Confucius, Yamaha, or Mozart? Cultural Capital and Upward Mobility Among Children of Chinese Immigrants

Wei-Ting Lu

Graduate Center, City University of New York

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CONFUCIUS, YAMAHA, or MOZART?

CULTURAL CAPITAL AND UPWARD MOBILITY AMONG CHILDREN OF CHINESE IMMIGRANTS

by

WEI-TING LU

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Sociology in partially fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, The City University of New York

2014
This manuscript has been read and accepted for the
Graduate Faculty in Sociology in satisfaction of the
dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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Executive Officer

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Professor Pyong Gap Min
Professor Robert C. Smith
Supervisory Committee

THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK
Abstract

Confucius, Yamaha, or Mozart?

Cultural Capital and Upward Mobility Among Children of Chinese Immigrants

By

Wei-Ting Lu

Adviser: Professor Philip Kasinitz

This study examines the determinants of upward mobility among children of Chinese immigrants. While most studies emphasize ethnic cultural capital as a primary determinant of Chinese upward mobility, this study proposes three new concepts to illuminate understudied processes promoting mobility. Specifically, this study argues that Chinese immigrants’ interactions with classical music schools in the Chinese community help generate globalized cultural capital (resources from immigrants’ participation in transnational networks), navigational capital (the ability to connect social networks together to facilitate community navigation through higher-status educational institutions) and aspirational capital (the ability of parents to acknowledge the barriers to upward mobility). These music schools offer parents highly valued Western cultural capital in the form of difficult-to-acquire competence in classical music, which parents are promised will help their children gain access to
higher-status educational institutions. Parents internalize this valorizing of classical music and believe it will help their children. In addition, Western classical music as a component of Chinese American identity is also reconstructed and blurred through family cultural practice in the local context. Moreover, the competition to climb the educational ladder in the new land encourages Chinese immigrant families to create ethnic identities of hybrid cultural components. This more instrumental acquisition of highly valued cultural capital is a qualitatively different (though not incommensurate) explanation of Chinese upward mobility, which usually centers on Confucian values, retention of Chinese language, and obedience. This study seeks here not to attack the Chinese-values argument, but to argue that institutional factors outside the family are also crucial to understanding Chinese upward mobility.
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Chapter I: Introduction

On the day a blizzard dumped 18 inches of snow on New York City and shut down its public schools, Mrs. Lai walked into the Mozart Music School in Queens and exclaimed, “What a terrible day! I was so scared driving here.” After taking off her down jacket and walking with her son into the classroom, like the other eight Chinese immigrant parents, Mrs. Lai found a seat, sat down, and waited in the small lobby of the school for her son to finish his lesson. She started chatting with the school owners and other parents about the snow; some parents complained that relatives back home in Taiwan or Hong Kong romanticize the snow. It seems as though the parents had known each other for a long time. Others silently read the Chinese-language newspaper World Journal. Despite coming from different parts of East Asia, having different immigrant experiences, and even speaking different dialects, these parents had a common purpose: supporting their children through music lessons.

How does Western classical music become Asian? Recently, music education has received considerable media attention in response to Amy Chua’s (2011) paean to the “Tiger Mom,” a stereotypical version of Chinese intensive mothering. Her claim to be following a Chinese parenting style associated with music education is rooted in her upper-class family heritage that mixes and confuses her class and Chinese identities. Unlike Chua’s story, this
research relies on the concept of community cultural wealth in investigating how Chinese immigrant communities act collectively to support Western classical music education.

An increasing number of reports show a high percentage of Asian Americans learning Western classical music, including students from lower-middle/working-class backgrounds. According to the Survey of Public Participation in the Arts 2002 (National Endowment for the Arts. 2003), the proportion of school-age Asians (57 percent) who take music lessons is higher than other racial groups, including school-age whites (53.9 percent). In addition, the media highlight the high rate of Chinese-American students who participate in orchestras at prestigious colleges. For example, in 2012 among 56 members of the Harvard Bach Society Orchestra, 17 are Chinese Americans. Moreover, the Harvard Crimson reports that a great number of Chinese American students from mixed class backgrounds who apply for prestigious colleges list talent in Western classical music along with perfect SAT scores in their admission packages (Lin, 2007). These statistics and stories show that mastering Western classical music plays a role in reshaping the image of Chinese students by providing them with characteristics that will make them well-rounded, characteristics that are highly prized in the admissions process of many prestigious American colleges.

___________________________

This study examines the determinants of educational success among children of Chinese immigrants, in particular, how immigrant communities perceive the acquisition of the cultural capital associated with Western classical music and access to higher-status colleges. Scholars in the field of educational sociology have recently begun to address the new concept of community-based cultural capital, a set of mobility strategies that local communities generate to assist ethnic minority groups in accessing resources in higher-status educational institutions (Villalpando & Solorzano, 2005; Yosso, 2005; Yosso & Garcia, 2007). This study proposes three forms of community-based cultural capital: globalized cultural capital, navigational capital, and aspirational capital. Globalized cultural capital analyzes how cultural capital circulates and accumulates through the transnational participation of ethnic entrepreneurs. In particular, I examine how the highly valued cultural capital of Western classical music is disseminated by entrepreneurs’ global networks. In addition, this research also investigates two other forms of capital, navigational and aspirational capital, which are generated from Chinese immigrant communities to maximize immigrants’ resources and create advancement opportunities for children in the host society. This research extends Bourdieu’s definition of cultural capital, which regards cultural capital as functioning for upper-class people to exclude others and reproduce their social position (Bourdieu, 1977a, 1977b, 1984, 1986; Wacquant, 1992, 1993). Here, these two forms of acquired cultural capital are resources for social mobility. Navigational capital encompasses resources in ethnic
communities on a large scale that help navigate high-ranking educational institutions. It takes into account the perceptions of parents who, as new immigrants, have to navigate unfamiliar educational territory in a receiving country. Aspirational capital represents how parental aspirations to improve children’s education contend with the perception of limited opportunities for social mobility through their own experience in the labor market. These new types of cultural capital emphasize the rich forms of community-based cultural capital in Chinese ethnic minority communities that have enabled minority children to survive, resist, and navigate higher educational institutions.

This concept of community cultural wealth is different from the traditional Bourdieuan approach, which defines cultural capital as a set of upper- or middle-class styles of behavior for accessing higher-value educational institutions and functions to reproduce social inequality (Bourdieu, 1977a, 1977b, 1984, 1986; Wacquant, 1992, 1993). This Bourdieuan approach implies that there is a lack of resources in ethnic minority communities that minority children can use to obtain dominant forms of cultural capital. If the lack of dominant cultural capital hinders the social mobility of children among ethnic minority groups, how is it that children of Chinese immigrants, including those who are from working-class backgrounds, have been able to attend higher-ranking educational institutions? The case of high upward mobility among the children of Chinese immigrants serves as an empirical challenge to the assumptions of the Bourdieuan approach.
Among various types of community-based cultural capital, globalized cultural capital, navigational capital, and aspirational capital have evolved into analytical concepts available for studies on the educational mobility of ethnic minority groups. Most research on Chinese Americans, however, still tends to focus on a form of ethnic cultural capital that emphasizes the importance of Confucian culture. These studies frequently focus on how supplementary educational institutions sustain traditional Confucian culture, which values education highly, and how parents strengthen their faith in Confucian culture by participating in these institutions (Zhou, 2006). On the one hand, ethnic culture approaches cannot explore the growing number of supplementary educational institutions in New York City’s Flushing, predominating Asian neighborhood, which provide high culture, such as piano lessons, ballet, painting, and so on. This empirical phenomenon challenges the segmented assimilation theory focusing on ethnic cultural capital which leads to an overemphasis on ethnic homeland culture. It neglects other community resources that play an even more important role in explaining children’s educational achievement. On the other hand, immigrants’ participation in classical music is not straight-line assimilation, either. American parents spend more time sending their children for various sports programs and are devoting less attention to classical music. Globalized cultural capital, navigational capital, and aspirational capital point to the importance of resources for ethnic-minority groups’ interactions with high-ranking
educational institutions. This interactive process often understudies in traditional and ethnic, cultural capital approaches.

This case study of Taiwanese- and Chinese-owned, Western classical music schools in Chinese communities in Queens, New York exemplifies the research hypothesis that, when compared to ethnic cultural capital approaches, navigational and aspirational capital can better explain the educational mobility of children of Chinese immigrants in ethnic communities.

The number of Taiwanese- and Chinese-owned classical music schools is increasing in Chinese communities in New York City. In 1986, there were only two such Western classical music schools in New York City, and, by 2010, more than ten such music schools existed. In contrast, there have been only two or three music schools teaching traditional Chinese music throughout these years. Western classical music schools are located in Flushing and have utilized music-education resources gathered from ethnic social networks. The forces that channel immigrant families to participate in Western classical music education are greater than those that sustain their ethnic music.

This study asks whether support of ethnic culture is the primary reason for supplementary educational institutions and why parents aspire to provide their children with a Western classical music education. This research argues that Chinese immigrant families, rather than maintaining their traditional ethnic culture, participate in ethnic, supplementary
educational institutions to obtain new cultural resources in order to orient their families to mainstream educational institutions.

This study makes two contributions. First, it follows current trains of thought in the sociology of education and argues against Bourdieu’s theory, which regards (1) cultural capital as a chief means of social reproduction and (2) ethnic minorities as lacking access to cultural capital. In truth, every ethnic minority group has its distinct culture, and what is most important is not having a culture, but navigating the dominant culture. Second, the research topic of Western classical music education provides an extraordinary case highlighting the importance of various types of community cultural wealth rather than only one type of ethnic cultural capital. This project is relevant to debates on higher educational attainment among urban Chinese immigrant children. It examines how parental aspirations for children’s Western classical music education are constructed by immigrant communities in the host country and are not simply rooted in parents’ experiences in the homeland. This approach to community cultural wealth provides a new perspective on current Chinese American studies.
Literature Review

Class, Cultural Capital, and Educational Mobility

Bourdieu and his associates developed a concept of cultural capital that explains the effects of social and cultural background on educational outcomes (Bourdieu, 1977a, 1977b, 1984, 1986; Wacquant, 1992, 1993). This theoretical concept emphasizes that what is taught in school is structured by cultural preferences, such as the appreciation of art and classical music, theater and museum attendance, and reading literature, which are the cultural heritage of the middle or upper-middle classes. Students with middle-class cultural capital, as a result, do far better in school than their peers who lack such valuable cultural capital. In Bourdieu’s (1986) perspective, cultural capital is a mechanism of social reproduction. By contrast, in most empirical research in the American educational context, cultural capital is regarded as a tool for social mobility (Attewell and Lavin, 2007; DiMaggio, 1982; Lareau, 1987, 2000, 2003; Mohr and DiMaggio, 1995). By investing in the acquisition of cultural capital for their children, parents who possess little cultural capital seek to increase the chances of their children’s education success. From this second perspective, cultural capital is not a social constraint but rather a strategic tool through which children from the lower social classes can achieve educational mobility.
Intersection of Class and Race/Ethnicity

In addition to class differences, research has identified important race-based differences in educational mobility in American school settings (Kalmijn and Kraaykamp, 1996). The differences between Euro-American high culture and Afro-American arts forms also explains why certain minority students are often kept from school-based channels leading to upward mobility (DiMaggio, 1990; Fordham and Ogbu, 1986; Ogbu, 1988, 2004). The system of cultural distinction, or cultural ecology, in American public schools is examined as an example of structural constraints on educational mobility for ethnic-minority students. Racial hierarchy reproduces itself. This research assumes that ethnic-minority groups lack cultural capital for social mobility, and that middle-class whites have much greater access to this cultural capital (Valenzuela, 1999). Yet, DiMaggio (1990) shows that middle-class black students tend to adopt hobbies or behaviors that are valuable for their mobility in dominant educational institutions. As a result, research tends to recommend that educational systems should help disadvantaged students who lack knowledge and capital to gain dominant cultural capital.

Some scholars, however, argue that this notion of cultural capital cannot fully explain the experiences of ethnic-minority groups. Rather than study what ethnic-minority students lack, these scholars study what ethnic-minority students or ethnic-minority communities have. According to Carter, two important points are the cultural ecology of schools that the
minority students face, and how minority students develop their own culture to negotiate social constraints that are associated with the composition of race or ethnicity and class in their local contexts. Students are the main agents in developing particular subcultures (Carter, 2003, 2006). Franklin defines “cultural capital” as “the sense of group consciousness and collective identity.” It explains the historical funding of African American schools and other educational institutions as stemming from various forms of cultural capital in their ethnic communities (Franklin, 2002).

**Chinese American Studies and Community-Based Cultural Capital**

The question of why Chinese immigrant children do so well in American schools has attracted great interest in the field of Asian-American studies. Many scholars claim that Confucian cultural values influence Chinese parents’ high expectations of their children’s educational attainment (Siu, 1992; Watkins and Biggs, 1996; Wason-Ellam, 2002). Other social scientists, however, argue that this cultural argument is too simplistic. For example, Zhou argues that in Chinese communities the ethnic establishment of educational institutions enables a particular group with high education levels and a relatively advantageous class-status to share class-based and ethnic cultural resources, such as Confucian values, Chinese-language, and obedience, with Chinese immigrants from working-class backgrounds.
(Zhou, 2007; Zhou and Kim, 2006). Zhou’s case study does not, however, explain how Chinese educational institutions convert ethnic and class cultural resources into educational advantages in American school settings, where social distinction is structured by middle-class American cultural norms.

Scholars who argue against this Confucian approach state that attributing Chinese immigrant educational success to the maintenance of Chinese culture and values is problematic because Chinese immigrant children, in comparison to other immigrant children, often lack knowledge of their parents’ culture. Chinese immigrant children are, for example, among the immigrant groups least likely to understand their parents’ language, as well as least likely to maintain their parents’ religious traditions (Tran 2010; Kasinitz et al., 2008; Chai-Kim, 2004). The argument for ethnic culture is apparently not up to the task of fully explaining educational achievement among the children of Chinese immigrants. The tendency in current Asian-American studies to emphasize the importance of ethnic culture has led to a neglect of other important forms of cultural capital provided by ethnic communities.

The concept of community cultural wealth reflects an effort to shift cultural-capital analyses of social mobility from an individual context to a larger social and racial context. This concept defines various types of capital in ethnic-minority communities as facilitating efforts to survive and succeed in a segregated world bounded by the forces of social
distinction. These various forms of capital include the following: aspirational capital, which refers to the resources available to maintain hopes and dreams for the future, even in the face of real and perceived barriers (Gandara, 1982, 1995); linguistic capital, which includes the intellectual and social skills attained through communication experiences in more than one language or style (Faulstich Orellana, 2003); familial capital, which is the cultural knowledge that is nurtured among kin and carries with it a sense of community history, memory, and the imprint of cultural institutions (Delgado Bernal, 1998, 2002); social capital, which comprises networks of people and community resources providing both instrumental and emotional support to people navigating through society’s institutions (Gilbert, 1982; Stanton-Salazar, 2001); navigational capital, which refers to the skills of maneuvering through social institutions (Arrellano & Padilla, 1996); and resistance capital, which refers to the knowledge and skills fostered through oppositional behavior that challenge inequality (Freire, 1970, 1973; Giroux, 1983; McLaren, 1994; Delgado Bernal, 1997; Solorzano & Delgado Bernal, 2001).

Most Chinese American studies still neglect analyzing forms of capital other than cultural capital within Chinese American communities when explaining the educational achievement of urban Chinese immigrant children. Among those crediting other forms of capital are Zhou (2006) who points out the importance of social capital in these communities’ ethnic educational institutions and Louie (2004b) who mentions how parental aspirations for
children’s education stem from parents’ perceptions of racial hierarchies in labor markets.

These studies, however, do not look into how ethnic institutions utilize various forms of cultural capital to help immigrant families overcome segregation.

**Boundary Assimilation**

The discussion of whether Chinese educational institutions convert ethnic culture or middle-class culture into educational advantages often falls back onto one central question: whether immigrant children assimilate into American society or not. Major theories concerned with the question suggest different types of assimilation: straight-line, segmented, and boundary assimilation. The theory of straight-line assimilation, drawn from the experience of European immigrants a century ago, asserts that ethnic differences gradually diminish and immigrants eventually adapt to American society (Park, 1950; Gordon, 1964). A later theory known as segmented assimilation, describes immigrants arriving after the 1960s, and shows that immigrants can choose to maintain ethnic solidarity in local communities rather than assimilate into American culture (Portes and Zhou, 1993; Zhou, 1997b; Zhou and Bankston, 1998). The segmented assimilation theory is criticized for neglecting the interactions between ethnic communities and surrounding communities. Some scholars further use the term, incorporation, to critique previous models of assimilation.
theory, suggesting that immigrant groups participate in but do not assimilate into American society (Kasinitz, 2004).

Currently, the idea of boundary assimilation sheds light on the discussion of cultural boundaries from both sides—ethnic groups and mainstream society. Boundary assimilation theory points out that cultural change may occur after new immigrants utilize institutional opportunities to incorporate into American society. These institutional opportunities include the labor market, higher education, and residential settings (Alba and Nee, 2003). Hence, while Chinese immigrants move to new ethnic enclaves and have higher rates of college attendance, they consider themselves, and are considered by the mainstream, as changing culturally. A majority of scholars in the field of Asian studies tend to adhere to theories of segmented assimilation, focusing on how ethnic infrastructure, such as educational institutions, serves to retain ethnic cultural traditions (Zhou, 2009; Zhou and Kim, 2006). My study will focus on the role Chinese ethnic institutions play in providing educational advantages that respond to institutional opportunities in the mainstream culture and through which new immigrant families project their potential future. The theory of boundary assimilation can more accurately characterize the dynamic of the cultural changes among these institutions.
Methodology

This study examines the story of ethnic educational institutions in a Chinese immigrant community and cultural distinction in public schools in the community. I employ four research techniques: (1) survey data to examine learning environments within individual community schools; (2) archival study of available news from ethnic newspapers to document the history of ethnic Chinese educational institutions; (3) ethnographic research undertaken in different types of privately-run Chinese, ethnic educational institutions; (4) ethnographic interviews (Smith, 2006) with students, parents, teachers, and staff in ethnic educational institutions.

This study followed the Institutional Review Board (IRB) standards at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York. It obtained approval letters from the school directors of the participating schools. I asked all informants to sign a consent form before their interviews and observations. For participants under the age of 18, I obtained parent/guardian consent forms as well.
**Survey Data**

This study analyzed statistical data from individual schools in District 25 and District 26 where Flushing is located. Two survey data streams were consulted: the *Parent, Teacher, and Student Learning Environment Survey* and the *Quality Review Report* (New York City Department of Education, 2010) from individual schools in the borough of Queens. This study determined the racial composition of these schools using data from the *Quality Review Report*. In addition, this study also compiled information on the cultural activities the schools provide and the rate of participation in various types of after-school activities using data from the *Learning Environment Survey*.

**Archival Study**

To trace the history of ethnic educational institutions in the Chinese immigrant community, this study collected newspaper articles and advertisements. The Chinese community in New York has two major Chinese-language dailies, *World Journal* and *Sing Tao Newspaper*. Harvard’s Yen-Ching Library has the complete collection of all issues, including advertisements, of *World Journal* published since 1978. In addition, this study also collected newspaper articles in *Taiwan News Smart Web*. 
Fieldwork Research

This study conducted participant observation in a Taiwanese-owned classical music school. Western classical music education is an important educational resource provided by Chinese communities in New York City. Starting in October 2007 and continuing through April 2011, I carried out participant observation fieldwork at the Mozart Music School, one of the Taiwanese-/Chinese-owned music schools in Flushing, Queens. I observed interactions among parents, children, and teachers in the music school and how information was transmitted among them. I also became a student and took piano lessons at the school. Most my observations were conducted in the lobby of the music school, when parents were waiting for their children to get out of their classes. During this period, I amassed about 1,000 pages of fieldnotes. I collected documents, curriculum books, flyers for the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music (ABRSM) exams, flyers for students’ music concerts, print ads, and Chinese-language newspaper articles to contextualize the network of music education in which these families were situated.

