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SINGAPORE CHINESE TRADITIONAL VOLUNTARY ASSOCIATIONS:CONVERGENCE VS DIVERGENCE

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A Structural Analysis

Group alignment according to basic organizing principles is much less a complex phenomenon for the early Chinese immigrants in North America than for those in Southeast Asia. Most early Chinese immigrants to the American continent were drawn from a few conterminous localities in the Province of Quangdong. Some of the social organizing principles, e.g. affinity in dialect, geographical origin, lineage and occupation, overlapped considerably.

For the Chinese immigrants in the early British Straits Settlements, group alignment was entirely a different social reality. These Chinese had migrated from various parts of Fujian and Quangdong. A very prevalent organizing principle for group alignment had then been geographical origin. This we call the First Locality Organizing Principle (L), because there are subsidiary locality principles. Associations had been formed bearing the respective names of their members' original residential location in China. To identify such associations operationally, the name of the association sufficiently indicates or implies the place the memebers were from.

Not all of those from the same locality spoke the same dialect. Those who did not would have a further criterion to distinguish themselves by forming smaller groups. This other organizing principle which stressed speech or dialect homogeneity was also very commonly observed among the early local immigrants. This had become the second locality principle (LD), which was essentially a principle conditional upon dialect affinity.

Some inhabitants of Fujian's Yongding District had aligned with Hokkien-speaking bodies and others with Hakka-speaking groups.

Also, not all LD group members belonged to the same lineage. For closer ties, those who believed that they were originated from the same ancestor by virtue of their common surname had also differentiated themselves from the rest. In the case of localized lineage groups, common dialect and locality can be readily presumed. This then gives us the third locality organizing principle which is graduated firstly by dialect origin (D) and secondly by lineange (C). It is denoted as LDC. Such LD clan groups were numerous in Singapore alone.

The three locality principles help generate three levels of exclusivity, with L being less exclusive and LDC most. So, an LDC group is one whose members are from the same locality and dialect origins, and are having the same surname. There were, however, groupings whose members shared the same surname and dialect but were from several localities. This kind of grouping may be denoted as LnDC, where the subscript 'n' denotes the number of localities. If the group is composed of members from five localities, but sharing the same dialect origin and lineage, it may then be denoted as L5D1C1. While there may not exist empirically all types of combination, it is a theoretical possibility. The unitary grouping may thus be denoted as L1D1C1, and the global grouping, as LDC. In terms of level of exclusivity, an L3D2C1 grouping is less exclusive than the L2D1C1 or the L2D2C1 bodies.

The second fundamental organizing principle among the immigrant Chinese was the origin of dialect (D). Regardless of locality, people who spoke the same dialect had also bound themsleves together. The task to identify a dialect group is not as simple as that for identifying a

locality association. Associations founded upon dialect principle, in most cases, were encoded in labels with historical meaning associating with the dialect origin. For example, 'keshu' and 'yinghe' are common codes for the Hakka-speaking people. Under normal circumstances, the composition of such dialect-bound associations would involve more than one locality where the Hakkas had a demographic predominance, such as Jiaying Zhou Prefecture and Dapu District.

This principle was more prevalently employed by the Hakka-speaking people, as in the case of the Hakkas from Guangdong's Fengshun, Yongding and Dapu or Feng, Yong and Da in brief. This principle can also be made conditional upon other organizing principle to form subsidiary principles. Among these other principles, the more prominent one is the principle of locality. We found that people who spoke the same dialect had also realigned themselves through locality origins. This dialect-locality subprinciple may be denoted as DL, or dialect principle No.2. Meixian Dongxianghui, Huizhou Huiguan and Dapu Dongxianghui are good examples to illustrate the DL principle.

The application of another subsidiary principle to further differentiate the DL groups is also evident in that people who shared the same origins of dialect and locality had also tied themselves to a common lineage. A good case in mind is the Hakka Deng Shi Gonghui which admitted only the Hakka-speaking Dengs. This may be labelled the dialect principle No. 3 or DLC. The locality element in this instance is implied, as the association in question took in only the Dengs from Feng, Yong and Da districts (Wu, 1975, vol.2:192-3).

The third major non-locality organizing principle is lineage or clan ties which had bound together people who believed that they were originated

from the same ancestor. Surname groups that are not differentiated further by either locality or dialect ties may be denoted as C groups. The Nanyang Zhao Shi Zhonghui (Wu, 1975, vol. 2:169-71) appears to be such an organization.

In reality, most of the surname groups were segmented into either locality (CL) or dialect (CD) groups, or both (CDL or CLD). The Guang, Hui and Zhao Xu Shi Gonghui (Wu, 1975, vol.2: 121) is a typical localized lineage group which was composed of the Xus from the Guangzhou, Huizhou and Zhaoqin districts. If the dialect ties could be presumed in the locality, it would have made the said clan group a CLD organization. On the other hand, the Xies' Hakka Baoxu Dongzhong She (Wu, 1975, vol. 1: 189-91) illustrates well the non-localized but dialect-diversified clan groups (CD). The Zhong Ya Zheng Shi Gonghui (Wu, 1975, vol.2: 73-4) is a CD organization that was further differentiated by locality, for the Zhengs of the association were Hainanese traceable to the Hainan Island's Zhongzhou Fu and Ya Zhou.

