting gambier helped to provide an income to supplement the highly seasonal cycle of pepper production. But more importantly, the price of gambier was seldom high enough to justify its cultivation alone as integrated pepper-gambier cultivation ensured regular employment throughout the year for a relatively large labor force. (J.C. Jackson 1968:9)

Ironically, the most obvious fact demonstrating the impermanence of Chinese shifting agriculturalists was found namely in the nature of the land-lease title which was mutually arranged between the settler (or settling community) and the local Malay ruler. As was the case with pepper-gambier cultivation and tapioca cultivation, it was not so much the fact that the local rulers were unwilling to grant rights to ownership of land but rather that the Chinese found such ownership of land to be uneconomical and unnecessary in the long run, given the need to constantly abandon old worn out plots in favor of exploiting virgin land. In fact, in many of these unsettled, sparsely populated areas, these groups of Chinese planters were merely squatters with no legal title to the land. (*ibid.*:10)

In 1790, Che Kay, the "Capitan China" of Penang, with financial aid from Francis Light of the East India Company began to introduce pepper plants into Malaya. Gambier was also imported during the early 1790's, but in the initial stages they were not planted concurrently by the Chinese. At the turn of the nineteenth century, European planters experimented with making pepper into the first permanent export crop from Malaya.

In general, the enterprise was European-financed and Chinese-worked. European owners usually employed Malay and Chinese laborers to prepare the ground and set up the vines. Chinese contractors, acting as intermediaries between the European owner and immigrant labor, contracted ambitious sin-kheh on the "credit-ticket" system to work on small, divided plots as soon as the vines reached maturity. As such, the cultivator was required to deliver a fixed amount of pepper per vine or per annum, thus enabling the owner to engage in other activities and placing the brunt of the day-to-day supervisory work of the labor force in the hands of the Chinese contractor. (*ibid.*:99) While pepper enjoyed success on the European market in the decade that followed, falling prices and stagnancy in pepper production due to the ultimate failure of sedentary pepper cultivation later spelled doom for the enterprise as a whole such that, by the mid-1830's, the crop had virtually disappeared and "the jungle (had) usurped the extensive tracts formerly under pepper". (*ibid.*:98)

In contrast, pepper-gambier cultivation beginning in the 1840's was entirely financed, operated, and worked by the Chinese. Chinese planters, most of whom had come directly through the "credit-ticket" system, engaged Chinese merchants in Singapore town to finance the initial working expenses in order to open up small plantations. In return, a certain percentage of future crops would then be handed over to the financier on terms which were generally favorable to the financier.

Pepper-gambier cultivation, almost exclusively a Chinese enterprise, played a major part in absorbing much of the migrant labor of the 1840's and 1850's and ultimately aided in the rapid growth of the industry as a whole. Initially, pepper-gambier cultivation began in Singapore and later spread to nearby Johore, attracted by vast areas of virgin land available

there. Due to the lack of any effective routes of inland communication in Johore at the time, Chinese cultivators set up small villages along river banks called kang-kar (港脚). The headman of the group called kang-chu (港主), who acted as a representative of the settlers, obtained on the behalf of his community a title of land from the local Malay ruler called surat sungei (river document), which designated the right to cultivate in some vague area "limited only by the watersheds of the next two rivers". (Cooper 1936:248) In turn, the kang-chu took responsibility for paying taxes on the land and for maintaining strict segregation between Malay and Chinese communities. Later on, the Malay ruler recognized the authority of the kang-chu over the monopoly of rights on public gaming, pawnbroking, selling pork, selling spirits, selling opium as well as taking commission on the export of pepper and gambier and the import of rice. (*ibid.*:251) In essence, the internal organization of the kang-kar system appeared to mirror in many ways the socio-political organization of Chinese mining communities. And like the secret societies and the kong-si, the kang-kar tended to be strictly regionalistic (that is, of the same dialect group) as a high degree of discipline further served to intensify the tight-knit organization of the community.

The historically shifting frontier of pepper-gambier cultivation became apparent as the soil began to show signs of exhaustion, and cultivators displaced themselves to new stretches of virgin land, leaving behind vast areas of landang (coarse grass) and belukar (secondary jungle). From a synchronic perspective, the movement of shifting cultivators from southern Johore proceeded northward and westward into the interior along the rivers or along the western coast. However, with the constant flow of cultivators from Singapore to Johore throughout the latter half of the

nineteenth century, older zones of settlement which had been abandoned and been left to fallow during earlier periods of exploitation were being reoccupied. This therefore suggests that from a diachronic perspective, the distribution of cultivated land within the occupied areas in actuality fluctuated continually. (J.C. Jackson 1968:29) While Chinese pepper-gambier shifting cultivation ultimately extended to the western Malay States of Negri Sembilan and Selangor beginning from the 1870s's onward following the extension of British control there, the industry there as a whole declined before it could become a widespread phenomenon.