Ethnographic Interviews

In 2007, I conducted an ethnographic study in a Western classical music school, which provides only Western classical music lessons. Most Chinese immigrant parents who don’t
have skills in performing Western classical music are highly involved in scheduling their children’s music education. In this ethnographic context, parents discuss how their children’s extracurricular education relates to their achievement in school. Hence, although I include teachers, students, and staff in this research, my investigation focuses mainly on ethnographic interviews with parents. From November 2008 to April 2010, I conducted 65 interviews in the music schools with children, staff, parents, and teachers. Questions I asked in the interview included participation in cultural activities in Chinese supplemental educational institutions; individual demographic profiles; immigrant histories; and information on individual cultural capital. With students, the interviews focused on their participation in cultural activities in Chinese supplemental educational institutions. I conducted ten interviews with school staff, forty parent interviews, and fifteen interviews with students (age six to eighteen). I received permission to audio tape the interviews and take notes. I had two interviews with directors of Chinese-owned orchestras. In addition, I conducted interviews in Taiwan, including two interviews with owners of music schools and an interview with the representative of the British Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music exams (ABRSM exams). Each of the interviews, conducted chiefly in Mandarin, but sometimes in English, lasted from 30 to 60 minutes; some were longer. I transcribed and translated the interviews into English.
This study begins the empirical portion with a chapter addressing the demographic characteristics of Flushing in New York City and the dramatic growth of Chinese immigrant popularity there. Further, the first chapter looks at the Taiwanese-/Chinese-owned, supplementary educational institutions in this neighborhood. Through an analysis of these institutions over time, this chapter describes a transition in supplementary educational institutions. The second chapter takes a closer look at the immigration history of ethnic entrepreneurs of Western classical music schools and how they acquire Western classical music education resources through their transnational networks. In particular, this study looks at how globalized cultural capital translates into entrepreneurs’ ability to facilitate music education resources globally to convince consumers that the educational services they provide are highly valued. The third chapter analyzes how Chinese-language newspapers portray the importance of Western music education. This analysis reveals how the function of the music school changes through its interaction with a local community, and further addressees the process of gathering navigational capital. In Chapter Four, I discuss parental aspirations for children’s music education. While communities offer access to highly-valued music capital for immigrant families, how parents perceive these resources and their children’s educational mobility in terms of immigrant trajectories, labor participation, and social life in ethnic enclaves is the subject of this chapter. Chapter Five provides further
discussion of how the practice of Western classical music as a cultural component of Chinese American identity is reconstructed in local Chinese communities. Children’s musical achievement produces social power for immigrant families to redefine the meaning of ethnicity through musical practices in local communities. This chapter will examine why a superior Chinese parenting style is reframed by upper-middle-class immigrants as a claim of Chinese Americans to the right to become inheritors of high culture and posit children as higher in social status, and whether parents from mixed-class backgrounds in Chinese communities can implement this specific type of parenting style. Both parents’ participation in music education and children’s resistance to, or compliance with playing the role of classical music achievers are also examined in this chapter.

This dissertation focuses attention on new types of capital in Chinese communities, rather than on traditional views of ethnic cultural capital, and highlights how ethnic groups utilize these different forms of capital to resist stereotypes that are barriers to their children’s educational mobility. It also addresses how restructured cultural components of ethnicity define themselves. Rather than treat traditional ethnic cultural capital as a factor that determines educational mobility among Chinese immigrants, this research focuses on the competitive struggle over educational mobility and how it restructures the components of ethnicity. It gives voice to immigrants to express their understanding of music and the cultural components of Chinese ethnicity.
Chapter II: Demographics and Education in NYC’s Chinese Community

According to the 2000 U.S. census, among the 2,314,537 Chinese immigrants in the United States, sixteen percent (374,321) settled in New York City. The Chinese in the city are composed of diverse groups, including those who have been residing in the city for several generations, as well as those who came with higher socio-economic backgrounds from China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Vietnam, and other countries after the 1970s. In particular, after 1990, a large proportion of immigrants from rural or small cities in China, such as Fujian and Zhejiang, arrived in the city. The rapid growth of the Chinese population and the mix of subgroups affect the communities in terms of immigrant institutions, labor participation, education, and more. This chapter describes demographic changes in the Chinese population in New York City and further focuses on the transformation of services in ethnic supplementary educational institutions in the Chinese communities.
Chinese Immigrants in New York City

The Chinese are the largest group among more than 20 Asian groups residing in New York City. It is a group with diverse national origins, immigration patterns, and educational attainment.

Population

Table 1 shows that the Asian population in New York City grew by 71 percent from 509,955 in 1990 to 872,777 in 2000. Chinese are the largest Asian American ethnic group comprising 43 percent of the total Asian American population, followed by Asian Indians (24 percent) and Koreans (10 percent) in 2000. From 1990 to 2000, the Chinese population grew at a rate of 61 percent. The growth rate of the Taiwanese population, however, declined by 8.7 percent over these ten years.

Immigration

In Table 2, among the Chinese population in New York City, 75 percent are foreign-born (281,800). Most Chinese immigrants in New York City arrived in the United States in the last 20 years, contributing to recent population growth. Specifically, 43 percent (120,353) came to
this country between 1990 and 2000; 35 percent (99,319) arrived from 1980 to 1989; and 22 percent (62,128) immigrated before 1980.

Table 1: New York City Asian Population Composition

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Asian Group</th>
<th>Asian Alone or Mixed Asian Groups</th>
<th>Subgroup Percentage</th>
<th>% Growth 1990 of 2000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>232,908</td>
<td>374,321</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Filipino</td>
<td>43,229</td>
<td>62,058</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indian</td>
<td>94,590</td>
<td>206,228</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japanese</td>
<td>16,828</td>
<td>26,419</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Korean</td>
<td>69,718</td>
<td>90,208</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taiwanese</td>
<td>6,011</td>
<td>5,488</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Table 2: Chinese Immigrants in NYC by Time of Arrival in 2000 (Total: 281,800)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Foreign-born Chinese</td>
<td>62,128</td>
<td>99,319</td>
<td>120,353</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(22%)</td>
<td>(35%)</td>
<td>(43%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign-born Asians</td>
<td>121,821</td>
<td>227,038</td>
<td>315,891</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(18%)</td>
<td>(34%)</td>
<td>(48%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


**Education**

Table 3 reports on the educational attainment of Taiwanese/Chinese immigrants in the New York-New Jersey area, based on the 2000 census. The educational attainment of Chinese immigrants is bifurcated in New York City. Forty percent (109,587) of Chinese immigrants never graduated from high school. A large number of these mainland immigrants emigrated from rural areas without ever earning high school diplomas. This group does not have high levels of education, takes working-class jobs after arriving in the United States, and, later, may recapture its social capital by opening small businesses in the ethnic economy. They usually work in long hours in labor intensive jobs in the ethnic economy. In contrast, 17.1 percent of Chinese immigrants possess an advanced degree. Most of these Chinese immigrants came to the United States as international students and later stayed in the country. In addition, because of the better living conditions and quality of life in Taiwan, Taiwanese immigrants have much higher educational levels than other groups, including their mainland Chinese counterparts: 37.6 percent of them have degrees beyond the BA. The higher educational attainment among Taiwanese immigrants explains why many educational institutions in Flushing are owned by Taiwanese immigrants, particularly before 2000, when mainland China’s economy was not as advanced as it is today. In the last 20 years, the rapid population growth of Chinese immigrants has also created demand for community access to
supplementary resources for children educated in the city’s public schools. Many of the parents without high school diploma and those who have to spend most of their time at work seek help from these ethnic supplementary institutions.

Table 3: Comparative Educational Attainment of Adults in New York–New Jersey, 2000

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>High School</th>
<th>Four-year College</th>
<th>Advanced Degree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>U.S.-born white</td>
<td>94.0</td>
<td>43.3</td>
<td>18.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S.-born black</td>
<td>77.8</td>
<td>21.1</td>
<td>5.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All immigrants</td>
<td>69.5</td>
<td>22.6</td>
<td>11.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese immigrants</td>
<td>60.5</td>
<td>31.3</td>
<td>17.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taiwanese immigrants</td>
<td>92.2</td>
<td>67.1</td>
<td>37.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Author’s compilation from 5% Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) of the 2000 U.S. Census for adults 25 to 64 years old (Min 2008).

The Chinese Community in New York City

Distribution of Residents

In 2000, the residential distribution of Chinese immigrants in New York City was 38 percent (143,126) living in Queens, followed by 34 percent in Brooklyn (125,050);
Table 4: The Distribution of Chinese Population in Boroughs of New York City

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>New York City Borough</th>
<th>Population (in 2000)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Queens</td>
<td>143,126 (38%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brooklyn</td>
<td>125,050 (34%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manhattan</td>
<td>90,518 (24%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Bronx</td>
<td>7,628 (2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staten Island</td>
<td>7,999 (2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>374,321 (100%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2000

24 percent (90,518) in Manhattan; 2 percent in Staten Island (7,999); and 2 percent in the Bronx (2 percent).

**Asian Subgroup Composition in Three Chinese Neighborhoods**

According to 2005-2009 American Community Survey,² the Chinese population is highly concentrated in three neighborhoods³: Flushing, Sunset Park, and Manhattan’s Chinatown. Among these three Chinese neighborhoods,

---

² The American Community Survey (ACS) is a nationwide survey designed to give communities current and accurate information every year about their socioeconomic and housing characteristics. The ACS produces annual and multi-year estimates of population and housing characteristics and produces data for small areas, including tracts and population subgroups. Before the Census Bureau instituted ACS, small geographic areas had to rely on the 2000 Census for community level research. Consisting of about 11.1 billion individual estimates and including more than 670,000 distinct geographies, 2005-2009 ACS estimates give even the smallest communities more timely information on topics ranging from commute times to languages spoken at home to housing values.

³ According to Infoshare community data (infoshare, 2010), there are 292 neighborhoods in which New Yorkers
Table 5: Asian Population by National Origin in Three Chinese Immigrant Neighborhoods

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Flushing</th>
<th>Chinatown</th>
<th>Sunset Park</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of Asians in Local Population</td>
<td>56.46%</td>
<td>73.13%</td>
<td>20.17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of Asian Population</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>64.51%</td>
<td>95.31%</td>
<td>84.43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Korean</td>
<td>20.09%</td>
<td>.41%</td>
<td>1.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Filipino</td>
<td>6.26%</td>
<td>.19%</td>
<td>.02%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian Indian</td>
<td>3.96%</td>
<td>1.11%</td>
<td>.49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pakistani</td>
<td>1.47%</td>
<td>.00%</td>
<td>.08%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taiwanese</td>
<td>1.05%</td>
<td>.00%</td>
<td>.08%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vietnamese</td>
<td>.44%</td>
<td>.67%</td>
<td>.33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laotian</td>
<td>.15%</td>
<td>.00%</td>
<td>.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indonesian</td>
<td>.01%</td>
<td>.00%</td>
<td>.11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malaysian</td>
<td>.00%</td>
<td>.56%</td>
<td>.05%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Infoshare, 2005-2009 American Community Surveys

Flushing has the largest Chinese population. The highest concentration of Asians is in Manhattan’s Chinatown with 73 percent of local residents of Chinese heritage, followed by

generally think of themselves as residing. They are not precisely defined, and no government agency has specified their official boundaries. Nevertheless, a number of years ago an informal City task force drew boundaries, and Infoshare community data are using these boundaries. In spite of their lack of official definition, these areas are useful simply because they are the neighborhoods in which residents believe they live.

4 The American Community Survey 2005-2009 estimated that there are 441,963 Chinese, except Taiwanese, in New York City. 10,503 live in the Flushing neighborhood, 8,696 live in Sunset Park, and 3,496 live in Chinatown. The American Community Survey is not the official source of population counts. The official population count - including population by age, sex, race and Hispanic origin - comes from the once-a-decade census, supplemented by annual population estimates (the Population Estimates Program). ACS data are designed to show the characteristics of the nation's population and are not actual population counts or housing totals for the nation, states, or counties.
Flushing with 56 percent, and Sunset Park with 20 percent. Chinese are the dominant group among Asians in these neighborhoods. The percentage of the Chinese among Asians, however, differs between Flushing and the other two Chinese neighborhoods. Ninety-five percent of Asians are Chinese in Manhattan’s Chinatown, 84 percent in Sunset Park, and 64 percent in Flushing. Compared to the other two Chinese neighborhoods, the Chinese in Flushing share their neighborhood with a greater percentage of other Asian groups, including Koreans (20 percent), Filipinos (6.26), Asian Indians (3.96), Pakistanis (1.47), Taiwanese (1.05), Vietnamese (.44), Laotians (.15), and Indonesians (.01).

**Household Income in Three Chinese Neighborhoods**

In general, the socio-economic status of Asian residents in Flushing is higher than that in other Chinese communities in New York City. The table below shows the median annual household incomes of Asian residents in these three Chinese immigrant neighborhoods. The median annual household income of Manhattan’s Chinatown is $21,071, while that in Sunset Park, Brooklyn is $43,147. The median household income of Asian residents in the two Chinese communities is lower than Asians city-wide, which is $53,173. The median annual household income of Flushing, however, is $60,274, which is higher than the household income of Asian residents in the other two Chinese neighborhoods in New York City.
Chinese Labor Participation in Flushing

According to Census Bureau 2005 Public Use Microdata Area (PUMA), there is a wide range of ethnic businesses that provide job opportunities for Flushing residents. Compared to the labor force of New York City, but like other Chinatowns, Chinese immigrants in Flushing are over represented in the following ten occupations: 1. sewing machine operators, 2. cooks, 3. chefs and head cooks, 4. accountants and auditors, 5. waiters and waitresses, 6. accounting, and auditing clerks, 7. computer software engineers, 8. wholesale and manufacturing, 8. computer programmers, 10. supervisors/managers of retail sales workers, and retail salespersons. In addition to these occupations, many of which are concentrated in ethnic related businesses, there are also a substantial proportion of Chinese immigrants who work in skilled jobs, such as computer programmer, accountant, and auditor.

Compared to Sunset Park and Manhattan’s Chinatown, Flushing has the largest number of Chinese. The Chinese in Flushing, unlike their counterparts in Sunset Park and Manhattan’s Chinatown, share schools with a mix of Asian groups, in particular, Koreans, Asian Indians, and a smaller portion of Taiwanese. Chinese immigrants in Flushing have higher family incomes than Asians who live in the Chinatown and Sunset Park. Many Chinese residents work in occupations that are highly regarded in the ethnic economy.
Among those who work in the mainstream economy, they also over represented in particular “ethnic-employment-niche” occupations, such as computer programmers, accountants, auditors, and post-office workers. Chinese living in Flushing on average have better standards of living than those who live in the other two Chinese neighborhoods in the city.

Table 6: Median Household Income for Chinese Neighborhoods in NYC

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>New York City</th>
<th>Flushing</th>
<th>Chinatown</th>
<th>Sunset Park</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Asian Residents</td>
<td>$53,173</td>
<td>$60,274</td>
<td>$21,071</td>
<td>$43,147</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Residents</td>
<td>$50,173</td>
<td>$68,197</td>
<td>$26,693</td>
<td>$40,186</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Infoshare, 2005-2009 American Community Surveys
### Table 7: Top 15 Occupations of Chinese Immigrants in Flushing, 2005

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Flushing</th>
<th>New York City</th>
<th>Flushing vs. NYC</th>
<th>Over-representative Ranking</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(1)</td>
<td>(2)</td>
<td>(1)-(2)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Sewing Machine Operators</td>
<td>1180</td>
<td>53309</td>
<td>1.2, 3.3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Cooks</td>
<td>866</td>
<td>52969</td>
<td>1.2, 2.1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Waiters and Waitresses</td>
<td>817</td>
<td>52882</td>
<td>1.2, 1.9</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Retail Salespersons</td>
<td>811</td>
<td>112427</td>
<td>2.5, 0.6</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Cashiers</td>
<td>736</td>
<td>110133</td>
<td>2.5, 0.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Bookkeeping, Accounting, and Auditing Clerks</td>
<td>692</td>
<td>52993</td>
<td>1.2, 1.4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Chefs and Head Cooks</td>
<td>628</td>
<td>19881</td>
<td>0.4, 2.0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Accountants and Auditors</td>
<td>626</td>
<td>67611</td>
<td>1.5, 0.9</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Supervisors/Managers of Retail Sales Workers</td>
<td>560</td>
<td>69856</td>
<td>1.6, 0.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Driver/Sales Workers and Truck Drivers</td>
<td>527</td>
<td>71544</td>
<td>1.6, 0.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Secretaries and Administrative Assistants</td>
<td>494</td>
<td>147939</td>
<td>3.3, -1.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Food Service Managers</td>
<td>489</td>
<td>19449</td>
<td>4.0, -2.2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Wholesale and Manufacturing</td>
<td>476</td>
<td>34559</td>
<td>0.8, 1.0</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Computer Programmers</td>
<td>425</td>
<td>29111</td>
<td>0.7, 0.9</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Computer Software Engineers</td>
<td>410</td>
<td>11524</td>
<td>0.3, 1.2</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to the Census Bureau 2005 Public Use Microdata Area (PUMA) (IPUMSdata), the total population of Flushing and its surrounding neighborhoods in Queens is 243,795. The total population of Chinese immigrants in Flushing is 26,482 excluding those who are under 16 or have not worked in more than five years. 4,424,959 is the total population of NYC (7,822,750) excluding those who are under sixteen years old or have not worked for more than five years (3,397,791).

I selected the 15 occupations with highest population from IPUMS data variable, occupation-soc [occsoc5] from Chinese immigrant groups in Flushing and College Point Area. I calculated the number and percentages of these 15 occupations among the total population of New York City. Then, I compared the percentages between Flushing and New York City.
Children of Chinese Immigrants and Educational Achievement

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, 21 percent (78,343) of NYC’s Chinese residents were children (age 17 and younger). Chinese Americans age 17 and younger made up four percent of the city’s children (1,940,269). The population of Chinese children was relatively small. The children of Chinese immigrants in the city have attracted scholarly attention due to their extraordinary academic achievement in the city’s public schools (Kasinitz et al., 2008; Louie, 2004a). Second-generation Chinese outperform native-born whites in the New York City school system according to the Second-Generation Immigrants in Metropolitan New York study (SGIMNY), with 64 percent of second-generation Chinese Americans between the ages of 24 and 32 having at least a bachelor’s degree (Kasinitz et al., 2008). The academic achievement of Chinese children is also high in K-12 throughout the city’s public schools.

New York State Assessment Tests in the City’s Public Elementary Schools

The following figures rely on results from 4th-grade students’ NY state math scores by school districts in 2000 and the 2000 U.S. census to indicate student academic achievement in the school districts in Chinese immigrant neighborhoods. The New York State Mathematics
Test is administered to fourth grade students in early May every year and examines whether they have mastered grade-appropriate knowledge and skills. The New York City public school system is divided into 32 school districts (Figure1). Chinese students are disproportionately represented in the following school districts: District 2 (Manhattan’s Chinatown); District 25 (Flushing); District 26 (covers part of Flushing); and District 20 (Sunset Park, Brooklyn). More than 65.6 percent of students performed above standard in school districts 2, 20, 25, and 26 in 2000. The school districts which have high scores in the 4th grade math exam coincide with Chinese concentration areas.

Higher exam scores are not a straightforward measure of the quality of local public schools. According to Zhou, the high academic performance of Chinese students is due to cultural and educational institutions provided by Chinese immigrant communities, rather than the public schools. The large number of students attending afterschool programs in Chinese communities also reflects the insufficient resources in public education at the elementary level.
Figure 1: The Result of New York State Assessment Test in New York City I

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2000 and New York City and the New York State Education Department, 4th-grade student NY State math scores.
Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2000 and New York City and the New York State Education Department, 4th-grade student NY State math scores.

High Schools in School District 25 and 26

In 2010, school-age Asian students were overrepresented in New York City’s selective high schools, and young Asian residents in Queens tend to go to public high schools in former school districts 25 and 26, which perform at higher rates and have
Table 8: Asian Population in New York City’s Selective High Schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>New York City’s Selective High schools</th>
<th>Total Population</th>
<th>Asian Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stuyvesant High School</td>
<td>3287</td>
<td>71.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bronx High School of Science</td>
<td>3017</td>
<td>61.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brooklyn Technical High School</td>
<td>5139</td>
<td>60.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laguardia High School of Music</td>
<td>506</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


lower dropout rates. Chinese students made up the majority of Asians in these high schools.

According to New York City’s Department of Education in 2010-2011, among the 3,287 students in the selective, public Stuyvesant High School 71.6 percent were Asians. Asian students made up 61.8 percent of those attending Bronx High School of Science (n = 3,017), and 60.4 percent of students in Brooklyn Technical High School (n = 5,139) were Asians. Chinese students made up the largest percentage of Asian students. The portion of Chinese students in these selective high schools indeed is far more common than in other groups. The portion of Asian students in specialized arts schools, however, is much smaller. For example, 20 percent of students in LaGuardia High School were Asians (n=506).

While a “small” proportion of Chinese students in terms of the size of the community were admitted into the city's selective high schools, the majority of Chinese teenagers in Queens go to neighborhood high schools with comparatively lower dropout rates and higher college enrollment rates than most public schools. For example, in 2010 to 2011, among high
schools in former School Districts 25 and 26 (see Table 8), 45.8 percent of students in Benjamin N. Cardozo High School are Asian (n = 4,063); 47.8 percent are Asian (n = 3,633) in Bayside High School; and 51.5 percent in Francis Lewis High School (n = 4,216).

Although these schools promise higher college enrollments, their large size means that students lack individual attention. They receive less individual support in terms of emotional counseling, college enrollment guidance, and attention from teachers.