The fourth fundamental non-locality organizing principle is occupation (O). The Chinese immigrants who assumed the same kind of occupation had formed associations, unions, or guilds for purposes of socializing and protecting their common interests. Such associations would normally be expected not to be bound by either locality or dialect ties. This does not seem to be the case in actual practice. Because of team work and social exchange requirement in many occupations such as restaurant, plantation, mining, opera troupe, traditional medicine, and construction, origins of dialect had become a prerequisite in the working life. Thus, when occupational guilds were founded, the presence of the dialect element, whether or not formally instituted, would be natural. Bei Chen Hang and

Gushu Sheng Jin Tang (Wu, 1975, vol.2: 1-7), which were Cantonese occupational guilds, illustrate well the subprinciple OD. An OLD case may be found in the Swatow (Shantou) Hakka Pawnbrokers Association.

For each of the four major organizing principles, there are different levels of organizational integration. Let us begin with an CDL group which is a surname clan conditional upon dialect and locality differentiation. Such an association would be deemed integrative if it had accepted members from more than one locality in addition to homogeneity in speech as well as in locality ties. So, notationally, an L2D1C1 association should be more integrative than an L1D1C1 group. For the same matter, the most integrative association may be denotd as L {max.} where the subscript {max.} means the highest number of units involved. This addresses more appropriately the inter-provincial associations. An L is reserved for the provincial level organizations. The same derivation can be applied to DLC, LDC and OD/ODL groups. In theory, any of the four organizing principles can be expanded in a permutable manner, which would yield a good number of levels of integration.

Perspectives on Group Development

The structural analysis presented above has unfolded a theoretically complex hierarchy of system rigidity among the many traditional Chinese voluntary associations. Notationally, the hierarchy begins with a smallest unit symbolized by, e.g., D1L1C1, and ends with an inter-provincial organization denoted by D{max.}. The number of in-between organizations is in some cases theoretically infinite, for each numerical combination denotes one possible type of organization. But, empirically, since the numbers of localities, dialects, surnames and occupations are finite, the number of the combination of voluntary organizations is thus limited.

We are interested in the finite and empirical aspect of the traditional Chinese voluntary associations. Our interest surrounds three questions: First, given the hierarchy of the traditional organizations, which level of the associations first came into being in the Straits Settlements? Second, had there been any direction of change in the alignment pattern from one to another? Third, what accounts for such a directional change, if there is any?

The social Darwinists would see the evolution of Chinese voluntary associations to proceed from simple and generalized to complex and specialized type of social organization. Freedman (1960: 47-8), for one, expressed that in the earliest phase the Singapore Chinese immigrants bound all their solidarities together. This form of organization was said to have given way to specialized associations which are characterized by differentiation and individualized solidarities. He probably took the secret societies or kongsis as the base for comparison with subsequent development of other types of Chinese voluntary associations.

On the other hand, Li (1970: 104-5) observed in the 1950s that most surname groups in Muar (Malaya) were founded after the World War II. This growth of the diversified groups is a sign of additional complexity. Li does not attribute such an increase to the Japanese Occupation; he has only given a specific time frame for the stage of transition.

There is also a perspective which is counter-social Darwinism. It views the development of Chinese voluntary associations as going from divergent to convergent (Wu, 1975; Hsieh, 1977; Yong, 1986). Traditional Chinese organizations are seen as developing from individualized units to highly integrative bodies over time. This trend of counter transformation is either seen as a natural process of social change consequential upon

social differentiation in the society at large, or seen as a process that was being triggered off by unprecendented historical events. The Chinese revolutionary activities in Singapore/Malaya during 1911 are said to have great impact on the growth of unity in the overseas Chinese community, as these activities had provided the best common ground for moulding a Chinese identity. (Yen, 1976: 287-8). On the other hand, the social mobilization movement for the Jinan/Shandong Relief Fund (May, 1928 to January, 1929), as a result of the Japanese' brutal killing in the Shandong province, is claimed to have caused the segmented Chinese community in the Straits Settlements to forge closer ties (Yong, 1986: 180-88).

It is also advanced that the Japanese encroachment on China in 1937 had spurted up a spate of united voluntary associations, especially surname groups in Malaya and Singapore (Hsieh, 1977: 94-6; Wu, 1975, vol. 1: 9). Change of political system to communism in China in 1949, which resulted in the termination of Chinese emigration and later in the commitment to new identity, has also been cited as a relevant historical event that could have brought about the change (Hsieh, 1977: 96).

The consequences of each or all these events are said to be responsible for the mushrooming of an integrative type of association. Integrative association, as it is used, is in one sense meant regional body while its system remains restrictive, e.g. a regional organization for a particular LDC or DLC group. A good example is the Nangyang (broadly Southeast Asia) Wang Shi Zhongqin Hui that was developed from the Wang Shi Gonghui in Singapore alone. It in another sense also means the development from a restrictive unit to an unrestrictive unit, e.g. form a localized huiguan to a provincial huiguan, although it is not regional overseas. We shall accommodate both definitions of divergence. For clarity purpose, a

new concept of 'inclusive' organization is employed in this analysis to encompass both definitions, leaving the term integrative to refer to the latter type of associations.