Tapioca cultivation, first grown as a significant export crop in the 1860's, followed a similar pattern of development, expanding rapidly in the 1870's and the early 1890's while it reached peaks of 93,000 acres in 1882 and 160,000 acres in 1900. (*ibid.*:56) Centered in Malacca, the tapioca industry spread outward in concentric circles, aided by the road building activities undertaken by the Malaccan government. By the early 1880's, the tier of cultivation extended well into Negri Sembilan and parts of Johore, while at the same time older zones of settlement became increasingly abandoned. In general, the frontiers of tapioca cultivation shifted much more rapidly than gambier due to the quicker exhaustion of the soil and a longer fallow period. Thus, semi-permanent settlements such as the kangkar never emerged in connection with tapioca cultivation.

Chinese tapioca enterprises for the most part appeared to be financed and owned by wealthy Chinese proprietors in Malacca town. Chinese contractors acted as middlemen by setting up plantations and funnelling immigrant labor onto these agricultural concessions. While the proprietor on the one hand provided the initial working capital to the contractor, the contractor on the other hand was obliged to sell his produce to the

proprietor at fixed rates. (*ibid.*:75) As with the credit system in the pepper-gambier industry, the benefits or the profits eventually accumulated into the hands of the few merchants and proprietors who supplied the initial working capital in return for "shares" in the finished product. The bureaucratic efficiency, simple flow of capital, and effective use of labor which characterized the operation of Chinese agricultural enterprises no doubt contributed to the growth and the prosperity of the industry, too.

Other factors contributed as well to the "success" of Chinese shifting cultivation *vis-à-vis* that of Western sedentary agriculture in this period prior to the advent of rubber. On the one hand, European settlers of the early nineteenth century had little knowledge of local conditions and of tropical agriculture. Their experiments with pepper, nutmeg, cloves, coffee, cotton, tea, tobacco and cinnamon represented repeated and costly failures to make out of these crops, all of which required a long maturation period and specialized treatment in the hands of a specialized labor force, permanent export-oriented crops. Furthermore, the saturation of the world market caused a sharp decline in prices which could not justify such single-crop cultivation on a large-scale basis. Attempting to cope with the actual infertility of tropical soil after clearing, European planters did not begin to cultivate tree crops until the late nineteenth century. With the cultivation of tree crops, which were realized to create their own nutrient cycle, European agriculture thus began to achieve some measure of success. (*ibid.*:88)

On the other hand, the decline of Chinese shifting cultivation was due directly to an official colonial policy which attempted to prevent further soil exhaustion and excessive depletion of firewood caused by shifting cultivation. By the mid-1890's, legislation was enacted on the one hand to

force shifting cultivators to simultaneously adopt some type of permanent crop in addition to tapioca, gambier or pepper, and on the other hand to deny the use of virgin land for purposes of growing non-sedentary crops. Consequently, existing pepper-gambier and tapioca production continually declined, followed by the emergence of new agricultural patterns.

As in the case of tin mining, the operation of Chinese shifting agricultural enterprises mirrored various essential features of the idealtypical sojourning economy with its emphasis upon short-term returns, low capital input and intensive labor among other things. The fact that shifting agriculture was not traditionally found among the Chinese made it even more a product of particular historical circumstances. Yet as in the case of mining, the role of the entrepreneur or middleman merchant and the subsequent creation of debt-credit contractual bonds began to emerge as a critical nexus of relations directly affecting the fate of the enterprise as a whole. For one thing, it was a system operated at the expense of the bonded laborer and in so doing provided the basis for differentiating the "successful" Chinese from the less successful ones. But more importantly, the institutional linkages and social relations which formed the core that financially maintained and socially regulated this system of production were not products of the sojourning experience proper but rather part of a peculiarly Chinese mode of operation, broadly defined.

*The Nature of Chinese Middleman Economics  
in the History of Nanyang Trade and Commerce*

Needless to say, there has been a long history of trade between China and countries of the Nanyang, comprised primarily of flows of luxury goods

from the tributary states to the Chinese court for imperial consumption. However, prior to the increasing trade of the Dutch and the English, from the seventeenth to the late eighteenth century, private Chinese merchants were also engaged in wholesale and retail commerce, transportation and small-scale trading mainly with and for the empires of Siam and Johore. In contrast to the Dutch and English traders, for example, the Chinese were principally local traders and individuals who built their private fortunes wherever they could.

With the founding of Penang in 1785 and the founding of Singapore in 1819, one saw a substantial influx of Chinese to these uninhabited islands. With the establishment of such entrepôt ports, the British not only provided incentives for the development of Chinese commercial activity there but also provided an important home base or settlement for local Chinese traders. As a result, the role of Chinese trade and commerce changed drastically from a diffused, localized network of private merchants and individuals to a kind of sedentary focal point for middleman commercial activity. (Wang 1959:18-19) A commercial center began to take shape which not only served as a receiving port for the influx of Chinese immigrant labor in the decades that followed thereafter but also provided the financial base for the development of new Chinese industries, namely tin-mining and agriculture.