Figure 3: High Schools in Former School Districts 25 and 26 in Queens, New York
Table 9: Racial Composition in High Schools in Former School Districts 25 and 26 in Queens, New York, 2010-2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>School Name</th>
<th>Ethnicity (%)</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Native</td>
<td>Black</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q25-1</td>
<td>East-West School of International Studies</td>
<td>0.30</td>
<td>17.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q25-2</td>
<td>Flushing High School</td>
<td>0.40</td>
<td>24.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q25-3</td>
<td>Flushing International High School</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q25-4</td>
<td>John Bowne High School</td>
<td>0.40</td>
<td>20.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q25-5</td>
<td>North Queens Community High School</td>
<td>0.50</td>
<td>42.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q25-6</td>
<td>Queens School of Inquiry, TheQ252</td>
<td>0.40</td>
<td>17.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q25-7</td>
<td>Robert F. Kennedy Community High School</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>11.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q25-8</td>
<td>Townsend Harris High School</td>
<td>0.20</td>
<td>5.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q25-9</td>
<td>World Journalism Preparatory</td>
<td>0.50</td>
<td>8.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q26-1</td>
<td>Bayside High School</td>
<td>0.20</td>
<td>12.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q26-2</td>
<td>Benjamin N. Cardozo High School</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>18.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q26-3</td>
<td>Francis Lewis High School</td>
<td>0.20</td>
<td>8.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q26-4</td>
<td>Martin Van Buren High School</td>
<td>0.40</td>
<td>20.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q26-5</td>
<td>Queens High School of Teaching, Liberal Arts and the Sciences</td>
<td>0.60</td>
<td>47.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Supplementary Educational Institutions in the Community

Educational services are always an important resource in Chinese communities. Unlike older types of educational institutions, which are based on the goal of maintaining Chinese ethnic and cultural heritage and are run as non-profits, most new types of supplementary educational institutions in Chinese communities are for profit. Supplementary educational services have become important among ethnic businesses in Chinese communities in New York City. Table 9 presents an analysis of educational institutions catering mainly to customers of Chinese heritage. The numbers of school are counted from the 2009 Chinese Yellow Pages. These supplementary educational institutions are heavily concentrated in three main Chinese communities in New York City: Flushing in Chinatown and Sunset Park. Among these three Chinese communities, the majority of the institutions are located in Flushing, the Chinese neighborhood with the highest average household income: 156 of 250 Chinese supplementary educational institutions are in Flushing. In the 1970s, ethnic educational institutions, which aim to maintain Chinese cultural heritage, were mainly located in Manhattan Chinatown. There were only a few people from Taiwan who settled in the Flushing area. At that time, no ethnic supplementary educational institutions were located there. Even forty years later, few of the schools for maintaining ethnic heritage existed in Flushing; there was, however, a dramatic expansion of schools which provide non-Chinese
culture. Among 156 institutions in the Flushing area, more than half (54 percent) provide academic services and one quarter (26 percent) provide extra-curricular activities, while schools that concentrate on Chinese traditional cultures account for the smallest proportion of institutions. From the growth of ethnic institution, only a small portion of schools present ethnic cultural activities. The new types of supplementary educational institutions function mostly to provide information about navigating the bureaucracy of the New York City public school system (Mollenkopf et al., 1997; Louie, 2004b). Western classical music schools exemplify the deliberate strategies that ethnic supplementary educational Institutions adopt when navigating the American educational system on behalf of immigrant parents. Moreover, the schools are comprehensive, offering not only strategies for children’s academic performance but also an after-school curriculum intended to raise children’s levels of cultural capital.

The following charts show 1996 to 2009 data from the Chinese Yellow Pages,\(^5\) a popular phone book in New York Chinese communities, including the geographic distribution of ethnic educational institutions in New York City, as well as the types of

\(^5\) The earliest Chinese Yellow Pages available was for 1996. This analysis only includes schools listed in the Chinese Yellow Pages. The exact number of different types of schools listed in the map is different from the numbers listed in the previous table.
supplementary ethnic institutions that are interested in advertising themselves to new immigrants.

Table 10: The Number of Taiwanese-/Chinese-owned Educational Institutions in Chinese Communities in New York City

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Queens (Flushing)</th>
<th>Manhattan</th>
<th>Brooklyn</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>156</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>246</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Academic</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preparatory School/ Tutoring(^1)</td>
<td>34(23)</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preschool/ Daycare(^2)</td>
<td>37(23)</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESL/ ESOL</td>
<td>19(16)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Extra-curricular Activities</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Classical Music</td>
<td>15(11)</td>
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<td>Traditional Music</td>
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<td>100%</td>
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Source: Compiled from 2009 Chinese Yellow Pages & 2009-2010 Chinese Business Directory

1 Preparatory schools include preparation for SATs, the New York City Specialized High Schools Admissions Test (SHSAT), which is the entrance exam required for acceptance into one of the NYC selective magnet high schools.
2 Many preschools and daycare centers prepare students for NYC public schools.
3 Most dancing schools offer mainly either ballet or ballroom lessons. Only a few schools have one or two lessons for Chinese traditional dance lessons.
Cram Schools

Cram schools, including test preparatory and tutoring schools, posted information in the Chinese Yellow Pages. By 1996, the Chinese Yellow Pages listed four cram schools. These Taiwanese-owned schools were mainly located in Flushing and Bayside in Queens and the Sunset Park area in Brooklyn.\(^6\) In 2009, there were more types of cram schools that posted their information in the Chinese Yellow Pages.

\[\text{Figure 4: Cram Schools in 1996}\]

\(^6\) Phone calls were made to survey the owners’ ethnic backgrounds.
Pages, including schools that prepared students for SATs, the New York City Specialized High Schools Admissions Test (SHSAT), enrollment exams for gifted and talented programs, and afterschool homework assistance. These schools formed a corridor that encompassed Flushing, Bayside, College Points, Fresh Meadow, Forest Hills, and Elmhurst in Queens. The number of cram schools also increased in Manhattan’s Chinatown and Sunset Park. In
addition, test preparatory schools owned by other groups in Midtown such as Kaplan and CCB also posted their information for Chinese customers.

Many of these cram schools started as private tutoring, and the demand from new immigrant families enabled these owners to expand their services. For example, Miss Wei, the owner of one of the earliest cram schools in Flushing, said, “my school started from my living room.” In 2012, Miss Wei’s school had two branches with more than 500 students during the school year and more than 700 students in the summer. Miss Wei had been a lecturer in a college back home in Taiwan. After migrating to New York City, she was able to help with her children’s school work at home, participated in school activities and engaged and communicated with school teachers and staff. With her successful experience in assisting her children’s admission into prestigious colleges, more and more Taiwanese families asked her for assistance. In 1990, with the financial support from Miss Wei’s father, she established a cram school in Flushing. She started by hiring NY-State-certificated teachers and designed programs and curriculum to guide children to supplement their school’s education. In the beginning, the student population was 70 percent Taiwanese students; the rest were Jewish, Hispanic, or of Indian heritage. In the late 1990s, more and more highly educated immigrants from China arrived in New York City and brought their children to the school. Starting in 2000, there were an increasing number of students whose parents were rural peasants in China. These parents could not speak English, had to work long hours and had little time for
their children. This group of children under high pressure from their families placed very high expectations on their success in the new land. Miss Wei believes working-class families can benefit from the services offered in her cram school most. In particular, once children have had trouble in school, the public schools usually contact parents and request they take responsibility of their children. For these new immigrant parents who lack communication skills and need to spend the majority of their time at work, such encounters provoke feelings of frustration. Part of the services that cram schools offer are bridges between parents and teachers. Miss Wei showed me a thank you card from a student who enrolled in one of the city’s selective high schools and whose parents were rural peasants from China. In the card, the student wrote, “you changed me from impossible to possible.”

The structure of the institutions has changed since the early days of Miss Wei’s cram school. She explained there are more and more people entering the cram school businesses. Schools have specialized in order to compete. Miss Wei’s school emphasizes building students’ math and English skills. Many students attend to her schools from elementary school until they go to college. Some schools are well-known for assisting students in science competitions. Currently, there are schools that consult students in college admissions. The dramatically growing numbers of these cram schools shows that the increasing demands for assistance in supplementing public education for new immigrant families. These cram
schools provide value-added services for new Chinese immigrants rather than services to maintain their traditional ethnic culture.

**Day Care Centers/ Preschools**

The number of day care centers/preschools in the *Chinese Yellow Pages* has grown in the last ten years, too. Many day care establishments listed in 1996 were non-profits, such as Garment Industry Day Care Center, Chinatown Day Care Center, and the Chinatown Head Start. In 2009, the majority of day care centers were run for profit. They went by names such as Day Care Center for Bright and Gifted Children or Angel Star Day Care Center. A dramatically growing number of kindergartens are owned by Chinese immigrants from diverse areas, including Taiwan, Hong Kong, Shanghai and Beijing. They targeted Chinese customers who were mainly local residents in neighborhoods with growing numbers of Chinese residents.

In the mid-1990s, day care centers/ preschools, particularly those in Flushing, were different from the traditional day care centers in Chinatown. The traditional day care centers provided affordable/free day care for working-class Chinese immigrants. Their main concern was delivering safe and basic services. Most caretakers spoke Cantonese, and only few had NY State licenses for early childhood education.
Providing high quality early education is always presented in advertisements of new for-profit day care/preschools. These new schools always advertise their licenses, follow city curriculum guidelines and hire English speaking teachers with NY State teaching certificates. Schools also provide various kinds of cultural activities, such as ballet class, art projects, neighborhood fieldtrips, and holiday festivals. Most schools offer bilingual (Mandarin/English) education. Currently, the new services that these for-profit day care centers/preschools provide prepare children for the city’s kindergarten Gifted and Talented program assessments.

Little Einstein (pseudonym) is a well-known preschool that serves children from ages 2 to 4. The first branch was established in the mid-1990 and within 20 years has opened more than ten branches in Flushing, Sunset Park, and Chinatown. Miss Min, a director in the Flushing branch, mentions that parents bring their children for a variety of reasons. Some parents bring their children to the schools because they want them to learn Mandarin, even though many families speak their own dialect, such as Cantonese or Fuzhounese at home. The increasingly diverse population comes from working-class families who hope to enhance the city’s public elementary schools. Many of these children were born in the United States and returned to China to be raised by their grandparents. These children need a transitional space where they have Chinese-language assistant teachers to take care of their basic needs and English-speaking teachers to help them learn English. Currently, many immigrants seek
test preparation from Little Einstein to prepare their children for the city’s gifted and talented program assessments.

When I asked Miss Min why was Little Einstein able to grow so fast, she responded, ”it is the school’s after-sale service.” In addition to preschool education, Little Einstein also offers afterschool and extra-curricular programs. Many students who graduate from Little Einstein will keep continue to attend throughout their school age years. From these families, Little Einstein gathers their experiences and provides school choices or preparation of special school programs for young kindergarteners. Rather than touting the school’s Mandarin education, Miss Min claims the most important service that Little Einstein offers is preparing new immigrant families for the school choices they face, either in city-wide gifted and talented programs or the best local elementary schools. For Little Einstein, maintaining an ethnic language is no longer its primary service. Instead, it is a space where immigrants gather resources to help their children access mainstream public education resources. In New York City, competition starts when children are still very young.

**Western Classical Music Schools**

Supplementary educational institutions also provide lessons for various types of extracurricular activities. In the *Chinese Yellow Pages*, programs that posted information
include classical music, Chinese traditional music, ballet, ballroom dance, singing, modern
dance, art/ painting, tennis, swimming, and martial arts. Among these various programs, the
number of classical music schools grew quickly. A few schools were located in Chinese
neighborhoods, such as Flushing, Manhattan’s Chinatown, and Sunset Park in the earlier
period, but in 2009 as the Chinese population reached higher levels, there were more schools
established in other neighborhoods, including more working-class Elmhurst, middle-class
Forest Hills, and areas in Long Island. The majority of the music schools were owned by
Taiwanese immigrants.

Figure 6: Day Care Centers/ Preschools in 1996
While the number of classical music schools in Chinese communities grew in the last 10 years, there has been little expansion of schools that offer lessons for Chinese traditional music. Miss Hua, the owner of the Turandot Music School, and Miss Lin, the owner of the Mozart Music School, both are arrived in Flushing in the early 1980s and started their respective schools with two classrooms in central Flushing. Thirty years later, the Turandot
Music School is still located in its original location, and Miss Hua is the only teacher who still teaches the traditional Chinese musical instrument, the guzheng, a Chinese zither. In addition to guzheng classes, her school also offers calligraphy lessons and the traditional Chinese art of dough figurine pinching, or mian ren. On one weekday afternoon, only three students attended Miss Hua’s Chinese Zither lesson, and there was a sole student for the dough figurine class. One of Miss Hua’ students is a teenager of Caribbean descent. Miss Hua told me that most students who attend guzheng class are there to develop an exotic hobby. She has tried to introduce musical credentials from Taiwan, but the public schools in New York do not take the credentials seriously. Over the years, only a few of her students have taken the guzheng exam. On the other hand, the Mozart Music School has moved to a new location with thirty classrooms, employs more than 20 music teachers teaching Western musical instruments, and has about 300 students. In November 2010, there were about 900 students in the greater New York City area taking British music exams for which the Mozart School is the local representative.

Chinese Language Schools

Compared to the previous three types of ethnic educational institutions, the number of Chinese language schools listed in the Chinese Yellow Pages did not increase dramatically
overtime. In 1996, many Chinese-language schools were already located in Flushing. Later, the location of schools expanded in Queens, while few were located in Long Island or Staten Island.

In comparison to other ethnic educational institutions, Chinese language schools within Chinese communities have expanded slowly. The goal of these schools has also changed, more for instrumental purposes rather than cultural maintenance. For example, many traditional Chinese language schools actually taught Cantonese and used the same curriculum as in Hong Kong. This curriculum emphasizes Chinese literacy and writing skills, which always are difficult for children who grow up in the United States. Those programs not established in Manhattan’s Chinatown have begun to offer different lessons and more emphasis on everyday conversation skills. They teach Mandarin to children with and without a Chinese-cultural heritage. For those children who only speak a regional dialect at home, attending these new language schools is more for instrumental purposes than for maintaining their home cultural heritage. In addition, there is a dramatic increase in the number of Chinese-language schools outside of Chinese communities, such as in public schools that cater to demands of Americans interested in the economic and political importance of China. The curriculum in these schools differs from traditional Chinese-language schools.
The Case of a Middle-Class Family in Supplementary Educational Institutions

Chinese communities offer immigrants various kinds of academic and enrichment programs. What programs to go to and how many programs to participate in vary, but family income is always fundamental to the choice made. Mr. Ching presents how a typical middle-class Chinese family utilizes Chinese afterschool programs in scheduling children’s leisure time. He works as a computer programmer and his wife as an acupuncturist; their annual household income is more than $100,000. He spends $6,000 to $7,000, however, every year so that his three children can attend enrichment and academic programs in the local community. He enrolls his three children (ages 7, 9, and 11) in programs such as swimming, ice skating, classical music, Chinese-language, painting, and math. He thinks that parents should cultivate their children with various kinds of hobbies. Middle-class families around him also enroll their children in similar lessons.

Annette Lareau (2003) calls this middle-class parenting style “concerted cultivation,” which means parents arrange their children’s leisure time with various types of cultural activities. Mr. Ching and Chinese parents around him undertake the same efforts to educate their children to be well-rounded. These immigrant families, however, send their children to the programs mostly in Chinese communities where they cost less than mainstream enrichment programs. For example, one hour of music lessons in a
Chinese-owned school is about 35 dollars, but in a mainstream music school, an hour music lesson cost between 50 and 70 dollars. Music lessons are the most common enrichment program Mr. Ching and parents around him utilize.

Table11. Leisure Time Schedule of Mr. Ching’s Three Children

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<td></td>
<td>Music</td>
<td>Swim</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Skating</td>
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Unlike Annette Lareau’s working-class families who undertake a parenting style she refers to as the “accomplishment of natural growth,” which lacks strong kinship support, working-class Chinese families also participate in supplementary education. The ways they participate in supplementary education in the community vary. Some parents cannot offer their children any supplemental education and encourage their children to work to support the family as soon as possible. Other parents rely on low-cost afterschool programs to care for their young or even teenage children while they have to work. Some parents can only invest in academic-oriented programs. There are also cases like Miss Fu, however, whose husband works in a restaurant to support their children in various programs in the Chinese community.
Although Miss Fu and her husband have labor intensive jobs, without too much direct help from her parents, Miss Fu’s daughter has always done well in school and enrolled in special programs from elementary to middle school. Most students in her program, however, take various kinds of enrichment classes in after school. Miss Fu mentioned to me, “most parents around me said, ‘It is very important for students to know various hobbies in selective high school programs.’ I feel financial pressure on my shoulders, but I still try to spend almost all my money from my salary for my daughter’s education. She has taken violin lessons for four years, and had taken two summer lessons to learn how to swim. I save money for her to go to a cram school to prepare for the exam for the city’s selective high school this summer. I hope my daughter can enroll in one of these exam high schools, go to a good college, and have an easier life than I have had.” For some working-class families with limited budgets, the reason for sending their children to afterschool programs is goal orientated. Education investment for children to perform well academically always comes first. For high achievers, however, academic achievement is basic. Within Chinese communities, high achievers, even from working-class families, also have to participate in enrichment programs, which parents hope will allow them to compete on the city’s educational track for upward mobility. Among the children of Chinese immigrants in the city’s special programs or selective high schools, a high portion of them take classical music lessons, even children from working-class backgrounds.
Figure 8: Music Schools in 1996

Figure 9: Music Schools in 2009
Figure 10: Chinese Language Schools in 1996

Figure 11: Chinese Language Schools in 2009
Conclusion

After the Immigration Act of 1965 was amended in 1981, there was a surge in the Chinese immigrant population. Many more people came from China, particularly from the province of Fujian. The newcomers had a mix of socioeconomic backgrounds. Almost one fifth had graduate degrees, but two fifths were without high school diplomas. The socioeconomic composition of Chinese immigrants in New York City is bifurcated. The rapidly growing post-1990 population of Chinese immigrants, rather than staying in the traditional Chinese neighborhood of Manhattan’s Chinatown, moved to the new Chinese neighborhoods of Sunset Park and Flushing and increased the residential population there. Soon, the population in the new Chinese neighborhoods overshadowed the traditional Chinatown in Manhattan. The Chinese population in Flushing became the largest Chinese neighborhood in New York City. In Flushing, Asian residents, on average, have higher median family incomes than Asians in the other two neighborhoods. Chinese immigrants also tend to share Flushing with other Asian immigrants with middle-class backgrounds, such as Taiwanese, Koreans, Asian Indians, and Filipinos, in comparison to the Manhattan’s Chinatown, in which the Chinese are the only majority Asian group represented.
While the first generation of Chinese immigrants arrived with different socioeconomic backgrounds, the children of Chinese immigrants across classes attained greater educational achievement from elementary to high school in comparison to other groups, including their white American counterparts. According to results from New York State Math Test in 2005, the school districts where Chinese neighborhoods are located reported higher levels of proficiency on average than other school districts. There is also an over-representation of the Chinese population in selective public high schools in the city.

When this research examined Chinese immigrant children’s distribution in the city’s high schools, it found that the majority of students who live in Queens go to the higher-performing high schools in their neighborhoods. In particular, this research took a closer look at the high schools where these Chinese students attended in former School Districts 25 and 26. Yet, most of these Chinese children attended schools with large student populations, where parents believe their children do not receive enough individual attention.

The growth of new types of supplementary ethnic institutions is in part a response to the lack of resources available in public schools. The services they provide are varied,

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7 According to Vivian Louie (2004a), the class combination of Chinese immigrants is mixed. Hence, parents’ strategies for child raising strategies vary by their social class. Some immigrant Chinese parents have high education background, can speak English fluently, and work in professional jobs. These families tend to live in well-to-do white suburbs. With sufficient financial and academic resources, these families send their children to suburban public schools or private schools. Some Chinese parents are part of the working-class and have relatively low levels of education, are not necessarily fluent in English, and often work in long-hour,
encompassing academic learning and extra-curricular activities. In contrast to Chinese language schools, which have existed in the communities for a long time, these new types of ethnic, supplementary educational institutions have actively advertised themselves to new immigrants in the last twenty years. Within this time, these institutions have been transformed. Before 1990, most provided services to help families maintain their ethnic culture, such as the Chinese language, calligraphy, or fan dancing. After 1990, these institutions still functioned in local communities. There was a dramatic increase, however, of new types of supplementary educational institutions in Chinese neighborhoods, particularly in Flushing where more middle-class Chinese immigrants settled. These new types of educational institutions provided immigrant families with help in obtaining different skills, from academic tutoring to extra-curricular activities, which they believe can help their children in school. Usually, long-time, highly-educated immigrant residents run these businesses for newcomers from a mix of socioeconomic backgrounds. The next two chapters will explain how the transformation happened within the communities and schools.

labor-intensive jobs. They often maintain strong connections with Chinese communities, in places like Chinatown. There is a good deal of diversity within this group of working-class parents as well. Those parents who have higher-status jobs in the ethnic economy, such as managing or owning a small business, have more money to send their children to parochial schools or private academic preparatory institutions, which are owned and run by Chinese. Other parents do not have these resources, and their children have to fend for themselves at school and in college.
Chapter III: Cultural Capital and Entrepreneurs’ Transnational Participation

“In Taiwanese it is called Kiat-Chi [結市], Ji-Shi[集市] in Mandarin, [in English business cluster]. When people want to learn to play the piano, they think about Flushing since many schools cluster there. I don’t mind that there is more than one music school in the same neighborhood. “Adam Lee, a former teacher in the Mozart Music School and now the Bach Music School owner.