While the present enquiry will make an attempt to verify the validity of the various observations, which is likely to be obscured by the incomplete nature of the data we have, it aims more directly at deriving an overall pattern of the development of such associations. The findings would help to substantiate the relationship between occurrence of socio-political crises and the direction of change of voluntary associations. Examination of the frequency and nature of associations founded before, during and after a crisis period should be the appropriate approach. However, because of the erosion of information that happened to the many associations, a positive proof is much weaker than a negative rejection of any thesis. The rejection of either the convergence or divergence thesis would imply a multiple or even mixed pattern of development of the Chinese voluntary associations. That would give rise to other possible explanations such as internal self-created force or natural structural change, e.g., demographic transition. The decrease or increase in the population of a particular subgroup might render the subgroup to incorporate with others or to become independent.

It is also possible, that as put forward by Hsieh (1977: 95-6), owing to the exhaustiveness of the total number of surnames, individual surname groups would reach a stage to incorporate among themselves, or to align with locality groups.

Another explanation has also been offered in this regard: the transformation, or part of it, of the traditional Chinese associations is due to responses to the reformation of the local government administrative

system in China (Peng, 1983: L14). During the Republican period in China, many districts were subdivided. Some traditional associations had followed suit by setting up new associations based on the subdivisional locality units. This is evident in the founding of Xiamen Gonghui, Heshan (Xiamen area) Gonghui and Jinmen Huiguan, after the Republican Government's re-demarcation of Fujian's Tongan District into Xiamen Municipality, Simin District, and Jinmen District.[1]

The Determinant Role of the Dialect Element

It has been a rather perplexing question regarding the role played by the locality and the dialect ties. These two organizing principles revolving around the two elements, as compared to surname and occupation, have not been well-defined and hence have sometimes been used interchangeably. It is conceptually clear that locality refers to geographical location of domicile, while dialect, speech spoken by a minority group, is socio-cultural. Vernacular may be developed out of geographical isolation of minority groups, but empirical evidence shows that dialect is the real practising organizing principle and locality is only a manifestation of the dialect element for huiguans at the prefectural, district and lower levels. For locality associations above the prefectural levels were perhaps more meaningful structurally than functionally, it is observed that the prefectural and district component associations were much more active than their affiliated provincial association (Peng, 1983: L-15). Those below the district level and even the LDC surname groups were expected to be relatively less active by virtue of their much limited membership as well as the specificity of functions served.

The following examples are intended to illustrate sufficiently the hidden significance of the dialect element in the many associations with a locality label (see, for example, Pan et al., 1963; Zhou and You, 1985).

Under Guangdong Province's Chaozhou Prefecture, there used to be ten administrative districts, of which Fengshun and Dapu (Chayang) are two. The local Teochiu (Chaozhou) people's prefectural 'locality' association had excluded the two named districts to form the Chaozhou Eight Districts Association. The people from the eight districts spoke a dialect known as Teochiu dialect, whereas those from the two excluded districts spoke Hakka. The Fengshun and Dapu people had actually joined up with another Hakka-speaking district located in the Fujian Province to form the Feng, Yong and Da group to run their public cementery. As a matter of fact, as an observer puts it, the speech used for conducting meetings in the said Teochiu prefectural association had along been the Teochiu dialect. (Peng, 1983: L-63).

The Teochiu dialect is only one of the four major dialects in the Guangdong Province, the other three being the Hakka, the Hainanese and the Cantonese. The Hakka dialect was used in a vast number of districts in both Quangdong and Fujian provinces. The Hakka-speaking people have been well-known for observing closely the dialect organizing principle, i.e., notationally, D/DL/DLC and DLO. Whatever number of locality groups were taken to be the component bodies of any organization founded by the Hakka-speaking people, the members from those locality groups would have had the knowledge of the dialect. Although evidence also shows that the Hakkas had also once joined with the Cantonese-speaking people to run religious bodies, just like in a provincial association, the Hakka identity was made crystally clear. Consider the Teluk Ayer Fude shrine which had once been

run by both the Cantonese and the Hakkas, the origin of dialect of each group was unambiguously recorded in the said shrine.

The other ardent follower of the dialect organizing principle was the Hainanese. Hainan is a prefecture under which there are a number of districts. It is noteworthy that the Hainanese in Singapore had not established any Hainanese 'locality' associations at the district level, although there were a few at the village level and quite a good number of surname groups.

Residents in Guangzhou and Chaoqin prefectures mostly spoke the Cantonese dialect. The people in these two prefectures had formed societies with only the Cantonese-prevalent districts in the Huizhou Prefecture, especially those districts lying southwest of the prefecture. The districts sprawling over the northeast of the same prefecture customarily joined the Hakka speaking-organizations, because the inhabitants there spoke the Hakka dialect. Thus, the dialect group origin of any association with Huizhou as a constituent body can be established not by the mere name of the prefecture, but through the associating locality/dialect groups.