During the nineteenth century, although there was increasing trade between China and the Nanyang region through the free ports of Singapore and Penang, the bulk of the large-scale import-export operations was handled by European companies such as the British East India Company. The Chinese in essence became the main compradores of European capital. They formed the middleman organizational link which collected produce for export

and which distributed and retailed imported merchandise. In many ways, they had become agents of large-scale European enterprises and thus "mastered the art of amassing wealth without assuming much responsibility". (*ibid.*:17) Subsequently, the mass of Chinese immigrants which arrived during the early development of mining and agriculture in particular had little to do with the development of an already pre-existing middleman commercial strata in Malaya. Apparently, it was only after their arrival in Malaya that the Chinese immigrants recognized the opportunities for trade and commerce there.

Trade attracted a great deal of the interest and energy even of families that depended mainly on agriculture for their livelihood. For the returned immigrants, residence abroad had usually meant a change to their inclination and the opportunities available in the foreign community. A larger proportion were engaged in trade after their return to China than before leaving for the Nanyang, that is to say, about half the total -- shop assistants (there were no apprentices among them), merchants, and peddlers being added together: this was due to the greater opportunity for trade offered in the Nanyang than at home, and the ambitious Chinese naturally chose the opening with the greatest chances of profit. Nevertheless, there were those who returned home, representing those who were laborers before they left and those who had struggled to emancipate themselves from working with their hands and failed to do so. Farming showed a startling decline as an occupation among the returned emigrants, having fallen to last place. (Purcell 1951:41)

By and large, most of the Chinese business operations tended to be small, family-owned enterprises necessitating little capital expenditure either for initial working expenses or for maintenance. More importantly, profits were easily reinvested, and capital was never tied up into such things as land and other high-risk enterprises, hence liquidity.

Whether or not such factors as liquidity, organization efficiency, or even business thrift actually accounted for such "success", there was a difference between the "success" of Chinese middleman commercial activities as a whole and those "successful" merchants and proprietors who employed

the liquid assets of their own enterprises to capitalize on other developments. As previously mentioned, urban financiers played a strong role in providing the necessary capital for the opening of new enterprises in return for some percentage share of the finished product. The same credit system extended into so many sectors of the Chinese economy that it simply became the core of Chinese enterprise itself as well as the key to its fate; and the conditions were so advantageous to the financier or advancer such that laborers or cultivators were continually kept in debt.

Many of these pioneer planters never cleared their original debt and remained under the control of Singapore financiers; indeed, it was believed that two-thirds of the plantations existing in 1839 were subject to encumbrances of this description. Moreover, according to the Chinese themselves 'the best of the plantations, when clear of all encumbrances yield the proprietor an annual profit of about \$400, while the lowest pay their way'... By providing capital to almost penniless immigrants, this system of financing new gambier and pepper plantations took advantage of their 'get-rich-quick' desire. But without a system of financing of this type, extensive agricultural colonization could never have occurred in early nineteenth-century Singapore. (J.C. Jackson 1968:12-13)

Unfortunately, the historical development of Chinese mining, agricultural, and commercial enterprises in nineteenth century Malaya offers little to support the view that the immigrant Chinese, through experience with various sorts of "money loan associations", had gained economic sophistication in the handling of money which enabled them to become eminently "successful". The key feature of this sort of economic sophistication and "savoir faire" on the contrary appeared to be the illusion of easy credit which in fact bonded persons to an intrinsically exploitative relationship maintained by supporting institutions like the secret society. In fact, "universal indebtedness" in China appears to be a routine way of life among the Chinese peasantry. A long-time missionary named Rev. J. MacGowan described the situation in Fukien as follows:

These money lenders are not a distinct class such as exist in England, but they are everyone who has any spare cash at his disposal ... The whole Chinese empire may be said to be in a perpetual state of borrowing and lending, and a large majority of its people are daily concerned with that most practical question of how shall they pay the interest to the minority who have lent them money. (Freedman 1959:64)

On the contrary, the rigid separations of status within the developing mining and agricultural communities and the binding relationships between creditor and debtor gave rise to the strong possibility that there were indeed distinct classes if not groups of people, established money lenders and entrepreneurs, who continually attempted to keep debtors in a perpetual state of debt. More important in this context are the prior existence of a wealthy commercial class which was the major source of capital stimulating the development of Chinese industries in nineteenth century Malaya and also the ultimate distribution of profit resulting from the "success" of Chinese enterprises which was inevitably funneled back into the hands of a few "successful" entrepreneurs and proprietors. (also see Nonini 1987)