On a Saturday afternoon, walking on Main Street in Flushing to Northern Boulevard, signs and awnings for supplementary schools dot the commercial strip, and children carrying musical instruments are a common sight. For music school owner Adam this common sight is transnational but also local. Adam’s family has run a YAMAHA music school in Taiwan for more than thirty years. On the one hand, he regards the clustering of music schools in

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8 This sight seems to be familiar to me. In 2009 summer, I went back to the neighborhood, Da-An District, where I attended college and did some interviews with local music school owners. Within Da-An District, there were more than five Western classical music schools in the neighborhood. YAMAHA music school there was the largest local music school.
Flush as a typical Taiwanese business strategy, a Kiat-Chi (結市) or business cluster. On the other hand, he expresses the time arrangement of afterschool activities for children is local, “in Taiwan, it is very common for children to attend afterschool programs till 9:00 or 10:00 pm on weekdays. American children rarely go out at night. After Taiwanese/Chinese families arrived, they assimilated to [this routine]. Most students come [to music school] on weekends. Music schools offer only a few classes before 6:00 pm during weekdays.”

The many music schools located in Flushing, a transnational space, engage the flows between immigrant communities and their home land (Portes, 2000; Zhou, 2004; Huang 2010). This chapter explores how music school entrepreneurs gather resources from their transnational networks. It specifically argues that Taiwanese entrepreneurs of Western classical music schools generate a form of globalized cultural capital through their transnational ties. Globalized networks are border-crossing networks. This form of Western classical music education in Chinese communities has been experienced as a globalized process, in which music originally from Western societies and further localized in Asian society is later brought to immigrant communities in New York City. This chapter explores the two processes of localization that the cultural capital of Western classical music has. First, how is knowledge of Western classical music localized in Asian society? Second, how do Taiwanese entrepreneurs gather this localized Western classical music to establish music
schools that serve Chinese parents’ desires for their children’s music education in New York City?

**The Mozart Music School in Flushing**

Starting in October 2006 and continuing through April 2011, I carried out participant observation fieldwork at The Mozart Music School. The Mozart Music School, founded in 1986, was the first Taiwanese-/Chinese-owned music school in New York City. The owners, Mrs. Lin and her husband, arrived in Flushing, NY, when they were middle aged. They came to the United States because Mrs. Lin’s older sister, who worked as a nurse, had sponsored a visa for Lin’s family. In the beginning, Mrs. Lin, who had played piano for many years in Taiwan, tutored students privately. Mr. Lin, who had been a piano tuner in Taiwan, worked in various positions, including as a restaurant cook and a security-alarm salesman, before picking up his old profession again. After a few years working part-time tuning pianos, the couple launched a music school providing lessons, a store importing musical instruments from Asia, and a bookstore specializing in music books for the local community.

Over the next twenty years, the school expanded. In 1986, there were three classrooms providing lessons on weekends in downtown Flushing. By 2010, the music school
had two branches, one in Flushing and another in Brooklyn. The main school in Flushing moved to a larger facility with over twenty classrooms. Several teachers who had taught at the school opened their own music schools in neighborhoods such as Flushing, Elmhurst, and Forest Hills, where Chinese immigrant families live.

In the 1990s, the Mozart School became a local representative for the Associated Board of the Royal School of Music exams (ABRSM exams). The job of a local representative includes advertising the exams in local newspapers, registering exam takers, and offering test-takers a place to take the exam. Over the years, an increasing number of students have taken the ABRSM exams in the New York metropolitan area. In the mid-1980s, fewer than fifty students took this exam. In 2010, the number rose to almost a thousand. In 2011, the school became more involved in ABRSM-related operations by assisting the Royal School of Music in finding a test site and registering students for the exams in Albany, the capital of New York State, several hours by car north of New York City.

**A Comparison of The Mozart School and A Mainstream Music School**

Mainstream community music schools, such as the Brooklyn Conservatory of Music (BQCM), which has been serving the New York musical community for more than 50 years,
differ in many ways from most Taiwanese-/Chinese-owned music schools (Brooklyn-Queens Conservatory of Music, 2010). First, the majority of the families attending the Mozart Music School are immigrants from Taiwan, Hong Kong, or China, whereas families at BQCM come from a wider range of ethnic backgrounds. Second, the Mozart Music School charges less for private instrument instruction than BQCM ($25 versus $48 for a 30 minute lesson in 2011). Third, the instructors at the Mozart School work mostly part-time. They include local Chinese immigrant music educators, international graduate students from China, Taiwan, and Malaysia, as well as instructors from Eastern Europe and South America. Most have had music education in their home country and in the United States. BQCM, on the other hand, hires full-time instructors from different ethnic backgrounds. Fourth, the Mozart Music School is open weekdays during afterschool hours from 4:00 pm to 7:00 pm, whereas BQCM runs on a full-time schedule from Monday through Saturday. Fifth, the Mozart School provides a curriculum that specifically targets ABRSM and the New York State School Music Association (NYSSMA) exam preps, in addition to general music education. The Mozart Music School functions as a supplementary music education, chiefly serving Chinese immigrant families.
Ethnic Entrepreneurs and Their Transnational Participation

According to Ivan Light’s research on U.S.-based, East Asian immigrant ethnic enclaves (Light 1984), ethnic entrepreneurs activate both racial and class resources to establish their businesses. Like many ethnic entrepreneurs, those running Taiwanese-/Chinese-owned classical music schools start by providing services for their co-ethnic counterparts through individual networks. Once they have gathered enough resources, they start a school.

Ethnic Networks

Mark Liu, a well-known music teacher in local communities who established the Beethoven Music School in Flushing in 1992, began as a student at the Juilliard School of Music. While a student, he intermittently worked part-time at the Mozart Music School. His reputation spread as community members learned that some of his students went to pre-college programs in the city’s top conservatories, and the number of children he tutored increased. Eventually, he established his own music school.

Adam Lee and William Huang had experiences similar to Mark Liu. Adam Lee’s family had a Yamaha music school in Taiwan. After he enrolled in Julliard’s precollege program, his family immigrated to New York City for his music education. While he was a college student in one of the city’s conservatories, he worked part-time at the Mozart Music School. In 2003,
after his graduation, he and his father started a music school. Recently, he has earned a degree in music education in New York City. William Huang went to music conservatory and taught in Mrs. Lin’s music school around the time Adam did. Soon after Adam Lee and his father started their school, Huang opened music schools in Flushing and Elmhurst, Queens.

Before the establishment of such Western classical music schools, most Taiwanese/Chinese immigrant music education in Queens emerged from informal social relationships. The music school entrepreneurs that provide middle-class/upper-middle-class cultural resources, particularly instruments used in Western classical music, are, in effect, providing flexible services to co-ethnic, immigrant families that use the resources to sustain cultural habits from their home country. These school owners had Western-classical music-related experiences in Taiwan; for instance, Lin was a piano tuner; Adam Lee’s family had a Yamaha music school; and Mark Liu and William Huang received music education in Taiwan. The sharing and exchanging of ethnic and class resources are informally bonded within immigrant social networks. Later on, the expansion of music schools in Queens relied on this informal social network. They began to bring in new customers, including those from different ethnic groups and with varied socioeconomic backgrounds.
Resources in Transnational Networks

The first music school in Flushing established a model for subsequent schools. The transnational character of the Mozart Music School is particularly important for showing how entrepreneurs bring resources into the community. In particularly, the schools’ funding, musical instruments, teacher recruitment, and musical credentialing rely on entrepreneur ties to local communities and music institutions in Asia.

Mrs. Lin’s business initially relied on capital her family brought from Taiwan and her husband’s savings after many years working as different jobs in the community. Likewise, Adam Lee, Mark Liu, and William Huang and their parents invested in their businesses right after they graduated from music conservatories. The funding of schools was through transnational ties.

Mrs. Lin’s music school began with three classrooms and three pianos. In the mid-1980s, she purchased used pianos locally and sold them to new immigrant families whose children were learning music. In the 1990s, following the expansion of her schools, the demand for pianos grew. Seeing a business opportunity, she returned to Taiwan and established contacts in Taiwan with representatives of the Yamaha Company in Japan. Mrs. Lin said that it was impossible to secure a Yamaha dealership without an intermediary in Taiwan [fieldwork note April, 2011]. Mrs. Lin mentioned that many Asian families
preferred Yamaha pianos, and they were willing to invest in their children’s music education.

The instrument businesses provided important income for the music schools. With a Taiwanese lawyer’s consultation, Mrs. Lin’s music school procured two licenses, one for a salesperson licensed for music instruments, the other for the educational institution. Her entrepreneurial ties back to Asia helped bring different resources for music education in the local community.

Mrs. Lin’s started recruiting teachers from her co-ethnic networks. Liu, Huang, and Lee shared, like Mrs. Lin, Taiwanese roots, with Taiwanese early music education and, later, went on to top conservatories in New York City. Adam Lee remarked, “I think because this is New York City. New York City is the dream of many music school students in Asia. Music schools provide endless supplies of teachers here.” In Taiwan, since professional music education starts early from elementary school and most people know each other for a long time through their education and, later, their work. There are network ties but they are in the micro level. When they arrive in New York City, senior students introduce them to job opportunities in music schools. These Taiwanese students also bring other Asian students from Japan, Malaysia, and Hong Kong to work part-time in Taiwanese/Chinese schools.

Like many other ethnic entrepreneurs, music school entrepreneurs gather resources such as funding, employee recruitment [music teachers], and imported products [Yamaha music instruments] from their transnational ties. Music schools provide highly valued cultural
capital in the form of competence in classical music and, as a result, are very different from other small ethnic businesses. Music education knowledge requires validation by musical education institutions both globally and locally. Hence, while Western classical music education is brought by Taiwanese immigrants to New York’s Chinese community, the music education they offer experiences localization twice: first in Asia and then in New York City.

To maintain the value of Western cultural capital, these classical music entrepreneurs utilize their “glocalized cultural capital,” i.e., institutional resources to recognize and transfer the value of music education.

Remaking Western Classical Music Education and Globalization

This study does not use the term ethnic cultural capital to characterize music education in Chinese communities brought by ethnic entrepreneurs from their immigrant homelands. Instead, this study uses the term globalized cultural capital to describe how the knowledge of Western classical music education was brought globally and remade in The Mozart School. Here, this study defines “globalized” as resources in networks that cross borders with global interaction.
The Process of Localization in Asia

Western classical music, as a representation of typical Western culture, is a form of cultural capital that these professional immigrants practice outside Western settings, in an local Asian way, and bring to the United States through their global networks. This chapter focuses on two important institutions in the localization of Western classical music education in East Asian countries. One is the Japanese Yamaha Music School which has popularized Western music education in East Asia, in particular Taiwan. The other is the British credentialing system, the Associated Board of the Royal Music Schools exams, which has been used to access cultural capital through the channel of educational mobility for elite families in Singapore and Hong Kong. There are still other institutions engaging in the localization of Western classical music education. This research focuses in particular on two institutions since immigrants later on brought these resources to the immigrant communities in North America.

In addition, in many East Asian countries two forms of music education exist side-by-side. One is music education in public schools, and the other is in music schools after school. Music education in public schools teaches basic knowledge of Western classical music. However, China is an exception. Music education in China is influential in
nation-building. Traditional Chinese music, Chinese folk songs, and revolutionary songs are the major components of music education in public schools. It was not until 1979 and the open-door policy that Western forms and ideas in music education were officially approved (Law and Ho, 2009). This also explained why in the mid-1980s, Western music schools in New York’s Chinese communities were mostly owned by Taiwanese immigrants. Professional immigrants from China in the 1980s received music education in China mainly in the form of traditional Chinese culture.

**Yamaha Music Education**

Among East Asian countries, afterschool music programs in Taiwan, Korean and Singapore are associated with the development of the Yamaha instrument and educational company. Yamaha has played an important role popularizing Western classical music education in East Asia. The overseas expansion of Yamaha music schools encouraged East Asian families to attend music education after school. Yamaha Schools created localized pedagogy and teacher training programs to better fit the needs and wants of local societies.

The expansion of Yamaha Schools in Taiwan was the most successful among East Asian countries. In 1967, the first Yamaha music school was established in Taiwan, and by 2011 there were more than 160 Yamaha Schools there (Kwong 2005). Yamaha has developed a
structured step-by-step curriculum to teach young students how to play musical instruments. The pedagogy focuses on basic technical training. As Adam Liu, whose family owned a Yamaha school in Taiwan, explained,

_Being a Yamaha franchise, we had to follow everything from the Japanese headquarters. The good thing is that owners can start a music service with strong support because the Yamaha [headquarters] standardizes everything, including curriculum, musical instruments, teacher training and examinations. The limitation is that Yamaha gives very little power to franchises. For example, after the branch schools register students and determines how many textbooks schools are needed, Yamaha sends the exact number of textbooks to the branch schools._

Yamaha Schools are not the only type of music schools in Taiwan. There are many private, individually-owned schools, too. For example, Mr. Wu, another music school owner, has a school located in the Da-An district, a neighborhood well-known for its schools that send many young people to prestigious high schools in Taipei. Within the neighborhood, there are more than five music schools, including a Yamaha music school. After Mr. Wu graduated from Yale University and returned to Taiwan, he worked part-time at the Chinese Culture University and ran his own music school. Wu’s school only provided one-on-one
music lessons. As a result, the tuition of individual music schools like Mr. Wu’s is often more expensive than a typical Yamaha school. In addition to learning music from local music schools, some middle-/upper-class families in Taiwan hire private tutors for their children’s piano lessons. The cost of hiring private, at-home tutors is much more expensive than attending a Yamaha school. Individually-owned music schools and private tutors help students study for music exams, as do Yamaha schools. Thus, the roots of localized Western music education are varied in Taiwan, but Yamaha has played an important role in popularizing Western classical music education and has affected the pedagogy of afterschool music education in Taiwan.

Two Music Credential Systems in the Asian Context

Western classical music has been widely disseminated throughout East Asia since the early twentieth century, and two related examination systems have taken root. One originated as the British colonial government brought its music education and examination system, the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music (ABRSM) exams, to the East Asian region: Singapore in 1948 and Hong Kong in 1949. ABRSM exams were introduced to Taiwan much
later in 1984 (Kwong, 2005). The other arose through Yamaha which established franchises in Singapore in 1968, Taiwan in 1969, and Hong Kong in 1971 (Yamaha, 2010). Both ABRSM and Yamaha provide globally recognized, graded, examination systems.

Taiwan

Since the 1970s, afterschool programs in Taiwan have incorporated these two exam systems into their music education to help children learn Western classical music after school. It has become common for ordinary middle-class families to send their children to these afterschool programs during the elementary school years. Western classical music is at the heart of global educational institutions such as the Yamaha Schools and the British Music Schools, which have music schools around the world. Middle-class families in Taiwan, however, acquire this cultural capital in local ways, such as by joining local musical schools, practicing music pieces, and setting up examination systems that guide one through various levels of accomplishment. These practices are local. Since the 1980s, middle-class families in Taiwan have obtained resources to access Western classical music by a unique glocalized method.
Hong Kong and Singapore

Colonial and post-colonial history made Western classical music the foundation of music education in regions like Hong Kong, Singapore, Taiwan, and Korea. In particular, the Singaporean and Hong Kong governments took British music-education methods and the British examination system of instrumental skills, the ABRSM, as their national standard. The meaning of the practice of Western classical music for people in Hong Kong and Singapore is deeply rooted to their colonial histories.

While The Royal Academy of Music, the institution that offers ABRSMs, was established in the late 19th century, the development of the university and high-art cultural infrastructure has played a role in nation-state identity building in Britain (Readings, 1996; Chatterton, 2000). Together with universities, cultural values and infrastructure were reorganized on a national level. Universities trained specialists in high culture, established and renewed canons in several art forms, and inculcated student awareness and respect for the products of the high-culture worlds (DiMaggio 1991). A national cultural infrastructure has organized and defined “official” culture by disseminating cultural hierarchies in the fields in which they provide institutions. Hence, educational institutions within this European tradition maintained cultural inculcation through the prestige of universities and affiliated cultural infrastructure, such as museums, orchestras, theatre companies, and professional associations.
Later, ABRSM and other cultural infrastructures affiliated with the British crown were established in Singapore (1948) and Hong Kong (1949). As time went by, this British exam system developed a global institutional network that would gauge overseas music learners’ instrumental ability in Western classical music. In the colonial and post-colonial era, these educational institutions of the British system have been the channel for colonial elites to access higher education or adapt Western cultural customs (Postiglione, G. A., Min, J. L. Y., and Sharpe, A, 1992; Ong, 1999). Until recently, places like Singapore and Hong Kong have been the channel for elites or upper-middle-class families in Asia to pursue higher education in Western countries (Huang, 2005). In 2010, the majority of those taking ABRSM exams were registered in Singapore (50,000) and Hong Kong (30,000).

In Taiwan, music credit and cultural capital has evolved much differently than in Singapore and Hong Kong. It was not until the late 1980s that ABRSM exams were introduced in Taiwan. In 2010, there were 32 music schools in Taiwan affiliated with the

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9 When the ABRSM representative approached the Department of Education both in Taiwan and China to take ABRSM as national exams, both governments in countries refused (reference from interview on Hsu Yo-Hsiao, ABRSM representative in Taiwan).

10 I interviewed representative, Hsu Yo-Hsiao (cc'ed). She said, “the ABRSM exam was introduced to Taiwan by a music teacher, Shao I-Shi (cc'ed) who travelled to Britain in the mid-1970s and had contact with people from the Royal School. In the beginning, there were only music-major students taking this exam and those who wanted to apply for music scholarships from the Royal School of Music. Later on, there were more people taking this exam. ABRSM is much harder to pass than YAMAHA’s exam. Many people who passed all the YAMAHA exam levels then took the ABRSM exam. It provides a more rigorous test of musical instrument ability (11.23.2009).
Royal Music School. Few students, however, take this exam each year (1,000). People take the exam in a way similar to how they take the Yamaha exams, that is, as a guide to musical learning.

Hence, the meaning of Western classical music in Taiwan is also different from other places. In the late 1980s, learning Western classical music in an afterschool setting became popular because Yamaha Music Schools invested in the music education market in Taiwan. In this context, playing Western classical music school for most Taiwanese people at that time was a symbol of becoming middle-class, a part of the takeoff of the Taiwanese economy.

**The Process of Localization in New York City**

Upon arriving in New York City in the 1980s, middle-class/upper-middle-class Taiwanese immigrants brought the resources they had gained from their world of Western classical music education with them. The evolution of the Mozart Music School shows how Taiwanese immigrants utilized their glocalized cultural capital and resources through their transnational ties to remake music education and meet the demands of local immigrant communities in the United States.
Pedagogy and Curriculum

Similar to many Chinese music school employees, Adam Lee, after being exposed to music education in Taiwan and New York and teaching in the Mozart Music School, became a music school owner. He developed a philosophy of music education that he put into practice, offering group lessons for 4-year-olds, and sometimes younger children. Influenced by Yamaha early music education, Lee designed a program in which parents and children learn music together and use their keyboards to record the songs children play.

When I was sitting in the classroom of his group lessons, one Chinese parent originally from Indonesia, told me,

*I want a group lesson for my four-year-old daughter. I thought about Yamaha because, in Asia, Yamaha schools are everywhere. Why is there no Yamaha school here [in Chinese communities]? I browsed online and found this school had group piano lessons. This lesson is the one most similar to Yamaha’s.*

Why do parents think group lessons are better for their young children? The price for group lessons here is not discounted much in comparison to one-on-one lessons. For very young children, however, they have more fun learning music by playing with their parents and peers.
The curriculum written by Yamaha always provides various games for parents to play with their children. In Adam’s class, he designed a set of movement activities to help students read the notes and always asks parents and children to engage in the game together. Adam always advertises that families gain a lot by paying one tuition for two people (mother/father and child).

When I asked Adam, “why are there no Yamaha franchises in New York City?” he explained that the distance from the headquarters in Japan makes it difficult for branches to follow rules. This is why there are no Yamaha Schools in American Chinese communities. Adam mentioned his music school implements many ideas from Yamaha education, such as offering group piano lessons for young children and using a series of Hal Leonard textbooks, which have been rewritten by a group of American music teachers who like the Yamaha curriculum. Rather than implementing play groups, such as the American Kindermusik curriculum or the German Orff curriculum, Asians have attempted to localize Yamaha-style music pedagogies.

*Music Teachers*

The educational backgrounds of music teachers are important institutional resources in proving the value of the music education these entrepreneurs provide. First, most teachers in
these schools have Asian and American music diplomas. Teachers with degrees from high prestigious music conservatories in New York City combined with early music education in East Asian countries are the most popular. Being from a prestigious conservatory is more important than being a piano major for their children’s piano lessons. Many teachers who majored in other instruments are assigned to be piano or violin teachers. When teachers have a background in two areas, they tend to teach in a structured way. Music schools provide teachers with music textbook series. They often chose to follow these textbooks, but children can bring the songs they want to learn. The preparation for music exams and developing fundamental skills takes up most tutoring time, though.

**Credentialing System**

The Mozart Music School has affiliated with the British music credential system as an exam representative for more than 20 years. Mrs. Lin, the owner, expressed, “I like the Yamaha education pedagogy and attempted to implement the music curriculum in my school by incorporating it into music credits. With this credentialing system, children can have a goal for piano learning and can be motivated to achieve these goals.” After she tried a few times to affiliate with Yamaha, however, she found that the Yamaha credentialing system is not recognized as ABRSM exams in the United States. American institutions don’t take the
East Asian one seriously. She said, “I need a globally recognized credentialing system. Only a globally recognized system will be recognized in prestigious colleges in the United States.” Hence, she contacted the Royal Music School and established relations with the British credentialers over many years. The Mozart School holds ABRSM exams twice a year. As registration for exams approaches, the school posts advertisements about the exams in Chinese-language newspapers. The school also provides places for the exams and arranges meetings with examiners from the United Kingdom. After the exam, the school also informs parents of exam results.