In the Fujian Province, dialect as a functional substitute of locality principle is equally obvious. People living in the Quanzhou, Zhangzhou and Yongchun prefectures are said to share the same dialect called variously Xiamen (Amoy) speech, Minnan hua (Southearn Fujian vernacular), or simply Fujian hua. These people reportedly founded the earliest association named Hengshan Ting. The Fuzhou people from the Fuzhou Prefecture, distinctive in their speech, showed no sign of being given a berth in the said public cemetery group. Neither were the people from Xinhua, who do not share the Xiamen dialect, given much social space.

It is reported that the Fujian Provincial Association had all along been the gathering place exclusively for the Zhang-Quan-Yongchun people since its foundation around 1850-60. Other subdialect groups such as Xiaman and Fuzhou people were invited to join the provincial association only after a century in the 1950s when the association was under the directorship of the late Tan Lark Sye (Chen Liushi) (Directory, 1984: L-26).

Given the above empirical evidence of group alignment and re-alignment, we are convinced that in most, if not all group alignment at the prefectural, district and lower levels, dialect origin is the practising organzing principle, either explicitly or implicitly. In other words, for the same matter, locality principle vis-a-vis dialect principle had been an organizing principle devoid of real social meaning. To say this is not to deny its functional role as a subsidiary principle to the dialect principle e.g. the DL/DLC groups. In short, while conceptually and analytically locality and dialect organizing principles are distinct, empirically they may be used interchangeably in grouping associations at the prefectural level and below.

The Empirical Analysis

Divergence or convergence is about degree of differentiation along a temporal dimension. It can be examined in a macroscopic perspective in which the variety and quantity of each variety of associations will constitute the unit of analysis. The two vital pair-elements in the concept of convergence are simple-complex and generalized-specialized. Organizations are simple if they are of few varieties. So, if the variety of the associations has grown numerous between two specific time periods, a divergence is noted. The reverse is a state of convergence.

Operationally, there could be two indicators of variety. First is the type of associations such as temple, clan group, huiguan and occupational guild. The other indicator is the number of subtypes of each type. The increased number of subtypes of each type indicates a higher level of differentiation and thus a sign of divergence.

On the other hand, generalized organization is one that caters to some common needs of the affiliated subgroups. A generalized organization is usually more inclusive in nature in that it is considerably unrestrictive in admitting members of diverse origins. The prevalence of such groups is thus a sign of convergence. On the contrary, the currency of exclusive or system-rigid groups suggests divergence. Locality and occupational groups that are set up at the provincial level or higher, organizations that accommodate two or more dialect groups, and exclusive associations that are regional in nature, are deemed inclusive.

In order to locate these two dimensions of group development, altogether 260 traditional associations functioning until the 1970s were included for the analysis. The source that contains these 260 cases is termed here descriptive source (Chen and Tan, 1972; Wu, 1975, 1977), for it provides some description of a few aspects of the associations concerned, through which crucial origins of members can be traced. In contrast, data that are not accompanied by any explanation except for the mere name of the association are from a source termed non-descriptive, or nominal source (Wu, 1985,1977). While the actual number of contemporary Chinese traditional associations is certainly well over these verfiable 260 associations, the remainder which are from non-descriptive source are used as supplementary data, primarily because of some difficulties in

identifying their dialect/locality origins. Most of the latter category were founded only after the first quarter of the present century.

Based on the two dimensions of divergence-convergence, namely, simplicity which comprises two indicators and the generalized feature which has one indicator, two patterns of the development of associations can be observed. One is a general pattern which is constructed along a time span, and the other is a specific pattern which is established through comparing the development of such associations before, during, and after the occurrence of some significant historical events.

The General Pattern

Variety of organizations Taking 1819-1830 as a base period, we find that within the first decade of the foundation of Singapore, there were four principal varieties of Chinese traditional voluntary associations (Table 1). These four types were clan group (one), huiguan (three), public burial ground (one) and temple (one). Thirty years later during 1851-1860, an occupational guild was established and ten years thereafter during 1861-70, a school was founded.

[Table 1 about here]

The first variety indicator by type of organization is certainly too broad to demonstrate much divergence in the social groupings of the Chinese in the early Singapore. However, a more refined variety indicator based on subtype organization does surface some degree of diversification of the voluntary associations. These subtype organizations were major associations that were differentiated along locality and/or dialect lines. Cumulative frequency of such organizations (Table 2) throughout the years indicates a trend of continual divergence. For example, there was only one clan group during the base period, but the number of such organizations

bearing different surnames within or outside the same dialect group had increased to 23 in 1911, to 32 in 1921-30, and to 52 in 1931-40. The number had reached 74 before World War II. Similarly, the number of huiguans was also on the increase throughout the period until it had reached the peak before World War II. The rate of increase had slackened after the War. Occupational groups in the subtype catergory had also been flourishing during the same period.