In sum, commercial or entrepreneurial interests constituted a kind of invisible hand which linked the fate of all other enterprises. In social terms, this involved in practice the work of complicated networks, informal institutions and secret organizations. To be sure, these networks, institutions and organizations tended to follow kinship or regional ties based, as it were, upon mutual trust, but it is quite inaccurate to say that these relationships by their nature either contributed to or fed upon ethnic nepotism *vis-à-vis* that of the host society. By their very nature, the social relations of production which characterized the fate of Chinese enterprise in nineteenth century Malaya in essence polarized the fate of the various individuals bound by that relationship in a way which merely gave the illusion of ethnic discrimination as has been depicted in the

literature. This mode of operation peculiar to the Chinese enterprise as witnessed in the context of its development in 19th century Malaya and as understood in terms of its *social relations of production* now simply begs the question of how the Chinese "experience" can be conceived of in broader theoretical light and as a historical phenomenon in its own right.

*Rethinking Ethnicity: The Economy Has No Race*

In conclusion, one must first of all distinguish analytically between those factors contributing to ethnicity and ethnic stratification on the one hand and those factors contributing to the kind of socio-economic formation associated with the phenomena of "middleman minority economies" or "pariah capitalism" as they are often referred to in the literature. The development of ethnic relations which took place beginning with the influx of Chinese labor into Southeast Asia, as in many other parts of the world, was largely a product of given socio-political conditions-at-large, in this case British colonialism and the changing state of Malay society. Just as these socio-political conditions-at-large enabled the Chinese to carve out a particular niche within the mainstream of Malayan life, changes in those conditions-at-large over time should then have continued to be the seminal factor in shaping the general climate of ethnic stratification as well as the possibilities of cultural persistence or assimilation.

On the surface, there appears to be some basis for describing the experience of the overseas Chinese in Malaya in terms of a theory of "middleman minorities" or "pariah capitalism", loosely defined. However, upon closer inspection of the data, it becomes increasingly evident that these prevailing theories have managed merely to scratch the surface of

what appears to be a complex socio-historical phenomenon in its own right. While it is true, for instance, that the Chinese "middleman economy" in Malaya was characterized by liquidity and ephemerality, on the other hand these characteristics were representative only of its material forces of production, to use the Marxist term, and overlooked the social relations of production underlying its mode of operation which could not be explained in terms of a theory of the middleman minority economy. In this connection, there were various important institutional linkages which not only were intrinsic to the nature of "the Chinese enterprise" but also served to bind the fate of various enterprises in diverse sectors of the economy, the most important being the dominant role played by urban financiers in creating and maintaining the social relations of credit throughout a complex history of Nanyang trade and commerce.

Likewise, with regard to Weber's discussion of the nature of pariah capitalism, one cannot disagree with his contention that a sociological understanding of such a problem must transcend any simple attempts to underscore the "adventuristic pursuit of wealth". However, as can be seen from the details of the present case study, the phenomenon of pariah capitalism cannot be dismissed lightly as sociologically insignificant. Given the context of its dependent relationship to the host society, it is clear that the kind of socio-economic formation peculiar to this Chinese mode of pariah capitalism can be characterized in terms which approaches a kind of total life situation. The significant issue in this regard concerns the problem of how to spell out in analytical terms the nature of *institutional linkages* peculiar to this kind of formation.

While efforts in this regard are exploratory at best, it is evident from the example of the Chinese enterprise in Malaya that the institutional

linkages described here are in fact part of a total life situation. In addition to the social network of credit which linked trade and commerce to mining, agriculture and other "ephemeral" industries and which in turn provided the conditions of labor that literally bound the coolie to an exploitative mechanical division of labor, these economic linkages also necessitated and gave rise to a much wider network of institutions. The foremost of these institutions was the secret societies, whose primary function in exercising internal control over the enterprise as well as the community of its members was to maintain in practice the existing social relations of production in a way which ensured the perpetuation of the system at its core. As the mining industry, for example, evolved away from the monolithic enterprises headed by the Capitan China to one which saw the rise of independent, small-scale entrepreneurs and changing labor relations, its relationship to supporting institutions like the secret societies necessarily changed too but by no means disappeared (witness the problem of Mafia-like tongs in contemporary Chinatowns). It simply touched off a change in the nature of the social community as a whole along with the development of other forms of supporting institutions like regional associations, chambers of commerce, etc.. Needless to say, even the middleman merchant and family store, taken by Bonacich and others to be the idealtypical sojourner enterprise, proves to be clearly the end product of a long, complex pattern of institutional development. In short, there is much to be explored in the study of these changing institutions which has heretofore escaped systematic attention by social scientists and historians alike. Thus, it would appear that from the niche carved out by prevailing theories of middleman minorities and pariah capitalism, one has left out by virtue of neglect or default a whole new field of empirical investigation.

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