Presently, the Mozart Music School also helps children take exams sponsored by the New York State School Music Association (NYSSMA), exams that many schools in Long Island require students to take. The Mozart Music School, nonetheless, encourages parents to focus on the ABRSM because the local exam, the New York State School Music Association (NYSSMA), is “too easy,” and the only educational system that recognizes the NYSSMA exam credentials is New York State’s. Having perfect scores on the various levels of the NYSSMA exam might still be of relatively little use to a student’s college-application process. Glocalized capital recognizes a hierarchy of music credit in which global standards may vary from local ones.

The Taiwanese entrepreneurs in the Mozart Music School have tried to use their connections in the networked global educational institution, the Royal School of Music, and
have persuaded parents to believe that getting internationally approved music credits can help their children apply to high-status colleges.

Since the rapid growth of the Yamaha schools in Asia after the 1980s, music education has been processed in relation to globalization, starting from Europe and extending to Japan and later to other East Asian countries, such as Taiwan. At the same time, localization takes place, even though music education has a very standardized learning process and an equally standardized testing process for evaluating students’ ability in music performance.

Conclusion

Western classical music schools started in Flushing where entrepreneurs using their social networks across national borders remade afterschool music education in their communities. According to Zhou (2004), entrepreneurs’ cross-border ties can imbue ethnic communities with valuable social capital that can foster horizontal and vertical integration. These effects extend far beyond the economy. Taiwanese-/Chinese-owned Western classical music schools are examples that show how the effects of ethnic businesses go beyond the effects of the economy. These entrepreneurs create new meanings out of their cultures to foster the educational mobility of Chinese immigrant children. They gather resources from
their transnational ties, including economic resources, such as funding and importing Yamaha music instruments; human resources, such as teacher recruitment; and more importantly, institutional resources to maintain the value of the Western classical music education they provide.

The value of high culture relies on institution-based cultural infrastructures for recognition, sustenance, and popularity. One way in which Taiwanese-/Chinese-owned music schools implement their transnational ties is through the Yamaha pedagogy, which is structured and standardized and is easier to deliver to families who have never had music cultural capital. In addition, music schools incorporate high-status musical institutions, such as ABRSM and prestigious conservatories in New York City. Universities have a specific cultural role in that they train specialists in high culture, establish and renew canons in several art forms, and inculcate in students’ awareness and respect for the products of high-culture worlds (DiMaggio, 1991). Although some entrepreneurs invite their students to participate in the world of music for its own sake, they also emphasize music education as a strategic choice. Neither they nor their students see this as contradictory, though. They mobilize institutional resources locally and globally so that their students’ musical performance will be recognized by prestigious colleges.

In the cultural domain of transnational migration, scholars still pay little attention to how people from different places come into contact with each other in transnational social
fields create different cultural mixes. Rather, they treat culture as something people bring from other places in an unchanged form (Peggy, 2007). While Western classical music education is remade in Flushing, its meaning is neither the meaning the British embraced in the 19th century as part of national-state identity building nor is it the meaning that was located in Taiwan as the symbol of becoming middle class in the 1980s. The meaning of this remade Western classical music as a strategy for children’s educational mobility is created by residents who practice music locally. The next chapter will show how this creation of cultural meaning has developed historically through the interaction between local Chinese-language newspapers, music schools, and different waves of Chinese immigrants.

Figure 12: A Glocalized Tie to the British Royal Music School and Its Credential System
|----------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|

The British Royal Music School and Its Credential System

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Origin</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ABRSM British 1889~</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian Cities</td>
<td>ABRSM Singapore 1948~</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ABRSM Hong Kong 1949~</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ABRSM Taiwan 1984~</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ABRSM Shanghai 2009~</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Immigrant Communities

The Mozart Music School 1990~

Japanese Yamaha Music School and Its Credential System

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Origin</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yamaha Japan 1967</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian Cities</td>
<td>Yamaha Singapore 1968</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yamaha Taiwan 1969</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yamaha Hong Kong 1971</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Immigrant Communities

The Mozart Music School 1990~

Yamaha (1986-1990)
Chapter IV: Well-Rounded Achievers in Ethnic Media

Dennis opened the monthly Oversea Chinese Magazine with a report about his daughter participating in the Miss NY Chinese Beauty Pageant in 1996. He then showed me two news clippings from World Journal placed between the pages of the magazine. Dennis explained, “this one was about my daughter passing the music exam... this one was about my daughter playing violin in a concert. ... A group of Taiwanese parents living in Long Island educated their children to be excellent musicians and participated in NY state concert and pre-collegiate music conservatory competitions as well. ...Her experience in the orchestra helped her get admitted to Cornell. ... Being a parent, I try to support her as much as I can.” (Fieldwork note, Mar. 24. 2011)

Dennis, 60, a Taiwanese American arriving in New York City in the mid-1970s, had worked as a computer programmer for more than twenty years. Although his two daughters are now in their thirties, he still vividly recalled the days when he accompanied them to childhood music lessons. Twenty years later, Dennis still has the news clippings about his daughter’s accomplishments. He certainly is not the only proud parent in the New York Chinese community. The Chinese language newspaper World Journal still reports about
Chinese children’s academic achievements and music competences. The success stories of the children of Chinese immigrants are not only a keepsake kept in every household but are also part of the collective experiences that the media and local music schools circulate.

Unlike education news in mainstream newspapers that report more about education related events or policies, in *Word Journal*, advertisements about educational institutions and personal stories about successful students take up the majority of the pages. Advertisements from cram schools and various enrichment programs are listed daily in the *World Journal*.

Miss Wei, the owner of Ivy Cram School, and Miss Lin, the owner of the Mozart Music School, both told me that they spent about $40,000 to $60,000 every year for newspaper advertisements in *World Journal*.

Annually, newspapers report on Chinese American students who have won academic awards, such as Intel Science Talent Search, Siemens Westinghouse Math, and the Math Olympiad, as well as nationwide music competitions, such as the Young Musicians Foundation National Debut Competition and The Blount-Slawson Young Artists Competitions, or those who take a seat in a prestigious youth orchestra. These stories of high achievers detail their immigrant histories, learning attitudes, time management skills, school life, hobbies, and career dreams. Among a larger array of talent competitions, newspapers also report on students who excel in chess matches, spelling bees, tennis tournaments, or
other arenas of accomplishment. *World Journal*, however, devotes the greatest coverage to student music achievements.

Recently, the mainstream media have widely reported on the characteristic success of Chinese American students at classical piano or violin (Chua, 2011). Previous scholars have likewise addressed the prevalence of classical music capital among suburban upper-middle-class Chinese immigrants (Louie, 2004a).

The increasing number of Western classical music schools in Queens shows that there are more urban families participating in Western classical music education. Many, but not all, of these families are middle class. There is still a lack of research, however, on urban families and their participation in music schools in their ethnic communities.

This chapter focuses on the development of community-based navigational capital, a resource that allows immigrant parents to take advantage of Western classical music as cultural capital in the form of difficult-to-acquire competencies and may open doors to higher-status educational institutions. Navigational capital is a resource that ethnic communities possess that allows individuals and families to navigate dominant educational institutions in their receiving country. This chapter will explore the role that Chinese newspapers play in guiding immigrants to American education, the relationship of Chinese newspapers to music schools, and how the interaction between newspapers and music schools
generates a strategy that connects music education to the idea of a well-rounded education, which is particularly important for admission to high status colleges in the United States.

Through an historical analysis of the image of learning Western classical music in local newspapers, this chapter reveals how navigational capital takes decades for immigrants to accumulate through experiences interacting with their new society. Historical analysis reveals a more dynamic approach to understanding how immigrant groups interact with their receiving societies and generate their own navigational capital. For this purpose, this chapter analyzes the 1976 to 2006 archives of World Journal, including news about education and advertisements for supplementary educational institutions in the New York metropolitan area.

U.S.-based Chinese-language newspapers have long reported stories about successful students. For example, achievement stories of children have been widely reported in Sing Tao Daily and World Journal, which are the two major Chinese-language newspapers in the New York City metropolitan area (Ma, 1999). In analyzing educational news in U.S.-based, Chinese-language newspapers, this chapter examines how excellence in playing piano or violin relates historically to images of successful Chinese. I analyze archive from The New York Times prior to 1996. This chapter organizes newspaper stories over four periods, 11

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Chinese-Language Newspapers in the Community

*World Journal* is a highly influential Chinese-language newspaper in New York City’s Chinese immigrant communities. Owned by the Taiwan-based transnational media conglomerate United Daily News Group, there are six global editions. In the New York metropolitan area, news covers four categories: (1) Taiwan and Hong Kong, (2) U.S. national and local New York events, (3) news about Chinese diasporic communities (Lin and Song, 2006; Zhou and Cai, 2002), and recently, (4) China. In general, the newspaper seeks to attract a diasporic audience that is highly educated and has significant purchasing power (Shi, 2009).

Scholarly opinion on the role of the media is divided with one strand of thought emphasizing the media’s function in communicating dominant ideologies and maintaining the status quo (Pharr, 1996a, 1996b; Freeman, 2000; & White and White, 1983). Other strands focus on normative possibilities and argue that the role of the media is to criticize the existing social structure and lead the call for societal change (Pharr, 1996b). In contrast to those two chiefly mainstream media functions the ethnic media bridges the two roles in both local and
transnational settings (Georgiou, 2001; Jeffres, 1999; Lin and Song, 2006; Zhou and Cai, 2002). On the one hand, ethnic media translates sources from mainstream “languages” into ethnic “languages” and helps to spread dominant ideologies to ethnic minority groups. On the other hand, ethnic power groups in ethnic-minority populations typically control these media sources and, therefore, feed specific messages to ethnic audiences regarding goings-on back home and the daily life of immigrant groups in host countries. In the case of U.S.-based Chinese-language newspapers, the company headquarters of the two major newspapers, Sing Tao Daily and World Journal, are owned by elites in Hong Kong and Taiwan (Shi, 2009). They utilize newspaper resources globally and locally. Hence, elites within the ethnic media exercise interpretative power outside the host-country mainstream: they can articulate and disseminate points and perspectives that serve as alternatives to mainstream media.

Mainstream American media and scholars began documenting the idea of Chinese immigrant children doing well in American schools in the 1960s (Fejgin, 1995; Sue and Zane, 1985; Hirschman and Wong, 1986; Sue and Okazaki, 1990; Reglin and Adams, 1990). Commentators frequently invoked the idea that immigrant families have an ethnic culture that naturally encourages hard work to explain high levels of educational achievement (Siu, 1992; Watkins & Biggs, 1996). After the 1970s with an increasing number of Chinese-language newspapers in Chinese immigrant communities, ethnic newspapers have responded with stories of Chinese immigrant children who have done well in schools. These ethnic
newspapers often describe high achievers in the ethnic communities who not only excel academically but are also talented in extracurricular activities outside of traditional Chinese culture such as sports, music, or leadership roles.

Over time, Chinese-language newspapers have described characteristics of achievers differently. In the beginning, stories of high achievers celebrated the ways in which ethnic culture made these achievers extraordinary. Later, achievers’ stories provide information about how to navigate the American educational system. In addition to news stories, I document how ethnic entrepreneurs use advertisements for Western classical music schools to promote images of children with many talents.

1963 to 1975: Success Strivers Growing Up in Chinatown’s Sweatshops

During the mid-1960s, U.S.-based Chinese-language newspapers operated on a limited scale and mostly covered news from immigrant home countries rather than the lives of local Chinese Americans. During this period, the majority of Chinese immigrants had low levels of Chinese literacy. There was also a lack of a strong ethnic economy to support newspapers in the Chinese communities (Zhou and Cai, 2002). The mainstream media, nonetheless, started
reporting on the educational success stories of Chinese immigrants. The stories quite often talked about ethnic Chinese culture as a factor for success.

On January 11, 1968, the *New York Times* reported that a Chinese-American teacher, David W. Lee, was appointed principal of a Brooklyn public school. Mr. Lee had a Bachelor of Science degree from New York University and had done his graduate work at the Teachers College of Columbia University. The newspapers explained that Mr. Lee’s success was due to his family culture:

> His late father always emphasized the value of education. “If you fail in school, you can always be a coolie in this restaurant,” he said his father would constantly tell him as a warning [(1968, January 11, p. 39). Chinese-American May Head School Here. *New York Times*, p.39.]

Here, the media constructed the case of educational success by exploring the pull and push forces which ethnicity provides. The pulling force comes from the ethnic trait that Chinese immigrant families value education highly. The pushing force is immigrant children’s desire to avoid entering their parents’ occupations, which were often low-paying and labor intensive. From the 1960s to the 1970s, most stories explored the reasons why Chinese
immigrant children did well in school and reached the same conclusion: their ethnic culture
encouraged, even demanded, hard-work and success.

1976 to 1980: Highly Educated Immigrants and Their
Cultural Capital

From the late 1970s to the late 1980s, the arrival of highly educated immigrants from
Taiwan and Hong Kong brought class-based cultural capital into Chinese communities. Many
of these immigrants came to the United States to pursue higher education. After graduation,
most of them stayed in the United States. High levels of education and decent incomes
allowed them to have more resources and participate in high-end cultural activities in the
United States (Ong, 1999). Peter Kwong described these professional immigrants as “uptown
Chinese” in comparison to the older Chinese immigrants in Chinatown in New York City.
Immigrant professionals, compared to their working-class co-ethnics, faced fewer barriers to
where they wanted to live (Kwong, 1987).

In the late 1970s, ethnic newspapers carried stories about concerts held by music
graduate students. These concerts were sometimes held in prestigious venues such as
Carnegie Hall and Lincoln Center. Although most Taiwanese students at that time came to
study topics other than the performing arts, such as science or business, there was also a small number who came for Western classical music education. Taiwan’s study abroad policy supported music majors (Hsu, 2007). In this early stage, ethnic newspapers played a major role in informing the immigrant public about Chinese immigrant music students’ concerts. Gwhyneth Chen’s story has been widely shared among Taiwanese immigrants. Ms Chen immigrated to the United States with her family in 1979. Stories about her success, such as her winning the Young Musicians Foundation National Debut Competition at sixteen years old in 1987, appeared in World Journal. The following news was published when she was a laureate in the 1990 Tchaikovsky International Piano Competition at nineteen years old:

*Yu-Hsiang Chen (Gwhyneth Chen) was born in Taiwan. In 1979, her mother brought her to California to pursue professional music education, where she continues her musical studies with Robert Turner, who was a student of the Russian pianist, Josef Lhevinne. In her high school, she was educated under Aube Tzerko, who introduced her to German and Austrian music. Later, she received a scholarship from the Juilliard School of Music and received her Bachelors and Masters of Music degrees there. While in New York, her teacher is Martin Canin. ... In her high school years, her entire family migrated from Taiwan to Los Angeles to support her music education [(1990, June 20). Yu-Hsiang Chen, a Laureate in the 1990 Tchaikovsky International Piano Competition. World Journal (in Chinese), p.19.]
1981 to 1990: Community-Based Western Classical Music Education

In the mid-1980s, a great number of Taiwanese families came to the United States to escape the highly competitive Taiwanese high school and college entrance exams (Wang, 2009). These families placed a high value on education. Like many middle-class/upper-middle-class families in Taiwan who sent their children to afterschool for lessons in Western musical instruments, the young children in most of these Taiwanese families had learned to play Western classical music before they came to the United States.¹² News during this period would often describe individual immigrant children’s stories and describe them as performing well academically and talented at music. Some stories went as far as to say that a student who was good at many things would do better in American schools. For example, this

¹² In 1969, YAMAHA started an afterschool music program for children in Taiwan to learn the piano. In the mid-1980s, middle-/upper-middle-class families parents either sent their children to YAMAHA schools or hired private tutor home for their children’s music education. In the 1990s, more than 600,000 Taiwanese have taken lessons in these schools (Journal of YAMAHA Music Education (in Chinese) 1999).
news article reports the result of the Queens Symphony Orchestra’s Young Soloist Competition and portrays these teenagers’ everyday lives:

Chia-Jung Tsai moved to the United States with her family in 1984. Before she moved to New York City, she went to a music school in Kaohsiung and, later, enrolled in a highly competitive professional music program at Gu-Ting Elementary school in Taipei. Now, she is a ninth grader at Bronx High School of Science. She played oboe and flute in a band at her middle school in Bayside. She routinely plays piano more than an hour per day, seven days a week. She also likes reading, listening to music, surfing the internet, and playing violin. She plays musical instruments as a hobby. Rather than becoming a professional musician, she wants to study and pursue a career in science. [1987 November 21). Chia-Jung Tsai, The winner in Queens symphony Orchestra’s Young Soloist Competition. The World Journal (in Chinese), p.19.]

In the mid-1980s, Western classical music schools owned by highly educated Taiwanese/Chinese immigrants started advertising the message that immigrant professional parents can and should cultivate their children’s non-academic talents. The school suggested

13 The Queens Symphony Orchestra’s Young Soloist Competition was sponsored in part by Astoria Federal Savings Bank, the Taiwan Center, the Taiwanese American Association of New York and the Queens Chronicle.
parents should provide an environment in which they could cultivate in their children a well-rounded personality. An advertisement for a Western music school that ran in a 1986 issue of *World Journal* espoused the following message:

*Parents, please pay attention here. Genius is not innate. It is made by the environment, and we can provide an excellent learning environment for your children [(1986, September 21).The World Journal (Chinese Advertisements), p.20.]*

Essentially, these ethnic entrepreneurs who placed the advertisements were telling parents that children are not naturally talented or intelligent. Parents must cultivate these qualities, and their music schools will help them achieve their goals. These ethnic entrepreneurs marketed an image of well-rounded achievers to immigrant parents and also passed on middle-class Chinese parenting styles to families in the communities.
1991 to Present: Well-Rounded Working-Class Achievers

During the 1990s, ads for Western classical music schools began targeting a new audience — recent immigrants from China. In this era, an increasing number of Chinese nationals began immigrating to New York City from major metropolitan areas such as Shanghai and regional cities such as Wenzhou and Fuzhou (Kwong, 1997). The population of new Chinese immigrants in New York City grew rapidly. Music schools portrayed themselves as counselors who could guide new immigrant families to help their children:

*Since the school was established in the 1980s, we have met many students needing to take the Royal Music Exam right away or those who asked how to pass the music exam as soon as possible. This is because in the United States, college admissions require students’ GPA in school and “official” extra-curricular credits. There are many Chinese families whose children do very well in school and also have a high level of skill in playing musical instruments. They are newcomers, however, and don’t know the requirements for college admissions. Hence, many of them lost opportunities to go to good colleges. Our music school suggests that parents need to pay attention to children’s extra-curricular activities. Children might lose the opportunities to go to a good school because they don’t have enough extra-curricular credits. Here is a story: there is a*
student passing the eighth level of the Royal Music exam. She got accepted into a prestigious college. In order to encourage her to keep playing piano, the college offered her a piano to practice. [(1991, August 28). Register The Vitasoy Music Youth Talent Search Audition. [World Journal (in Chinese), p.20.]

This immigrant-owned classical music school promoted a well-rounded education which would help students in being admitted to a competitive college.

In addition, these music schools sponsored by community entrepreneurs have held Music Competitions for community youth in Flushing since 1991. Personal stories of students who compete are widely reported to communities during this competition.

*Participating in music competitions can motivate children’s music learning and students can improve faster. Like Tom Wu, when he attended the competition the first time, he was just about six years old. Right now he is a high school student who is preparing for the SAT for college admissions... During these eight years, he has participated in the competitions every time. ... He is well-experienced in public performance. When he elected to perform for the city’s July 4th festival, he was not afraid at all. ... [2011, December 19. Ranging With Thunderous Applause: The Vitasoy Music Competition from Gifted Youth. [World Journal (in Chinese), p.20.]
Currently, there are more and more stories of successful students who have won local competitions or taken the top score on regional exams. For example, newspapers report on the Vitasoy Music competition every year, about the winners and their excellent academic accomplishments. These stories, in particular, encourage local new immigrants because they represent goals that their children can achieve.

By investigating the U.S.-based Chinese-language newspaper’s reports, this research presents different characteristics of successful children and parenting styles and how local music schools connect their services to the characteristics of successful children. In the late 1960s and 1970s, newspaper stories depicted the image of the hard-working, successful immigrant and the maintenance of ethnic cultural values that helped Chinese immigrant children do well in school and climb the American educational, social, and economic ladder. Parental expectations of academic achievements were widely reported. During the 1980s, following the arrival of highly-educated immigrants from Taiwan, Hong Kong, and China, these immigrants received information that children with both academic and non-academic talents can excel in the American educational system.

For example, a popular literature writer, Yung Liu, who graduated from Columbia University and migrated to the United States, has published many books in Taiwan since the 1990s. Many of his books share his experiences of educating his son, Hsieh Liu, in New York
City. His son went to Stuyvesant High School, took music lessons at The Juilliard School of Music, and later went to Harvard University. These books are widely shared in Taiwan and Chinese immigrant communities in New York. Recently, Hsieh Liu, the son, also published new books in Shanghai, and his father’s books have also been published in China in Chinese-simplified editions.