[Table 2 about here]

Since the number of dialect groups in Singapore is fundamentally countable, the public cemetery organizations had not grown at the same rate. It has not been the customary practice for each dialect/locality group to set up its own cemetery. Rather, cemeteries were normally constructed either at the provincial level or for a major dialect group such as the Hainanese and the Hakkas. Thus, we assumed that the number of public cemeteries had already saturated before the turn of the present century (Table 2).

The figures of temples and schools are relatively accurate for the greater part of the 19th century. More importantly, many of them were truly subtypes of the original types during the respective period. That is, many temples and the few schools built in the 19th century were either locality or dialect bound. The increase in such subtypes for the 19th century can also be seen from Table 2. The variety of such subtype organizations for the years beyond the indicated periods (Table 2) is not available from the two principal sources upon which the present study relies.

Inclusive Organizations As an indicator of the generalized-specialized dimension, inclusive organizations are thought to be at the

'general' end, as compared to specific and rigid associations. A cross dialect organization is supposed to serve two or more dialect groups whose felt needs can be assumed to be more or less similar. On the other hand, associations formed at the prefectural level and higher were catered for the common needs of the various dialect and locality groups residing in the same prefecture. The kind of needs to be served by the provincial and inter-provincial organizations conceivably would be even more general. An inclusive association is one whose members' solidarities are bound by locality or dialect whose membership is extended to other areas in the host country or beyond. The associations for the Hakkas in Southeast Asia are a good example.

We do not find any such inclusive types of organization in the first two decades of the Singapore history (Chen and Tan, 1972). The first one, which was a cross-dialect cemetery body for both the Cantonese and the Hakkas of certain localities, was set up only in 1840. The Hokkiens' Fujian Huiguan, which was established purportedly for all the people from the province, was evolved from the Tianfu Gong only in 1860; and yet it was not open to all the Hokkiens except those from Zhangzhou, Quanzhou and Yongchun. The number of locality associations at the provincial level can only be one for each province, and thus the two coastal provinces in question can theoretically form only one such inter-provincial body which has never been in existence.[5]

An occupational guild for general purposes was not founded until 1906 in the name of The Chinese Chamber of Commerce. While there had been sporadic founding of specialized occupational guilds in the 19th century, most of them were founded in the 20th century (Wu, 1973, vol. 3).

Looking at the data given (Table 1), it is rather apparent that the Chinese community in the early Singapore was segmented along dialect lines. Just consider that the only one organization, i.e. Jinlan Miao, that was supposed to be provincially open was in fact dialect bound. More convergent associations were established only after the base period. On the whole, the development of the Chinese community as reflected from the development of traditional associations has been towards diversification with brief, intermittent efforts in bundling up all relevant solidarities together under one general organization. A point worth noting is that while inclusive organizations were formed, the original locality/dialect-bound organizations which were constituent members of the inclusive organization were co-existing. That could mean diversity, for they added to the variety of organizations.

The Specific Pattern

The specific pattern refers to the periodic changes in the form of solidarity of the Chinese community -- increase as well as decrease -- as a result of historical changes. The indicators remained unchanged, namely, the variety and inclusivity of the organizations.

Owing to some technical difficulties in the type of data obtained, three types of traditional associations will be excluded from the analysis of the specific pattern. The first type is public cemetery. Traditionally, public cemetery had never been truly public. The highest level of 'publicness' is for people from the same province, and the lowest is that for a single localized lineage and is thus also a dialect-bound cemetery. While the latter,which is known as jia zong, had been found in 19th-century Penang (Chen and Franke, 1985, vol. 2: 761-66), the lowest level of the public cemetery that was ever found in Singapore were those built by major

dialect groups, e.g. the Cantonese Bishan Ting. Since the number of major dialect groups was limited, the growth in such type of organization is inherently checked, although the extension on the original site could be made. So public cemetery is indicative of divergence-convergence tendency only for the short-run, but not for the long-run perspective.

The next type to be excluded is temple. Unlike public cemetery, the number of temples can multiply enormously. Such growth, however, is likely to be 'horizontal' in that the multiplication of the same dialect group's temple, or any temple with specific deities, is a matter of geographical distribution. Such number is in the region of thousands and most importantly they are not available from the two principal sources.

The third exluded type is school. Schools could not have been a traditional Chinese voluntary association, if not for their dialect-bound character. But the element of dialect which had played a key role in sponsorship and medium of teaching in the first two schools in Singapore has been considerably diluted and been confined to the sponsors only ever since Mandarin was used as a teaching medium in 1921. In other words, from the 1920s onward, most schools had been open to pupils of a dialect origin from that of the sponsors or founders, board of directors and the teachers. Schools for the period mentioned have thus drastically reduced their relevance to the thesis of convergence-divergence.

The periods that distinguish the specific pattern are as follows: 1911 when the Chinese Great Revolution broke out; 1927-28 when the Jinan (Shangtung) Relief Fund Committee was set up for financial contribution to help the victims of the Jinan massacre; 1937-1946 when the Chinese were battling against the Japanese in their homeland; 1941-45 when the Japanese militarily occupied Malaya and Singapore; 1949 when China turned to

Communism; 1957 when Malaya gained her Independence, and lastly 1965 when Singapore became an independent nation after seperating from Malaysia. While the historical events taken place in China are a direct test of the convergence-divergence thesis, because these events required the Chinese in this region to redefine their identity and solidarities, those local events are not expected to show much far-reaching effects, for similar demands on the overseas Chinese were not forthcoming.