Upper-middle-class Chinese parenting styles that emphasize parental guidance in cultivating children’s many talents were widely targeted at middle-class Taiwanese/Chinese immigrant families. After the 1990s, Western classical music schools positioned themselves as providing services to help children of Chinese immigrants climb educational ladders. As a result, in modern ethnic enclaves like Flushing, we see nursery schools that use traditional ways to teach math or Chinese to young children. But, at the same time, we also find more and more schools providing various types of extra-curricular activities for immigrant children. The upper-middle-class Chinese parenting styles of cultivating multi-talented children, especially the musically talented, were marketed to new immigrant groups of mixed class backgrounds from China by entrepreneurs in these supplementary educational institutions. All of these articles helped Western music schools increase enrollments and acceptance in New York City’s Chinese immigrant communities.
Conclusion

From the preceding analysis of a U.S.-based Chinese-language newspaper, *World Journal*, this chapter has reported that ethnic newspapers provide perspectives that function as alternatives to mainstream American newspapers regarding the construction of images of successful Chinese children.

While the mainstream American media portray Chinese students as successful strivers due to their hard studying and their ethnic culture, which emphasizes education, Chinese-language newspapers share Chinese students’ stories not only of their academic achievements, but also their talents in extracurricular activities such as sports, music, leadership roles, and the like. Rather than the image of a successful striver, Chinese-language newspapers describe an image of a well-rounded achiever to guide parents in equipping their children to be successful in American schools. Local educational institutions utilize the media sources by posting advertisements or providing students’ success stories to these newspapers. This navigational capital within Chinese communities is provided by the institutional networks within the communities.

U.S.-based, Chinese-language newspapers present a more complicated portrait of Chinese achievers’ characteristics. In the 1980s and the 1990s, ethnic newspapers targeted
middle-class families from Taiwan and Hong Kong. Stories of children who were good at music started appearing in these newspapers. Most stories explained the children’s musical abilities by referring to the children’s musical education back in Taiwan or Hong Kong and how they had continued their music learning in the United States. There emerged a new image of well-rounded students who were good at academic performance and extra-curricular activities, in particular Western classical music. Many Taiwanese or Hong Kong immigrant children in the United States had learned to play musical instruments from a very young age in their respective native lands. Ethnic newspapers reported such success stories to cultivate hope among professional immigrant parents who sought a way to bridge the gap between their children’s music education in the home countries and in the host country. In the 1990s and the 2000s, most highly educated Taiwanese- and Chinese-owned educational institutions in New York City advertised in newspapers. Driven by these commercial needs, the image of well-roundedness has been widely communicated to new Chinese immigrants of mixed-class backgrounds. Hence, under this specific historical context, the ethnic media’s presentation of successful Chinese children in the United States has helped to construct an image wherein well-rounded Chinese children excel at playing Western classical music on musical instruments. In addition, upper-middle-class Chinese parenting styles that successfully cultivate children’s musical abilities become lessons from which new immigrant families learn about these parenting skills. It seems that these ethnic media outlets rely on Chinese
immigrant groups in which a number of individuals not only come from highly educated backgrounds but also, later on, end up running supplementary educational institutions.

Social context helps construct the image of well-roundedness as a guiding principle leading the way to success.
Figure 13: The Images of Children of Chinese Immigrants in Newspapers

Old Types of Ethnic Schools

A Successful Striver

Ethnic Media: Individual

Ethnic AD: ethnic schools

A Well-Rounded Achiever

Inner City Working Class Immigrants

New types of ethnic schools

--suburban middle class immigrants
--multi-ethnic neighborhood/working, middle class immigrants
--enclaves new immigrants
Chapter V: Parental Aspiration and Children’s Music Education

On Saturday, Mr. Wu and his four-year-old daughter, Emily, were sitting in the lobby and waiting for a group lesson. The father took World Journal to read, and Emily was reading a children’s book she carried with her. Then, the father pointed to the Chinese characters in the newspapers and spoke to his daughter, “what is it? It is “Da” [大 means big]. Da Xue [大學] is college. It is important to go to college. Mui Mui [妹妹-Cantonese], you will go someday (Fieldwork Note, Oct. 24. 2009).

For Mr. Wu, learning music is not just cultivating a hobby. In the Mozart Music School, Chinese immigrant families like Emily’s regard music instruction as a way to obtain extra-curricular credits for their college admissions package. They prepare children to acquire classical music competence early – as early as four years old.

What exactly is this music-based cultural strategy that is practiced in the Mozart school? The group lesson offering for 4-year-old children can give us a brief understanding of it. At 9 o’clock, Mr. Wu and six other parents walk into the classroom together with their four-year-old children. I followed them to go into the basement classroom. There are six Yamaha electronic pianos in the classroom and two chairs placed by each piano; one is for
the parent and the other is for the young student. Mr. Wu took out the music textbook, which was directly shipped from Japan, and practiced with Emily following the textbook’s parental guidelines. Emily practiced a very short song that she learned last week, and Mr. Wu asked Emily the name of notes which Emily just played. I spoke to teacher Hsu, who has a Yamaha teaching certificate, and she explained to me that this is a 45 minute lesson with various games for parents and children to participate in. The goal of music lessons is to train children to have good ears for music. Eventually, after two years’ lessons, children with parents’ guidance will develop their fundamental musical sensibility toward rhythm, harmony and melody. Not all children in this music schools start music education through group lessons, although beginner classes for young children are typically group sessions in many music schools in East Asia and in the Flushing community.

These immigrant families who attend the Mozart Music School have high aspirations for their children’s futures. As previous chapters noted, the music schools claim to equip children with classical music cultural capital, as evidence of well-roundedness available for bolstering admissions to highly prestigious institutions of higher education. What music schools provide is not only musical cultural capital, but also navigational capital that guides new immigrant families through mainstream institutions. When the information about American schools in the communities is received by parents, their personal experience and class backgrounds can also interplay with their understanding of the navigational information.
Hence, this chapter examines the following questions: how do immigrant parents perceive their participation in music schools? How do children learn music? How do they use them to gain access to high-status colleges? Who are these immigrant parents? How do they understand the claims that music schools make? How central is music cultural capital to higher education aspirations? How does it comport with their own experiences, their relative’s, or their children’s?

Previous research has tended to view the educational aspirations of Chinese parents as rooted in their Confucian traditions. This perspective neglects the importance of other factors. Other immigrant parents also hold high aspirations for their children’s success. For example, Huber’s research on undocumented Chicana college students finds that due to the high aspirations in the host society, female students utilize multiple forms of capital available in their families and communities despite tremendous barriers (Huber, 2009). This chapter also takes a closer look at what factors in the Chinese immigrant community affect aspirations, in particular through a focus on the Mozart Music School.
Parents and Ethnic Jobs

I interviewed thirty-eight parents with K-12 children attending the Mozart Music School. Although the majority of the parents are of Chinese heritage, they are a diverse lot from various backgrounds, immigration trajectories, and residential locations. Among the thirty-eight parents, their occupations fall into categories highly representative of the ethnic economy. Some of them have employment-niche jobs (Logan, Alba and Stults, 2003), working as computer software engineers, computer programmers, post office workers, accountants, or bank employees. A few are entrepreneurs in the ethnic economy: owners of gift shops, ethnic supermarkets, travel agencies, real estate brokers, or beauty salon proprietors. There are also a few parents with working-class jobs in the ethnic economy, for example, restaurant workers and cab drivers. On the basis solely of parental occupational status, they cover a wide range of locations on the socio-economic spectrum, ranging from individuals who graduated from Ivy League schools to new immigrants whose income falls below the poverty line.

Some are parents from Taiwan and Hong Kong who settled in Flushing when they were teenagers in the 1970s and 1980s and later moved to New Jersey or Long Island. Others are highly educated parents from North China who arrived in Queens neighborhoods, such as Elmhurst, College Point, Fresh Meadows, or Bayside in the early 1990s. Some parents from...
Zhejiang (Wenzhou) and Fujian (Fuzhou) also moved to Flushing or the aforementioned neighborhoods in Queens during the 1990s after living a few years in Manhattan’s Chinatown. There are also parents from big cities in China, such as Shanghai, who arrived in the Flushing area after 2000.

For the last several decades, an increasing number of Chinese nationals immigrated to New York City from the megalopolis of Shanghai and smaller cities such as Wenzhou and Fuzhou (Kwong, 1997). The population of new Chinese immigrants in New York City has, thus, grown rapidly. In this context, music schools decided to expand beyond their traditional co-ethnic Taiwanese clientele and portrayed themselves as counselors who could help guide new immigrant families in the task of rearing their children.

The Mozart Music School aided parents in navigating the extra-curricular paths that, though common in the United States, are uncommon for parents from Asia. The school particularly addressed the importance of receiving a certificate and enrolling in special high schools in the city and elite universities. When I asked parents why they bring their children to this music school, their responses varied, but most parents stated that they decided to send their children for music lessons; only few parents reported that their children asked parents to bring them to learn music. Of the 38 parents I interviewed, 25 stated that cultivating their children’s interest in music is more important than preparing the children for music exams. However, when I posed this same question to the music teacher Miss Yun, who has taught in
the school for more than four years, she responded, “Most Chinese parents have asked me about the music exam [ABRSM exams] after their children have taken piano lessons about a year or even less. Some parents also ask about the possibility of skipping the beginning level of music-exam preparation and take the more advanced level of the exam.” Parents do care about the exams. In addition, in the music school, parents shared stories about families whose children were passing all levels of the music exam and either attending the city’s selective high schools or attending prestigious colleges. They want to know how these families help their children achieve success.

**Musical Cultural Strategy**

In addition to the Yamaha group lessons described prior, most children, from age four to sixteen, go for one-on-one music lessons. In the Mozart Music School, there are about twenty classrooms for one-on-one lessons. Most beginners take 45 minute lessons and advanced students take one hour lessons. For one-on-one lessons, parents don’t have to learn with their children in the classroom. There are still few parents, however, sitting in on their children’s music lessons. For my one-on-one lesson as an example, I had John Thompson’s music book, which most young students in the Mozart school begin with, as my textbook.
Most songs in the book are American children’s songs or folk songs. For my beginner’s lesson, I always began playing music pieces which I learned the previous week. My teacher suggested that I practice at home every day for about thirty minutes. Some teachers also request parents to prepare a checklist notebook for their children to write down the time children practice every day. After I showed teachers that I mastered these pieces, I could move on to the new pieces. Sometimes, even I played every note correctly. My teacher worked with me on the position of my fingers, the coordination of my hands, rhythm, speed, volume, and the emotion of particular pieces. For 45 minutes, I had to concentrate on showing my teacher all of these basic piano skills. My teacher was clear about what skills I have to obtain advance. As Mr. Sumon, who is from Bangladesh, told me, “I prefer Chinese music school. Their music education is more serious.” From my music lessons, I felt the same way.

The Mozart School has a series of music textbooks from which teachers can choose to give lessons, and many are similar to those in mainstream music schools. There is a teachers’ magazine that offers discussions of musical education from British music schools. Since teachers’ backgrounds vary, however, the pedagogies of one-on-one lessons differ according to teacher. Among the music teachers are music graduate students from Taiwan, Japan, China, and Malaysia who attend the city’s prestigious conservatory schools. Some are from New
York City or Eastern Europe. The school owner encourages teachers to prepare children for exams or music competitions, which give them a more fixed teaching structure.

**Reaching Out to Prestigious Cultural Institutions**

Mrs. Hsieh emigrated from Taiwan with her family and attended high school in Seattle. In the 1980s, she moved to New York City for her college education. Members of her family had studied classical music and influenced her children at an early age.

*When my family moved to Seattle, there were not so many after-school programs owned by Taiwanese or Chinese there. In addition, my parents have never spoken English fluently and couldn’t find information about piano teachers. I had to give up my piano lessons. There were huge disadvantages in this... Hence, I only went to Queens College [CUNY]. However, my younger sisters went to better colleges. One went to NYU and the other went to MIT. ... After Seattle, my family moved to New York City. At that time, my younger sisters were middle school students and they could go to music schools and a SAT preparatory school in Flushing. One of my sisters even enrolled in the New York Youth Orchestra. I’ve believed that her outstanding achievement in playing violin helped her gain admittance to MIT. In American college admissions, students need to equip themselves not only with high academic performances but also with good records showing participation in extra-curricular activities. This explains why*
when my daughters were six I brought them to this music school to learn piano. I take my daughters’ music education seriously. We live in New Jersey, but teachers in Flushing are much better. My husband and I drive to the city every Saturday for my daughters’ music education. I always suggest to other families that they would do well to think through where they want to live before their children start attending middle school.

Mrs. Hsieh’s personal experience has been that learning Western classical music has served not only to maintain her family’s middle-class pursuits rooted in their homeland but to climb the American educational ladder, as well. The perception is that participation in extra-curricular activities helps children in accessing the resources of prestigious cultural institutions, and that prestigious colleges have high regard for students’ experiences in these institutions.

In addition to the New York Youth Orchestra, there are two children’s orchestras established in the mid-1980s operated by Taiwanese/Chinese musicians. One is The Youth Orchestra, CYCNY,14 and the other is the Children’s Orchestra Society. Children who find themselves doing well and loving music can register to compete for enrollment in one of these two orchestras. Students’ participation in an orchestra enables them to strengthen their ability to perform along with other musicians. These orchestras give students the chance to

14 On May 22, 2010, The YOUTH ORCHESTRA, CYCNY, held a concert in conjunction with the Taiwan Center and the Taiwanese Association at Carnegie Hall (Youth Orchestra, 2010).
perform at well-known venues, such as Carnegie Hall. As Mrs. Hsieh believes, these performance experiences help students compete for admission to desirable higher-education institutions.

**Getting Rid of the Stereotype of Being Nerdy in Selective High Schools**

According to DiMaggio’s research on American schools, student cultural participation is highly correlated with academic grades, particularly in high school (DiMaggio 1982). Applying Bourdieu’s concept of cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1977a) to the American education system, he noted that most American teachers are recruited largely from the middle class, and as a result, these teachers regularly attend arts activities in relatively high numbers (DiMaggio and Useem, 1978). Teachers communicate more easily with students who participate in these high-status forms of culture, give them more attention, and perceive them as being more intelligent than students who appear to lack cultural capital.

DiMaggio’s research sheds light on why Chinese immigrant parents pressure their children to participate in cultural activities in school. Mr. Chen expressed concern about his son, Harrison, even after he gained entrance to an elite New York City public high school. Mr. Chen and his colleague, Mr. Huang, work as computer programmers in the same company on Wall Street. Unlike Mr. Huang’s son, Jackson, who has been playing piano since
age 4, Harrison started music lessons in the fifth grade. Recently, their sons enrolled in the same high school.

Harrison did very well on the high school entry exam and took an advanced class. He got help mostly from the after-school program of MEGA Academy [a well-known cram school in Flushing]. He was taught to practice testing skills again and again. This was how he got a high score. However, he has a hard time in school now. My son spends all his time reading. I’ve tried to encourage him to take interest in new things…. I am really worried about him. His way of learning seems inflexible. He seems to lack the study skills necessary for exploring new things or for coming up with his own ideas.…. [He’s not like] my friend’s son, who is a child with broad interests and keen musical skills. When he was selected to be an accompanist at the same high school [that my son attends], he got to waive his music-appreciation course and take other courses. Jackson [his friend’s son] is good in music, and this gave him confidence in school. It’s too late for Harrison to learn to play piano.

Chinese immigrant parents send their children to private lessons to learn music reflective of their own interests, and, at the same time, they hope the children might benefit from social networks. They understand the importance of cultural participation to their children’s school life. Especially with children enrolled in the city’s selective high schools,
parents are aware of the correlation between cultural participation and academic access to elite educational institutions. These immigrant families face pressures to create an educationally enriched environment for their children.

As this research of ethnic music programs suggests, when Chinese immigrant parents encourage their children to do well in school, rote learning is not their only strategy. Under a highly competitive elite educational system, the accumulation of cultural capital can equip their children with well-rounded characteristics. For these lower-middle and middle-class immigrant families, ethnic music programs are affordable institutions that help their children accumulate cultural capital. Students can spend a summer receiving SAT test preparation; however, it takes years (typically more than five) for a student to cultivate piano performance skills and to pass high-level music exams. In short, music schools provide institutional support for Chinese immigrant parents who want their children to achieve high levels of musical accomplishment.

**Early Music Education to Develop Relative Advantage**

Early music education is a strategy that the Mozart Music School delivers to immigrant families. In addition to giving young children knowledge of Western classical music, early music education uses a “parenting” style to attract local families’ attention. This
parenting style reflects local community contexts, including children’s development in immigrant families and extra-curricular activities in the American school system. Here is the Mozart Music School’s ad placed on its website:

_In the United States, once children [of Chinese immigrants] become teenagers, children have more opinions about their own interests and might become more rebellious toward parents. In addition, high school students, particularly those in selective high schools, have lots of school homework, exams, and projects. During these years, it is common for children to stop practicing their musical instruments. Hence, parents would be better off starting their children’s music education early. Before their children become high-school students, parents can help the children obtain the ABRSM’s highest-level credentials for college admission._

After more than twenty years serving families in the Flushing neighborhood, the Mozart Music School has developed mature navigational capital in “music parenting” for young children.

Recently, early music education has received considerable media attention as a fixture of the typical “Chinese parenting style.” In Amy Chua’s book, _Battle Hymn of The Tiger Mother_, she spoke to her daughter about music, goals, and deadlines: “Remember, LuLu,
you’re only six. Sophia won her first Performance Prize when she was nine. I think you can win it earlier (Chua 2011: 43-44).”

Being a Filipino American of Chinese descent, Chua regards this strict parenting style as her Chinese identity, which she compares to her husband’s American parenting style, which she regards as emphasizing fun during childhood.

In Bourdieu’s theory, cultural capital is what families inherit at home. Being from an upper-middle-class immigrant family, Chua defines her Chinese identity with a mix of her upper-middle-class background and her ethnic culture. For her, the parenting style associated with music education is rooted in her family heritage. She relied extensively on her own efforts when pushing her daughters’ music education. In the case of the Mozart Music School, however, immigrant parents accomplish an upper-middle-class parenting style through their participation in the music school, where they have space to discuss with teachers and other parents the various approaches to facilitating children’s music practice, particularly when children are young.

These parents have developed their own understanding of this upper-middle-class musical parenting style through their local middle-class communities. Mrs. Lai, a mother with 12-year-old and 8-year-old daughters and a 5-year-old son, told me about her experiences in supporting her children’s early music education:
I don’t specifically distinguish between what is Western culture and what is Asian culture. ... But sometimes I think Asians are shy. We’re new to this country, and English isn’t our first language. We aren’t as confident as Americans are. ... Hence, I encourage my children to learn how to show off their talents. This is one reason I believe in the importance of my children’s early music education. ... My sons’ classmates, they are involved in sports. Those parents rarely encouraged their children when they were young to learn to play musical instruments. But Chinese parents are different. Children in the families around me learned to play piano or violin when they were young. My children learned when they were young [the son learned at the age four, the daughter learned at the age six], and this means that their music-performance abilities are much more advanced than their classmates’. He can have more chances to show off at music recitals or to win music competitions. Hence, although my children can’t play baseball as well as their classmates, they can say to themselves, “I can play music. It is fine that I can’t play baseball. I still have my piano.” I think music helps the children to build up their own confidence in school.

Mrs. Lai chose to accumulate knowledge about Western classical music and also to resist the cultural activities she didn’t care for. For Mrs. Lai, on the one hand, music performance eradicates certain personality characteristics that are socially constructed and that, with respect to East Asians, include shyness and lack of confidence. On the other hand, since most Chinese parents around her are involved in their own children’s classical music education,
she considers Western classical music to be an Asian matter, particularly compared to sports. Mrs. Lai’s perception of what an East Asian should be in the American context revolves around bolstering abilities displayed through public performance, abilities that would replace existing American stereotypes of East Asians and would, at the same time, resist pressures to become purely American (e.g., the pressure to participate in certain sports).

The Mozart Music School offers parents of participating children an opportunity to learn an upper-middle-class parenting style which might differ from the parents’ own class background. This navigational capital doesn’t translate into the parenting styles of white middle-class Americans; rather, this capital gathers resources on how to successfully apply East Asian upper-middle-class parenting styles to children’s acquisition of skills and knowledge in the field of Western classical music—all geared toward the children’s eventual attendance at prestigious colleges. According to Williams (1997), “Navigational capital acknowledges individual agency within institutional constraints, [and] it also connects to social networks that facilitate community navigation through places and spaces including schools, the job market and the health care and judicial systems.” Chinese immigrants’ development of music-related parenting styles rests on music school’s long-term relationships with families in immigrant communities.
Intergenerational Mobility and Cultural Connections

Vivian Louie (2004b) mentions that Chinese immigrants’ perceptions of racial hierarchies in the host country’s labor markets help explain parents’ high aspirations for their children’s education. This immigrant status, which research often neglects, reconstructs the value of education among Chinese immigrant parents. In her opinion, parents have attempted to fashion a path along which their children can gain “success” in the new land. Parents encourage children to choose professional jobs. Middle-class parents support their children’s efforts to become professionals. Working-class parents with few resources encourage their children to become professionals, such as pharmacists, computer scientists, auditors, and accountants. This study concurs, finding that parents’ immigrant status helps explain their aspirations for their children’s Western classical music education, which I had not expected before I attended the music school. Parental aspirations for Western classical music education instead of Chinese traditional music education exemplify the importance not of solidifying attachment to the ethnic culture of origin, but of strategically bypassing the host country’s limitations for mobility by immigrants or ethnic minorities.