Contrary to the popular proposition, most historical events but one had not had much impact on the solidarity pattern among the Chinese. (Table 3) It appears that in the year of the Great Revolution, only one inclusive association was formed, which is an occupatinal guild for traders in local/native products. After that, between 1912 and 1920, another inclusive organization was formed, but six associations organizing along dialect lines were also registered. A Ratio of .17, as measured by dividing the inclusive by the dialect associations, is in favour of the latter type of associations. Similarly, during the JRF movement, even in 1928 (up to January, 1929), there was also only one inclusive association founded and after that, between 1929-36, only four with a yearly average of .50. In contrast, there were 16 dialect/locality organizations set up during the same period. The relative impact as measured by the ratio between the inclusive and locality/dialect bound organizations is a very low .25. The segmentation tendency was surely stronger than the solidarity force, even if the eight doubtful cases were to be added to the inclusive category. During the AJW period, there seemed to be more inclusive organization compared to the JRF event, and yet locality/ direct organizations outnumbered inclusive organizations by almost four times. The Ratio shows a very low .26 during the War (1937-41); and an improved, still

low Ratio of .55 during the Post-War period (1945-48). The tendency is similar for the other two Independence events.

[Table 3 about here]

The only event that shows some impact on the solidarity pattern is the Communist takeover of China in 1949. There were 10 inclusive organizations, with a yearly average of 1.43, compared favourably to 7 dialect/locality organizations during the period 1950-56. The ratio of relative impact between the two kinds of solidarity measures is well over unity at 1.43, indicating a much stronger impact of the event on convergence than divergence.

The overall tendency towards convergence is improved to some extent, if non-descriptive data are also included for the analysis. Such data provide only name of the associations and,as a consequence, the few origins that we are concerned with will have to be inferred, or expertly guessed. In the case of locality associations, the inferred locality origin is as good as one can find in the descriptive data. It is however not the case for other types of associations, especially clan groups. Not even face validity can be achieved for many clan groups and they were assigned to the 'doubtful cases' category.

Table 4 contains both descriptive and non-descriptive data. While locality/dialect solidarity still quite reigned the situation by those historical events, the convergence position among the Chinese traditional associations had been much ameliorated. The more striking example is that after the JRF incident, 8 (Ratio= .44) instead of 4 inclusive organizations were erected when only descriptive data were used. Likewise, during the AJR period, there were 10 instead of 6 inclusive organizations, although the Ratio remains unchanged. If such effects can be assumed to continue

functioning until 1948, the Ratio has improved to .43 and the number of inclusive associations also increased from 11 to 26 for the same period. For the Communist takeover event, although the Ratio has gone down by half from 1.43 to .70, the number of inclusive organizations had almost doubled, from 10 to 19.

[Table 4 about here]

The effects of local political changes on the solidarity pattern remain negligible, compared to those occurred in China. This is understandable, for political identity required by the local political events may not have to take the form of consolidated solidarity among the associations. More naturally, these local events asked for specific identity -- loyalty, and to fulfil this demand, it is a matter of taking part in the local civic organizations and relegating the ethnic- or Chinese-bound associations to a lower priority. To bundle up solidarities from all the traditional voluntary associations for redefining identity, it would be an orientation misdirected. Comparatively, in the case of GR, JRF and AJW, Chinese people of all locality and dialect origins were mobilized to contribute to a common cause and to help manage common crises. While apparently the effects of such demands were not lasting, the demands were there.

The effect of the Communist takeover on the convergence of associations is rather puzzling, for the Chinese Communists were probably preoccupied with their social reconstruction programmes immediately after the takeover, and that alone had left them with no time to turn to the overseas Chinese problems, let alone working towards a solidary Overseas Chinese community. Two explanations can be offerred here on the paradox. First, such impact is a subjective, or self-initiated reaction on the part

of the local Chinese. It is true that a number of local students had sought higher education in China after the takeover, especially in the 1950s, but few of them eventually returned. We suspect that a sizeable portion of the effect during the period concerned can be more convincingly explained by the Kuomingtang's (KMT) active overseas Chinese programme which coincided with the takeover. The ties between the KMT and overseas Chinese had long been a tradition since Sun Yat-sen's time. After retreating to Taiwan, the KMT's avowed goal of re-capturing the Mainland was realistically hinged upon the formation of a group of pro-KMT united overseas Chinese. Such an intensive programme is certainly relevant to the explanation of the convergence thesis.

When assessing the impact of the Republican revolutionary activities on the overseas Chinese community during the 1911 Revolution, Yen's (1976: 286-9) theory of convergence was then more readily applicable to the younger generation of the Chinese. By 1949, the growth of unity must have come of age, for the earlier younger generation who had gone through some kind of integrative schooling had assumed an authoritative role in the Chinese community.

The other explanation, a non-political one, refers to parallel structural transformation. Social re-construction programms after the takeover had caused Chinese local government administrative system re-defined, which followed by re-demarcation of the boundaries of certain territorial units. Local Chinese associations quite probably followed suit to some extent (Peng,1983: L17-L21, L60-L62).

To sum up, findings from the specific pattern of development of traditional associations indicate that while convergence of solidarities had been effected by historically significant events to some extent,

especially those with racial tone, such convergence was neither profound nor lasting. In effect, the overall indication seems to be more in favour of the divergence rather than the convergence of solidarities.

CONCLUSION

Being a mere and general statistical survey on the developmental trend of traditional Chinese associations, the study certainly falls short of expectation in some areas of enquiry. The findings are, however, heuristic.

Studies on the thesis of convergence and divergence should ideally be complemented by mass case studies, i.e. the analysis of a substantial portion of the total number of associations tracing their structural differentiation and convergence through time. The contrast between an L3D1C1 group and three separate L1D1C1 associations, for example, would indicate such a trend.

With the many doubtful cases encountered in the data, from both descriptive and non-descriptive sources, it would be more sensible for future students to first search and define the origins of most if not all the organizations. Such a task would involve in large scale searching for the inscriptional data or, more practically, commemorative magazines by the respective associations. This is only the initial step. A nagging but often hidden methodological problem would have to be revolved. This refers to the time lag between description of events, rules and regulations at the time of publication of such magazines, and the prevailing reality when the associations were first founded. People who are not trained in history are in general more inclined to extrapolate fact from the present to the past. It is thus highly possible that the organizing principle was restrictive when the organization was first founded but was described as unrestrictive

a few decades later by the contemporary directors of the same organization. There bound to be associations which have gone through several phases of change in their membership policy, and it is certainly tedious, if at all possible, to spell out along a time dimension as to when such changes have taken place. In fact, any such policy change by itself is also a fruitful indicator of the trend of convergence or divergence.

NOTES

1. This seems to be one-directional towards divergence, for re-demarcation at source in combining smaller units into bigger ones were not met with equal responses by the local Chinese. Singapore' Heshan Huiguan and Goumin Huiguan had not been re-organized into one known as Gou-He Huiguan to be in line with the incorporation of the two districts in China.

2. Information regarding the 260 associations were processed with a mirco-computer. The main entries of each association include the association's name, type, dialect origin, locality origin, year of foundation, extent of inclusiveness, regional coverage. While some of those items received almost a direct recording, others such as dialect origin and inclusiveness were obtained through deciphering the description provided at source.

3. Wu (1975, 1977) recorded 133 huiguans, 200 clan bodies, and 175 occupational guilds, out of which 65 huiguans, 100 clan bodies and 60 occupational guilds were given some description on certain aspects of the association. Besides Wu' works which contain mainly locality, clan and occupational associations, the collection of epigraphic data compiled and edited by Chen and Tan (1972) was also heavily relied upon. The latter work covers more on temples and public cemeteries, among others.

4. Chinese secret societies/kongsis which had played a definite role in the Chinese community in the 19th-century Straits Settlements, were excluded because the reliability of the statistics is questionable.

5. There are, however, inter-provincial associations formed by people from other provinces of China than the two coastal provinces in question. On such association is known as the Sanjiang Gonghui which was formed by the people from three Northern Chinese provinces.

Table 1 Characteristics of Chinese Voluntary Associations Founded during the Initial Period (1819-1830).+

Name of Associations	Type of Associations	Dialect Origin	Structural Components	Year of Foundation
Chaojia Guan	Clan	Cantonese	C1L1D1	1819
Ningyang Guan	Huiguan	Cantonese	L1D1	1822
Yinghe Guan	Huiguan	Hakka	D1L5	1823
Hengshan Ting	Cemetery group	Hokkien (zhang-Quan-Yong)	D1L3	1830
Jinlan Miao	Temple	Hokkien	L	1839

Notes:
+ From descriptive source, i.e. data source that provides explanatory notes on some aspects of the association.
C1L1D1 means members sharing a common surname, from one single locality and who spoke a particular dialect.
L = For people from a province.
Zhang-Quan-Yong = Zhangzhou, Quanzhou and Yongchun.

Sources: Chen and Tan (1972); Wu (1975).