My interview subjects tend to identify themselves as professionals, with six exceptions: small businesses owners, food wholesalers, real estate brokers, post-office
workers, workers, workers, restaurant cooks, and cab drivers. I found that many Chinese immigrant parents from Hong Kong who moved to the United States while in their teens attended urban public colleges and went on to work in enclave businesses as white-collar occupations such as auditors, clerks, or computer administrators. Many first-generation immigrant parents from north China or Taiwan attended two-year professional programs in the United States and, since then, have worked in computer-related jobs in mainstream companies. These two groups of parents see themselves as professionals. A few parents who hailed from Fuzhou and who have held labor-intensive jobs, also support their children’s music lessons. There are new immigrants who have recently emigrated from big cities in China for their children’s education. From the interviews, parental occupations in the new land help explain why learning music is a way for the parents’ children to gain upward mobility.

Parents’ Fear of Their Children’s Downward Mobility

There are parents from working-class backgrounds in the music schools. These working-class parents were unfamiliar with Western classical music and the nature of music exams before learning about the Mozart Music School. Their children wanted to go to private music lessons and asked their parents to bring them into the music school after seeing their

15 In much of East Asia, post-office jobs are regarded as white-collar jobs.
classmates playing musical instruments. Among the few working-class parents, Mr. Chu’s work experience gave him a reason to support his daughter’s musical aspirations. Originally from Canton, he worked as a cook in restaurants for many years in Chinatown. After saving enough money, he bought a house in Queens, and his family moved out of Chinatown to Fresh Meadows, Queens. Currently, he is a cab driver. The cab company is owned by Malaysian immigrants and provides services for Chinese immigrants in New York City. Mr. Chu said,

*I want to give my daughter a good education. I hope she can become an elegant woman when she grows up. I think music helps.... I am a cab driver and have seen many people in my life. Some Chinese youth in Flushing don’t have a good education. Once I had two young Chinese passengers, they wanted to go to Kissena Street, but they didn’t know how to pronounce it. Without a good education, they suffer a handicap in this city.*

Although Mr. Chu works in a labor-intensive job and doesn’t earn a considerable salary, he is still willing to pay for his daughter’s music education. He knows nothing about music education, and his goal for his daughter’s music education is unclear, yet from his own work experiences, he fears that his daughter might face downward mobility.
Engaging in a Mainstream Social Life

There are also many parents in the music school who work in the ethnic economy or are entrepreneurs in small ethnic businesses. Many emphasize the importance of a college education, but few know much about music education. For example, Mrs. Wen and her husband run a gift shop in Midtown Manhattan. She has worked for a long time in the gift shop; after her children reached school age, however, she began spending less time on the business, instead helping with her children’s education. Mrs. Wen told me:

_Frankly speaking, I forced my children to learn piano. One started at age 7 and the other started at age 5. I didn’t give them the choice. However, from my life experience, I know music is going to be good in their lives. I moved to New York City at age 17. I took one extra year for high school and went to LaGuardia [Community College] and then transferred to Queens College.... However, my younger sister and younger brother did well in education and went to SUNY colleges.... My sister-in-law knew different instruments. When she goes out with her colleagues, she sometimes brings her accordion to play songs for others. Her three children are good at playing the piano. Now, when all family members get together, my sister-in-law plays the piano and we all sing together. I hope my family can have a musical home._
Mrs. Wen had little to no knowledge of music exams and playing music. Yet, music played an important role in expanding her social life. From her observations of her relatives, the ability to appreciate and to play music is a desirable attribute of middle-class lifestyles that serves as a corrective to a long day or a long week at work.

Avoiding Racial Segregation Among Peers in Suburban Public Schools

Families who have children attending public schools in Long Island experiences school differently than their counterparts in Queens where Asian students are majority in many public schools. For families like Mr. Chen’s who live in Queens, they wish to rid themselves of negative ethnic characteristics through music accomplishments. The case of Mr. Chang illustrates that being a minority in the public schools in Long Island introduces different parental concerns in assisting their children.

Mr. Chang has lived in Long Island more than 10 years. He emigrated from Taiwan to New York City, and later on moved to Long Island. Mr. Chang and his wife worked as public servants in Taiwan. After arriving in New York City, they took various kinds of labor-intensive jobs in the ethnic economy in Flushing. Later, Mr. Chang and his wife took tests and became postal workers. In Taiwan, working in the post office is means one is a public servant and has a high occupational status. In the United States, however, working in
the post office is a typical working-class job but with a pension, health insurance, and a stable salary. Mr. Chang and his wife worked different shifts to care for their children. Being a minority with language barriers and having a working-class job in his neighborhood, Mr. Chang was concerned that his daughters grow up with confidence. He said,

*Living in Long Island, as an Asian, I felt different. ... I have to say the physical difference does affect my daughters’ relationships with their peers. Peer relationships are very important for my daughters. I told my daughters that if you can do well in academics and have various talents, and you don’t fall behind others, you can be more confident and mentally healthy.*

The racial makeup in public schools in Queens and Long Island is very different. Although parents brought children to the same music schools to cultivate their music talents, they express how music helps their children engage in school life from a different perspective in terms of racial makeup and the competition in their lives in the public schools. Parents found cultivating children’s cultural appreciation is as important as studying hard.

However, when I asked Mr. Chang why he doesn’t brings his daughters to music school in Long Island or hires white music teachers there, he told me:
Yes, I did. When my daughter was four years old, I hired a white music teacher to come to my home. She was great! Her teaching style is lively and rich with variety. From her, my daughters love music. However, interesting is not enough. ... Once my daughters turned six, I brought them to the Mozart Music School. Here, the schools help them to prepare music exams and they have music competition each year. With this more structured music education, they are able to master classical music pieces faster and challenge themselves to play harder pieces and learn techniques step-by-step. Right now, I will prepare my daughter for an audition for precollegiate music lessons from Julliard Music School.

The goal of immigrant parents to cultivate their children’s music competences is not just to help children to get along with their peers. Being “excellent” in playing piano and enrolling in a prestigious music conservatory also helps parents’ self-image. For highly educated parents with working-class jobs in middle-class neighborhoods, they also see themselves as better when their children master difficult-to-acquire musical competencies and take a seat in a prestigious school. The ethnic music school helps parents to achieve this goal.

In addition, within the music school, ethnic networks also create social capital (Zhou 1997). The case of the music school shows not only that valuing education is supported by social capital in ethnic communities, but also ethnic social capital helps transform the ethnic
emphasis on intensive studying into an interest in participating in a range of cultural activities that are commonly seen in American educational systems.

Pushing the Glass Ceiling Up

From Mr. Huang’s story, we can see the complex process wherein immigrant parents rationalize their attempts to steer their children in the direction of certain kinds of careers through an investment in their children’s music education. After graduating from Tan-Chin University [a prestigious college in northern China], Mr. Huang enrolled in a master’s program in economics at Baruch College of the City University of New York, but he later pursued computer science. His computer major helped him find a job as a computer programmer in a mainstream company on Wall Street. His Chinese classmates in the computer program all stayed in New York City and became very close family friends. Those in the economics program, however, returned to China or moved to Canada. His experience of a racial hierarchy in the labor market reinforced his choice of technical jobs and encouraged him to take an interest in his son’s education.

Since he was four, every Saturday I’ve brought him to the music program and waited for him. We got used to it. Going to music class became part of
our life. My son passed all eight levels. At first, practice and testing were important events in my family; however, later on, it was just a routine that had to be done. My son’s interests are very broad. Now, he seems more interested in learning music by joining a band, not by playing classical music. I support him in this. He has already built up the basic skills for playing music, and it’s good for him to build up new interests based on these skills.

Although Mr. Huang has devoted much energy to building up his son’s interest in playing piano, he still regards music as an interest for his son and never thinks about the possibility of his son becoming a musician. When asked why he supports his son’s music education, he answered,

The more important goal now is that his performance can earn him positive recognition in public. I hope my son can have a more colorful life. He can have his interests and have a stage to share his interests.

Working as a computer programmer, Mr. Huang mostly works alone in front of a computer, and, to some degree, his work status is restricted. He considers his job just as a way to make a
living. Its benefit is that he has enough time to spend with his son. Mr. Huang hopes that his son will extend his social life through piano performance.

Conclusion

This chapter argues against previous research findings of educational achievement among Chinese immigrant students that their achievements depend solely on ethnic culture. This view of ethnic cultural capital neglects the interactions among Chinese families, their communities and the American educational system. The results of the current study suggest that aspirational capital acts as a factor helping to explain Chinese educational mobility. This form of cultural capital is generated from parents’ interactions with classical music schools in the Chinese community. The schools promise to help the their children gain access to higher-status educational institutions by equipping the children with Western cultural capital in the form of difficult-to-acquire competence. Parents internalize this valorizing of classical music and believe that a background in the music will strengthen their children’s prospects at public schools, at higher-education institutions, and eventually in the labor market.

This case study found that a Taiwanese-owned music school in Flushing serves as institutional support for the desire of Chinese parents to encourage their children’s cultural
participation in forms that are on display in public schools. Learning classical music is a cultural strategy whereby Chinese parents can overcome cultural barriers standing between families and schools. The function of the ethnic music school shows that Chinese student achievement is not attributable simply to a rote learning style. Chinese immigrant parents are involved not only in their children’s academics but also in their children’s cultural participation. At the individual level, those middle-class parents with children or relatives attending higher-status colleges become navigators themselves for new immigrant parents in the communities. On the large scale institutional level, ethnic music schools show the dynamic process of cultural transformation from the Chinese culture of hard work to the cultivation of children’s interests in different cultural activities. In this sense, music schools in Chinese immigrant communities provide navigational capital and help the immigrants both obtain cultural capital and use it as a tool to overcome the challenges stemming from existing structurally-cultured distinctions: the acculturation process for East Asian immigrants leads to stereotyping and racial segregation.

Furthermore, when expressing support for their children’s music lessons, these parents project the association of their own interests in music and their own experience of racial barriers in the labor market onto their children. Low-income/working-class parents (e.g., in the food-service and garment industries) work long hours to make a living and find it difficult to support children’s music education emotionally and culturally, even though
parents tried their best to invest financially in children’s music education. Their children often start music education late. Yet, many of those working-class parents who pursue music lessons for their children do so to prevent their children from experiencing mobility stagnation. The majority of parents in the music school, however, share an important characteristic: they work in “ethnic jobs” or in parts of the mainstream economy that require basic technical skills but relatively few language requirements. Their jobs offer relatively few opportunities to communicate. The racial hierarchy that they experience in the labor market leads these parents to hope that their children will escape such restrictions through music education. The parents hope, as well, that learning music can help their children expand their social lives and provide a more colorful life than the parents themselves have experienced.
Chapter VI: Asian-American Identity Redefined

I think, I am a half Chinese. Most of my friends are either Chinese or other Asians. ... Most of them learn to play musical instruments, either violin or piano. Playing piano makes me fit in. (Fieldwork Note, April. 12. 2010)

Katherine, 15, who lives in Flushing, has orchestrated a multi-ethnic identity throughout her life. For her, playing Western classical music is a way to highlight her Chinese identity. She has been learning piano at the Mozart Music School since she was nine. With her mother’s full support, her piano playing has dramatically improved. Recently, she fell in love with Chopin. Her mother, Marisa, a Cuban-born Chinese, arrived in Brooklyn at age 12 in the 1970s. Later, Marisa became a nurse. After marrying Andrew, a Nicaraguan, Marisa and her family settled down in Flushing where they have lived since the 1990s. When I asked Marisa, “do you think of yourself as Chinese?” She answered without doubt, “No, I think I am Cuban. My friends who are from Cuba think I am Cuban, too.” I put the same question to Katherine: she embraces her Chinese heritage. Growing up in Flushing and attending local public schools from elementary to high school, many of Katherine’s classmates are either Chinese or other Asians. Katherine develops her Chinese identity through her everyday life in
the community rather than simply inheriting it from her family. For Katherine, playing Western classical music is a cultural practice she engages in with her Asian-American peers.

Katherine’s story shows that Western classical music emerges as a cultural component of Chinese identity among immigrant families in Flushing. Previous research that emphasizes “Chinese parenting style” by upper-middle-class Chinese immigrants is used to reframe Western classical music as a Chinese American identity (Wang, 2009; Chua, 2011). This chapter argues that many parents in Flushing cannot implement Chinese-parenting styles that originated in upper-middle-class Chinese families. In those cases, how do the Flushing families express their practice of Western classical music as a Chinese American identity?

This chapter looks at how Western classical music as a cultural component of Chinese identity is constructed and how it changes through the process of an “immigrant bargain” between parents and children. The concept of an immigrant bargain is that immigrant parents often tell their children how much they have sacrificed to give their children a better life (Suarez-Orozco, 2002; Smith, 2006). This research assumes that, rather than a specific ethnic parenting style, the narrative of the household immigrant bargain provides a more accurate characterization of the practice of Western classical music among families in the Flushing area. In the context of Flushing, parents, in particular those with immigrant jobs that take up most of their time, rely on local institutions to cultivate their children’s music education. The immigrant bargain incorporates local educational institutions in a subplot, but, in reaction,
children may have alternative responses to the bargain with their parents and, thus, negotiate their identity differently.

**Rethinking Chinese Parenting Style and Community Institutions**

Recent media and scholarly attention has focused on the claims of upper-middle-class Chinese Americans that the practice of Western classical music is a cultural component of their Chinese identity. “Chinese parenting style” or “music mom” are essential characteristics of how Chinese cultural components are added to their practice of Western classical music. The cultural components of Chinese parenting styles usually include starting children’s music education early, adhering to strict daily practice schedules, and being willing to sacrifice for children’s music education (Wang, 2009; Chua, 2011). In Wang’s research (2009), she interviews a group of Asian parents whose children attended a Juilliard pre-college program. On the one hand, these parents try to present an Asian parenting style that de-emphasizes distinctions between Chinese, Koreans, and other immigrant groups, such as Jews. The strict parenting style is rooted in immigrant status rather than simply Confucian culture. On the other hand, these parents distinguish an Asian from American parenting style. By asserting
the superiority of Asian parenting, these parents claim Asian Americans’ right to become inheritors of high culture and make a claim for their children as higher in social status. As a result, these upper-middle-class parents use Western classical music as a chosen path for selective assimilation to affiliate with elite culture and distance themselves from American mass culture.

While the practice of Western classical music as a cultural component of Chinese American identity emerges in Flushing, local music schools likewise introduce an Asian parenting style. The local context, the class standing of immigrant parents, and second generation exposure in everyday life to American mass culture present, however, a fluid process of constructing and challenging the connection of Western classical music and Chinese-American identity.

**Advertising “Music Mom” in a Local Music School**

Lareau’s book, *Unequal Childhoods*, explores class differences in child rearing among parents in American society. She develops a distinction between “Concerted Cultivation” and “Accomplishment of Natural Growth” in explaining class differences in child rearing styles (2003: 17). Concerted cultivation describes middle-class parents who actively orchestrate their children’s leisure time with multiple activities. These parents allow children space to
negotiate, and provide children with emotional support. In contrast, working class parents leave children with more free time and encourage spending time with relatives. Their children, however, rarely challenge adults directly. As a result, the parenting style affects children’s educational attainment. Vivian Louie’s research (2004a) on Chinese immigrant families also shows there are class differences in child rearing approaches, even though the majority of Chinese parents emphasize the importance of education. Louie found that compared to working-class parents in traditional Chinatowns, upper-middle-class Chinese parents provide more resources to cultivate different talents and offer more emotional support to their children.

If class is an influential factor in explaining child rearing approaches among Chinese immigrant families, the Mozart School, which aggressively markets itself as a consultant that educates parents, will provide an interesting case to investigate whether participating in ethnic educational institutions can be reshape child rearing among immigrant families from a mix of class backgrounds.

The music school emphasizes parent’s role in music education, even though many parents bear heavy burdens in the ethnic economy. Strategies listed below illustrate that the school attempts to shape parenting styles in the local community.

*It is best that parents participate in children’s concerts. The Mozart School encourages parents to support their children’s participation in school*
concerts. Entire family engagement in children’s concert performances can encourage children's learning behavior. With parents’ support, children can also learn how to share their talents or express their feelings in public without fear. (Web Ad of the Mozart Music School [in Chinese])

The Mozart school also attempts to bring parents into children’s music learning. Even parents who know nothing about music can attend classes and learn with their children.

Parents should grow with their children…. It is common that parents might not have knowledge of music. ... While children are learning to play music, they can accompany them and learn from the teachers. They can practice and learn Western classical music with their children as well. (Web Ad of the Mozart Music School [in Chinese])

In addition, the school also emphasizes that children who play musical instruments well often perform well academically because mastering a musical instrument develops good learning habits.

Many new immigrant parents are busy working in order to survive in the host country. But still, we remind parents to work with music teachers to build children’s behaviors such as sitting still, being patient, and having discipline in practicing, etc. ... We try to explain to parents that learning
music is something more than fun. Mostly, young children are learning better study habits while they are learning music. ... Even if children have rebellious personalities, the experience of learning music can help them to extend the duration of sitting still or to become a more patient learner, etc. (Web AD of the Mozart Music School [in Chinese])

The music school regards learning Western classical music as a way to fortify learning by making discipline, diligence, and persistence habitual. These qualities are expected to be translated into high academic achievement and are reported as important virtues that upper-middle-class Chinese parents can instill in their children through Western, classical music education (Wang, 2009). The role the Mozart Music School plays is to introduce upper-middle-class Asian parenting styles to Chinese immigrant parents from working/lower-middle-class backgrounds.

A Bangladeshi Father As “Music Mom”

While the Mozart Music School advertises upper-middle-class “Chinese parenting styles,” many parents take it as a way of practicing Chinese ethnicity, including Mr. Sumon, a father from Bangladesh.
For classical music, I feel secure when my children have Chinese teachers. They are more serious and experienced. ... My daughter started learning to play the piano very early in this music school. ... She is manageable and always very actively practicing piano at home. ... I think that music can bring out people's inner power. ... Parents have the obligation to give their children as many opportunities as possible.

Mr. Sumon, an owner of an Indian restaurant in Manhattan, has been able to manage his time, accompany his children to music school every week, keep in contact with music teachers, and monitor his children's music practices at home for more than five years. He and his family used to live in Flushing and later moved to Long Island. Before he migrated to New York City, he spent time in Japan in graduate school and has visited many countries in East Asia. For him, attending the Mozart Music School was a way for his children to obtain an East Asian learning style. His personal immigrant status also strengthens his “Chinese parenting style.”

In my life, I saw many rich people lose everything in a night. I want to create something for my children, such as good education, good music performance skills. These are abilities people cannot take away from them.
Under Mr. Sumon’s careful guidance, a year after the interview, Nipa obtained her music credits for the highest level of ABRSM exam when she was only 14. He was so happy he wrote an email to share this news with me. Through many years of participating in the Mozart Music School, he adopted a Chinese parenting style that emphasizes structured leisure time schedules for children and an achievement-driven learning style.

The Inconsistency of Identity and Reality

Strict Chinese parenting is not that easy for many families at the Mozart School. After working with many parents, music teachers describe an inconsistency between parents’ belief in the ideal of “Chinese parenting” and the difficulty of practicing it in reality.

Miss Qian received her music education in China and the United States. Her parents were musicians in the national Song and Dance Ensemble (Troupe). Children who grew up in the troupe learned various musical instruments. For her, early music education came to her very naturally through playing with peers in the troupe. When I asked Miss Qian how Chinese parents are different than those of other ethnic background. She explained the Chinese parenting style in a very local context:
Among parents I work with here, Chinese parents’ attitudes in terms of learning music are very different from parents from other ethnic groups. Whites and parents from other ethnic groups care about children’s interests. If children are not interested in playing music, they will ask them to try one more time. If children still don’t like, they will give up. However, Chinese parents are different. If their children don’t like learning music instruments, they still ask children to learn until children passed highest levels of exams.

The practice of Western classical music among parents in Flushing occurs in its own local context, which is different from the upper-middle-class Chinese parenting style. Working-class and lower-middle-class parents who lack cultural capital in Western classical music, do not understand the extent of their musical knowledge, and, as a result, must rely on music exams to evaluate their children’s musical education.

Julian, 56, a violin teacher who is originally from Romania shared with me her observation. She attended a conservatory and taught elementary school for a long time after graduation. In order to provide her son with a better college education, she migrated to New York City. After arriving, she started working in the Mozart School, which is just located few blocks away from where she now lives. Asked whether Chinese parents raise their children
differently in terms of music education, she explained, having experience with fifty students a week:

In general, Chinese parents take children’s music learning seriously. Children and parents have patience to try learning instruments. They set up leisure time schedule for their children, such as no TV, no computer. Some of my students are skillful. But, I also have some students who are lazy about learning. Some parents are busy working, and their time is occupied by their work.

In the Mozart Music School, many parents work in immigrant jobs with long hours. Many of them cannot come with their children to the music school. Among thirty-eight parents I interviewed, thirteen worked in ethnic enclaves. While sitting in the lobby, some parents were doing their work. Although parents place high expectations on their children’s music education, in reality, few have the time to learn with their children.