Table 2 Year-Specific Chinese Traditional Associations By Number and Type, Singapore, 1819-1970.+

Year	Clan Group		Huiguan		Guild		Cemetery		Temple		School	
	No.	Cum.	No.	Cum.	No.	Cum.	No.	Cum.	No.	Cum.	No.	Cum.
1819-30	1	1	3	3	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	0
1831-40	0	1	2	5	0	0	0	1	2	3	0	0
1841-50	1	2	2	7	0	0	1	2	1	4	0	0
1851-60	3	5	2	9	1	1	2	4	0	4	0	0
1861-70	2	7	2	11	1	2	1	5	2	6	1	1
1871-80	4	11	6	17	2	4	0	5	3	9	0	1
1881-90	2	13	2	19	1	5	3	8	3	12	0	1
1891-00	3	16	2	21	1	6	3	11	5	17	0	1
1901-10	6	22	3	24	3	9	*	*	5	22	0	1
1911-20	1	23	3	27	4	13			1	23	1	2
1921-30	9	32	10	37	12	25			2	25	*	*
[21-27]	[6]	[29]	[7]	[34]	[3]	[16]						
1931-40	20	52	14	51	11	36			3	28		
1941-50	22	74	7	58	6	42			*	*		
[41-45]	[3]	[55]	[4]	[55]	[4]	[40]						
1951-60	21	95	3	61	5	47						
[51-57]	[20]	[94]	[2]	[60]	[4]	[46]						
1961-70	8	103	4	65	6	53						

Notes:
+ Descriptive source.
No.=Number; Cum.=Cumulative frequency.
* Data not available from the principal sources for the periods onward.

Table 3 Development of huiguans, clan groups and occupational guilds (descriptive source)*

Period [1]	Event [2]	Incl. Assoc. [3]	Yearly Average+ [4]	Dialect/ Locality [5]	Ratio [6]= [3]:[5]	Doubtful Cases [7]	Total [8]=[3] +[5]+[7]
1901-10	-	6	.60	7	.86	2	17
1911	GR	1	1.00	0	1.00	1	1
1912-20	-	1	.11	6	.17	2	9
1921-27	-	3	.43	9	.33	4	16
1928	JRF	1	1.00	0	-	5	6
1929-36	-	4	.50	16	.25	8	28
1937-41	AJW	6	1.20	23	.26	5	34
1945-48	-	5	.63	9	.55	7	21
1949	COM	1	1.00	1	1.00	1	3
1950-56	-	10	1.43	7	1.43	8	25
1957	MIND	1	1.00	3	.33	0	4
1958-64	-	3	.43	7	.43	1	11
1965	SIND	0	0	1	0	1	2
1966-70	-	1	.1	2	.50	5	8

NOTES:

GR=The 1911 Great Revolution.
JRF= Jinan Relief Fund; AJW= Anti-Japanese War;
COM= Takeover by the Chinese Communists; MIND= Independence of Malaya;
SIND= Independence of Singapore.

*Descriptive source refers to data source that provides some description on the associations concerned. Inclusive associations are those which were founded at the prefectural(zhou/fu) level, those which were composed of at least two distinctive major dialect groups and had a diffused (regional) character despite their specific locality/dialect requirement. Doubtful cases are those whose members' origins cannot be established by the data given.

+Yearly Average= number of cases for a period divided by the number of years that constitute the period.

Table 4 Development of huiguans,clan groups and occupational guilds (descriptive and non-descriptive sources)

Period [1]	Event [2]	Inclusive Assoc. [3]	Yearly Average [4]	Dialect/ Locality [5]	Ratio [6]= [3]:[5]	Doubtful Cases [7]	Total [8]=[3] +[5]+[7]
1901-10	-	7	.7	12	.59	3	20
1911	GR	1	1.00	0	1.00	1	2
1912-20	-	2	.22	8	.25	2	13
1921-27	-	3	.43	9	.33	7	19
1928	JRF	1	1.0	0	-	5	6
1929-36	-	8	1.0	18	.44	18	44
1937-41	AJW	10	2.0	39	.26	33	82
1945-48	-	16	4.0	21	.76	29	66
1949	COM	2	2.0	3	.67	5	10
1950-56	-	19	2.71	27	.70	29	75
1957	MIND	4	4.0	6	.67	4	14
1958-64	-	3	.43	27	.11	25	55
1965	SIND	0	0	3	0	2	5
1966-70	-	2	.40	11	.18	23	36

NOTES:

For Event, Yearly Average, Doubtful Cases please refer to the notes provided for Table 3, above.

*Non-descriptive source refers to data source that does not provide any description about the associations concerned except the full name of the associations. In some cases, the name of the association tells the origins of the members belonging to the association.

APPENDIX

Table 1 Distribution of huiguans, clan groups, and occupational guilds (descriptive and non-descriptive sources)

YEAR	HUIGUANS			CLAN GROUPS			OCCUPATIONAL GUILDS		
	Incl.	Doubt.	Total	Incl.	Doubt.	Total	Incl.	Doubt.	Total
1901-10	3	0	3	0	0	5	3	1	9
1911	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	2
1912-20	1	0	6	0	0	0	2	0	4
1921-27	3	0	7	0	2	5	0	5	7
1928	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	4	5
1929-36	4	0	13	4	5	16	0	13	15
1937-41	6	0	30	4	13	28	0	20	24
1945-48	2	0	16	12	13	30	2	16	20
1949	0	0	2	1	1	3	1	4	5
1950-56	1	1	11	18	9	45	0	19	19
1957	2	1	6	2	0	5	0	3	3
1958-64	0	0	10	3	4	24	0	21	21
1965	0	0	2	0	0	1	0	2	2
1966-70	0	0	3	2	2	12	0	21	21

NOTE:

For explanations on the type of data source, see Table 3 in the text.

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