Hence, “Chinese parenting” in the local music school becomes even more practical and strategic. Parents try to enforce a structured practice schedule for their children as the Mozart

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16 Since my research method is sitting in the lobby and interviewing parents who are waiting for their children I didn’t interview parents who could not go with their children for music lessons. However, when I asked Julian how many parents came with their children among her 50 students, she estimated half of the older children come to the music school by themselves.
School suggests, but they rely a lot on exams to monitor the learning process. For some parents, the exam even becomes the goal of learning music since they have internalized the message that having a music credential offers the possibility that their children may gain admittance to high-status colleges. The process to go through ABRSM exams takes about five to eight years. As for parents who work long hours it is hard to implement a structured practice schedule for their children.

This inconsistency between the ideal parenting style and the reality generates tension in between parents and children. Although parents place the onus of their high aspirations on their children and attempt to assist their children in becoming “music achievers,” in the end, not all parents can practice this parenting style.

**The Immigrant Bargain on Practicing Western Classical Music Education**

Chinese parents think they have sacrificed much more than American parents to help their children’s music education. Parents and children both work hard to perform music excellently so that their children have access to high culture and can move up in the American social stratification system. This narrative claims that the “Chinese parenting
style,” which relies on the efforts of parents’ sacrifices, is an essential component of Chinese identity. For Chinese immigrant families from different class backgrounds in the Flushing neighborhoods, in particular, working class parents, there is a different narrative about bargains for children’s music education.

**The Immigrant Bargain Among Working-Class Parents**

For Chinese immigrant families from lower-class backgrounds in Flushing, children’s social mobility through music cultural capital is uncertain. For working class parents, their lack of cultural capital and time makes them rely on local music schools. Their investments in children’s music education itself become an important element in their bargain with their children.

Mr. Fang, a Fujianese father who works as a cook in a Chinese restaurant, said,

"My daughter is 11 now. In her school, she saw that many of her friends learned to play the piano. She told me she wants to learn. ... I brought her to this school a few months ago and bought a second hand piano for about four thousand dollars for her. ... There is no one in my family who learned to play the piano. ... She has to practice by herself. We invested a lot and try to support her. ... She needs to learn herself."
For working-class parents, the narrative of the bargain about children’s music education often unfolds like this: parents will emphasize the money they have invested in their children’s music education. They cannot help them much, but they will support them. In return, children have to work hard by themselves.

Learning Western, musical instruments, however, is a long journey. Many children are interested in the beginning, but once children get to a bottleneck, they give up easily. At this bottleneck moment, passing the exams, becomes the bargaining chip between parents and children. When I was sitting in the lobby talking with Miss Qian, Mrs. Jin walked out. She said,

“I really want her to pass the exam as soon as possible. When will this nightmare stop?” She walked toward to Mrs. Lin. She continued, “every day when I asked her to practice at home, it becomes torture for both of us.” The daughter Fiona walked out with a poker face. Mrs. Jin softly her voice and said, “Hum... she likes music. She just doesn’t like to practice.”
(fieldwork note 10.24.2009)

For many immigrant parents, the immigrant bargain is more important in explaining their children’s music achievement than Chinese style of parenting. In the local music school context, the bargain becomes very practical. Parents emphasize how much money they have
invested in music school, and, in return, children, at least, have to pass the music exams. This narrative explains why there are some children from working-class families who also acquire this scarce, difficult-to-acquire cultural capital. More often, however, many children quit their music education. The long-term investment of money and time on Western classical music education puts a burden on a family’s budget and children’s engagement. The frustration, shame, and failure are also widely reported among families I interviewed, as I describe below.

**Blurring the Image of Classical Music Achievers**

In the Mozart Music School, we have teenagers such as Jackson who boost the image of Chinese students as “Classical Music Achievers.” Jackson’s success is a result of his father implementing the “Chinese parenting style.” As previously noted, his father, Mr. Huang, a computer programmer, devoted his leisure time to Jackson’s music education. In return for his father’s support, Jackson became a piano accompanist for the choir at Stuyvesant High School and, later on, attended a high-status college. Many students in the Mozart School do not fall into this track. They strike different bargains with their parents, and their different stories blur the image of Chinese students as music achievers.
Rebellious Children

Regardless of family background, children commonly refuse to learn classical music by resisting practice. Eleven-year-old Mark shared his sister’s story:

I: How often do you practice musical instruments at home?

R: Everyday, I practiced thirty minutes for piano and thirty minutes for violin. ...

I: Do you like to practice?

R: I don’t like [practicing.] My sister used to practice. But, now she doesn’t need to practice. ...

I: Why?

R: My father told me she is lazy and he is tired of forcing her to practice.

Mark’s father, Mr. Chock, spent a long time setting up a leisure-time schedule, looking for good teachers, and accompanying his children to music school, but Mark’s sister still refused to practice. It is very common for children to quit music lessons at Mozart. But quitting doesn’t mean the family could put the music school behind. Instead, they need to deal with
the stigma of lazy children and parenting failure that always follows a music education drop-out.

Absent Parents

Parents who work long hours are frequently absent from music education. Without their careful guidance, some children still pass the highest levels of ABRSM exams and equip themselves for college admission. David’s story shows a path among Chinese immigrants that is different from that of the typical achievers. The mechanism of the immigrant bargain and institutional support give us an insight in explaining his success. The day I met David at Mozart, he was taking the highest level ABRSM exam. It was a usual school day, and David’s uncle, Mr. Chow, took the day off to bring David and David’s sister to the music school. David, a 16-year-old student at Stuyvesant High School, started his piano lessons at Mozart Music School when he was six. His parents run a travel agency in Chinatown. Usually, David’s grandmother takes care of him, his sister, Jane, and cousin, Emily, after school and brings them to the music school on the weekend. When I asked David what he thinks about playing music and his school life, he unexpectedly answered that playing piano is something extra, unrelated to school:
I: Do you think learning piano can help you fit into your school life?

R: Well, my school does have piano club, actually, I should go, but not now.

I am stuck on this test. I might join after the test.

I: Is it a big thing for you to do this test?

R: Well, it will be a big thing if I pass.

I: How long do you practice for this exam?

R: Maybe an hour and half a day.

I: I mean how long exactly do you take to get to know the three pieces for the exam?

R: I am not good in accounting for the exact time.

I: Probably, three months or longer?

R: Maybe four. I wouldn’t count the first one and half because I was pretty lazy and didn’t practice that much.

I: Do you have many things you need to do at the same time in high school?

R: Yup, many...

I: Do you like your high school?

R: My high school is great! All I know is that if I can get enough sleep that will be amazing.
David thought preparing ABRSMs is strongly related to his college admission:

I: do you think extra-curricular activities help you to apply for college?

R: Well, they did really like well-rounded people. If I just put down my academics, it sounds as though I am very one dimensional. You know.

David is a highly motivated teenager. While preparing academic homework at a selective high school, he still motivates himself to take the ABRSM exams and keep challenging himself to overcome those periods when he feels he is lazy. When I asked Mr. Chow how David practiced music at home,

Without his parents at home, David sets up his piano practice schedule by himself. He is a kid who knows how hard parents work for a living and how much support we give him. … David wants to learn painting and we support him. He wants to learn piano and guitar and we support him. … He is a kid who knows to show his appreciation. … We know nothing about music. … David tries by himself and needs to rely on himself to figure out how to play. … Mostly, when he has difficulties, he asks teachers in the music school and practices again and again by himself at home.
When children, like David, have parents working in jobs with long hours, the narrative of the immigrant bargain explains the insistence of David’s music education, rather than “Chinese parenting style”. His parents work hard to make a living. Unable to spend much time accompanying him, his parents attempt to provide everything financially. In return, David needs to acknowledge their support. He motivates himself, but achieving the requisite skill in playing Western classical music requires knowledge and cultural capital. Teachers take on an important role guiding David’s music education. As David said,

*I went to another school but not for piano. But I quit because teachers there had bad tempers. The school I used to go to, the teacher I had was not the best. But, the teacher I have now is amazing. I intend to stick with her till I get to college.*

Understanding his parents’ sacrifices explains part of David’s motivation to seek success. But, this factor is not enough. A music teacher who acts as a role model helps David to build a better relationship with the music even under pressure to pass the music exams.

*Modern Music Player*

Children who creatively engage with new types of music also challenge classical music achievers. Harvey, a 16-year-old boy, studies at a local Flushing high school, Francis Lewis
High School. Harvey’s parents who are of Chinese descent are originally from Malaysia. They have a small carpet business in Queens. Sometimes, Harvey and his older brother help their parents when they need assistance. Financially, Harvey’s family is not well off. Harvey works part-time during the summer and is thinking about applying to Reserve Officers’ Training Corps (ROTC) as a way to afford college. He has liked singing and dancing since he was very young, though. When he was ten, he told his parents that he wanted to learn a musical instrument, and has since been playing piano for five years. He likes the piano. I asked Harvey why he wanted to learn the piano:

* R: I like music.

* I: So, the reason why you play music is just that you like it?

* A: Yeah.

* Q: do you think learning to play a musical instrument will be good for your education?

* A: No. I never thought about that.

* Q: You never thought about that?

* A: Yeah.

* Q: Do your parents think about that?
A: No. They just wanted me to learn an instrument so that I can express my feelings. Like, if I’m angry, I play piano; I just calm down.

Q: I see. Do you play in public?

A: I choose not to.

Q: Why?

A: I’m shy.

I: What kind of music do you play?

A: I play modern music. I don’t like classical. I don’t know why.

Q: Oh. So modern music... give me an example?

A: River Flows in You. [the background music of the popular, teenage, TV drama, Twilight]

Rather than playing classical music, Harvey chose modern music to express himself. In Harvey’s story, there is no strict parenting style involved in his musical learning, and no music exams to guide his practicing. Harvey, however, consistently attends weekly lessons and has practiced playing piano almost every day for more than five years. Harvey likes his music teacher. His teacher and he will talk about what modern songs Harvey likes and can do. Then, they work on it. Although he does not like performing on stage, he often plays and sings for his friends. He embraces modern music, which is connected to American mass
culture. Harvey’s example blurs the image of Chinese children as only classical music achievers.

Conclusion

While a new Chinese American identity, which utilizes Western classical music as a marker, emerges among upper-middle-class Chinese immigrant families (Wang, 2009), the practice of Western classical music in Flushing presents an inconsistency. Redefining “Chinese Parenting style” through successful Western classical music education shows that the practice of Western high culture can be done in a Chinese way. Parenting styles, though, are highly correlated with parental, class position (Lareau, 2003). While this upper-middle-class “Chinese parenting style” introduces to Flushing parents a particular practice, this parenting style creates an inconsistency in how Western classical music is understood as a component of Chinese American identity.

The findings of this research show that immigrant parent professionals are more likely to embrace and practice this “Chinese parenting style.” They can make time for their children’s music education and set up schedules for their children to practice at home. They are highly reliant on music credentialing systems to guide their children’s learning. They work hard to
be “Chinese parents,” to equip their children with Western classical music capital for competitive college admissions.

For parents who work long hours in ethnic businesses, either working as employees or as business owners, practicing this “Chinese parenting style” is more difficult. Hence, the role of the immigrant bargain is essential to their children’s musical achievements. This immigrant bargain often incorporates local educational institutions in a subplot. Rather than ethnicity, immigrant status provides children the rich resources and motivation to achieve music excellence. The absence of parents in children’s music education and the reliance on local ethnic educational institutions challenges the idea that the Chinese parenting style is the sole route to obtaining Western classical music cultural capital and greater opportunities for upwardly mobility.

Moreover, the way children engage music blurs the image of Western classical music and Chinese American identity. Rather than simply rebellious or compliant, children bring the new meanings into their Western classical music education. Some play popular music and jazz rather than only classical music. Their engagement enriches the image of Chinese Americans and their relationship to music.
Chapter VII: Conclusion

The case study of the Mozart Music School contradicts segmented theory. Whereas segmented assimilation theorists have focused on supplementary education institutions which sustain Confucian culture as a main factor in explaining educational success among Chinese immigrant children, I argue that these institutions do more. These institutions provide various forms of capital to assist Chinese immigrant children in climbing the educational ladder and fostering their vertical incorporation in American society. Various forms of community-based cultural capital, such as globalized, navigational, and aspirational capital, allow immigrant children to transcend cultural customs that stand between families and American schools.

The image of Asian music achievers also complicates the assumption of segmented assimilation theory on ethnic culture. While segmented theorists believe ethnic culture is as firm as steel and is deeply rooted in a value system that harkens back to immigrant home countries, this study traces the subtle evolution of components of ethnic culture over time within a community. With the aspiration to succeed in a new land, families living in Flushing, on the one hand, distance themselves from negative Asian stereotypes, such as being bookworms and nerds that may disadvantage their educational mobility. One the other hand, they also utilizes music achievements as a way to embrace positive characteristics, such as
well-roundedness, creativity, and great determination. Musical achievement gives these families opportunities to redefine the components of ethnic culture and the meaning of their ethnicity. They are learning to be upper-middle-class, cultured Asian Americans rather than just clinging to their Chinese identity or becoming white Americans.

Immigrant Communities and Institutional Transformation

Though ethnic educational institutions, in particular language schools, have served traditional Chinese communities for a long time, these institutions have changed over the last two decades. In new Chinese communities, such as Flushing, New York, there has been a rapid growth of afterschool programs, test preparatory schools, and programs for extra-curricular activities. These new supplementary educational institutions tend not to offer traditional Chinese culture but, instead, provide various forms of community-based capital. Taiwanese-owned Western classical music schools are examples of institutions oriented toward American society; their interest is not in traditional Chinese music activities.

This research employs multiple methods, including an analysis of Chinese newspapers, ethnographic interviews, and participant observation. The multiple methods enabled me to reveal community cultural wealth both at the macro and micro level. By conducting participant observation in a Taiwanese-owned music school, I extend our understanding of
the cultural practices in these institutions alongside a broader scale of social structures, such as transnational ties and the institutional hierarchy of American educational institutions. In addition, by analyzing Chinese-language newspapers historically, I show how the image of classical music achievers has become in the media over time a characteristic of upper-middle-class, Chinese-American identity. Furthermore, by conducting ethnographic interviews, I present parents’ and children’s voices so that they can express their understandings of Western classical music education in a local community context.

**Transnational Ties and Globalized Cultural Capital**

Flushing, New York has become host to new types of supplementary educational institutions and is thus a transnational social field. By participating in transnational networks, entrepreneurs bring not only ethnic culture but also global resources to foster immigrants’ horizontal and vertical integration in their new land (Zhou 2004). Their transnational ties facilitate the acquisition of economic resources, such as funding and importing YAHAMA music instruments, human resources, such as teacher recruitment, and more important, institutional resources to convince consumers that the educational services they provide are highly valued.
This research uses the concept globalized cultural capital to explain how Western classical music education is remade in Chinese immigrant communities. Globalized cultural capital extends Bourdieu’s concept of cultural capital to encompass entrepreneurial access to global knowledge resources. First, knowledge of Western classical music is localized in Asian society. Japanese Yamaha schools popularized Western classical music education by implementing a standardized curriculum and pedagogy. The British musical credential system was brought to Hong Kong and Singapore. Second, Taiwanese entrepreneurs remade Western, classical music education in Chinese immigrant communities by adapting music institutions that the Japanese and British had embedded in Asian societies through schools and credentialing. By cooperating with these global music institutions, entrepreneurs intend to convince immigrant parents that the value of music education is recognized by educational institutions across borders and valued by prestigious colleges in the United States. The ambition of entrepreneurs in remaking music education along with music education resources in Chinese communities help raise parents’ aspiration for children’s music education.

Navigational and Aspirational Capital and Educational Mobility

In addition to globalized capital, navigational and aspirational capital are two factors that help explain educational mobility among Chinese immigrant children. Western classical
music schools and local Chinese-language newspapers help parents navigate American institutions. U.S.-based Chinese-language newspapers present a complicated portrait of Chinese achievers. Rather than the image of a successful striver who avoids sweatshop labor, Chinese-language newspapers describe well-rounded achievers whose examples lead the way to success. In addition, parents share and exchange navigational capital in their communities through participation in Western classical music schools.

Previous research has located Chinese aspirations for their children’ education in their ethnic culture, but this research illustrates that Chinese parents’ aspirations also spring from their socialization within ethnic supplementary educational institutions in the local community. Parents internalize the idea that a background in music will increase their children’s prospects at public schools, higher education institutions, and eventually in the labor market. Most parents whose children attend Western classical music schools work in ethnic jobs, and their experience of limited access to mainstream labor markets leads them to hope their children will escape such restrictions through music education.

**Blurring Images of Classical Music Achievers**

Aspirations that children will surpass their own socio-economic status place great pressure on parenting styles and the need for children to succeed in school. The redefinition
of “Chinese parenting style” on children’s Western classical music education among upper-middle-class, Chinese parents, in particular, is an example of parental aspiration on children’s education. The claim that Chinese parents are superior to Americans is evidenced by Chinese sacrifice for, time spent engaged in, and knowledge of children’s music education, and those practices validate children’s achievements in music performance. The way in which they embrace Western classical music is an aspect of how they present their Chinese-American identity.

Although entrepreneurs in Flushing have introduced this “Chinese parenting style,” only a few parents can fulfill its strict requirements. Learning music takes time on the part of parents to gain musical knowledge and guide their children. For parents who work long hours, the implementation of this Chinese parenting style is impossible. Unable to act as music parents, households face pressures, tension and frustration. So rather than adopting the “Chinese parenting style,” families strike an immigrant bargain as a mechanism to motivate music learning. This bargain follows a narrative similar to this: parents emphasize their sacrifice, working long hours, and investing in their children’s education by sending them to various afterschool programs in the local community. By providing children with afterschool activities, parents show their support for their children’s education and relieve their insecurity about American education and their guilt that they cannot accompany their children. While such a bargain occurs in many middle-class and most working-class families,
second-generation children respond differently to their parents’ high expectations. Through their engagement with music, the second generation also blurs the image of classical music achievers.

**Boundary Assimilation**

This research indicates that the cultural identity of Chinese immigrant families is fluid and changeable. Western classical music schools utilize various forms of community-based capital to meet the need of educational mobility among immigrant families. As a result, immigrant family participation in Western classical music also changes the cultural components of Chinese-American identity.

In cultivating their children as pianists or violinists, upper-middle-class Chinese claim themselves as rightful inheritors of high culture. These families redefine Chinese identity through their music parenting, which entails sacrifice and strict disciplining in the face of American mass culture and parenting styles (Wang, 2009; Chua, 2011). Community music schools introduce this prestigious Chinese identity to urban immigrant families, but the meanings of Western classical music and implementing Asian music parenting become associated with an almost cultural need to access higher-status colleges. The pursuit of classical music is an implicit means of moving on the path to becoming middle- or
upper-middle-class Asians, which opens up the possibility of living outside of ethnic enclaves.

This study argues against Portes’ (2001) idea that selective assimilation is a way that Asian immigrants can realize social mobility and maintain homeland cultural values that are consonant with culturally acceptable parent-child relationships in ethnic communities. Here, the findings show the cultural components that immigrants select are not simply traditionally ethnic, such as ethnic language or ethnic cultural customs. They are a hybrid cultural construct, a Western classical cultural content that instills Asian parenting style, Asian pedagogy, and a learning style driven by credentialing that makes possible immigrant aspirations for access to prestigious colleges. As Alba and Nee (2003) note, boundary assimilation, which opens up opportunities for higher education, also increases the vertical incorporation of immigrant second generations in American society; this research shows the determination for higher education among Chinese immigrant families also changes the cultural components of being Chinese American. Later, the cultural practices of the second generation broaden the image of Western classical music achievers into more diverse fields of music and cultural participation in the new land. Rather than retaining their ethnic culture, the competition to climb the educational ladder in the new land encourages Chinese immigrant families to create ethnic identities of hybrid cultural components.
Future Research

At the local level, case studies of classical music schools in more ethnically diverse communities, such as Forest Hills and Elmhurst in New York City would benefit from this research. They would lead to a more nuanced body of research on multi-ethnic neighborhoods. The results would add to the growing literature on educational mobility among immigrants. In addition, comparative studies of new types of cultural capital among different minority communities are also needed to examine the different ways minority children attain upward mobility.

Moreover, future study is needed to present the views of children of Chinese immigrants and those families who do not participate in or cannot afford lessons in music schools. For example, I met with Jennifer, a friend of my respondent Harvey, in Flushing. Unlike most of my respondents who attend music lessons in their communities, Jennifer’s parents, even though they learned from friends that music education is important, cannot afford music lessons. Jennifer cares about her SAT scores but is unable to show proof of her extra-curricular activities. She is from one of the many working-class families who cannot afford extra-curricular activities. Whether these increasingly profitable institutions negatively affect working-class children needs further discussion.
This study explores factors of educational mobility among children of Chinese immigrants in New York City. By conceptualizing various forms of community-based capital, this research hopes to open up a dialogue to compare Chinese immigrant communities in different societies and link the dialogue to a basic question in immigrant studies: how the social mobility of new immigrants is correlated with the social stratification of receiving countries. This project is part of a longstanding investigation of intergenerational mobility, of how immigrant groups integrate in receiving societies.
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