

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 375 715

HE 027 799

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 TITLE Marginal Men on an American Campus: A Case of Chinese Faculty. ASHE Annual Meeting Paper.  
 PUB DATE 13 Nov 94  
 NOTE 29p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Association for the Study of Higher Education (19th, Tucson, AZ, November 10-13, 1994).  
 PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.  
 DESCRIPTORS \*Chinese Americans; Chinese Culture; \*College Faculty; Cultural Awareness; \*Cultural Differences; Cultural Traits; \*Faculty College Relationship; Higher Education; Immigrants; Intercultural Communication; Interviews; Males; Teacher Attitudes; \*Work Environment

IDENTIFIERS \*ASHE Annual Meeting; \*Chinese People; Marginal Man Theory

ABSTRACT

This study used the marginal man theory to try to understand the work experiences of a group of Chinese immigrant professors at American institutions of higher education. Marginal man theory describes an individual with dual, perhaps not resolvable identities in two cultures. Five male professors at a Midwestern university participated in the study which gathered data through ethnographic interviews with the faculty, all males in their forties and none with tenure. Analysis revealed four cultural themes with regard to marginality: (1) conservative environment; (2) clash of two instructional study subcultures; (3) aloofness in human relationships; and (4) linguistic marginality. The analysis also found that the participants were generally satisfied with their jobs. Many seemed to have developed a "comparative edge," an ability to weigh the pros and cons of their two cultures gained through their dual knowledge and experiences. This comparative edge derived from their willingness to embrace both cultures and try to combine the best of both. For instance, differences in Chinese and American pedagogical methods caused these professors to draw on the strengths of both methodologies and see the impact of cultural clash clearly. Degree of marginality appeared to be related to both configuration of organizational structure, acceptance of diversity in organizational culture, and length of time an individual had been in their position. (Contains 14 references.) (JB)

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# Marginal Men on An American Campus: A Case of Chinese Faculty

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**This paper was presented at the annual meeting of the Association for the Study of Higher Education held at the Doubletree Hotel, Tucson, Arizona, November 10-13, 1994. This paper was reviewed by ASHE and was judged to be of high quality and of interest to others concerned with the research of higher education. It has therefore been selected to be included in the ERIC collection of ASHE conference papers.**

## **Introduction**

Since China opened its doors to the West in 1978, the number of students and visiting scholars studying in Western countries has increased dramatically. Some of them are supported by the Chinese government. Others pursue higher education degrees with scholarships, graduate assistantships, or financial aid from friends and relatives. Except for those visiting scholars supported by the Chinese government who are obligated to go back to China, a very high percentage (an estimate of 95%) of self-supported Chinese choose to stay after earning their degrees in the U.S. A good proportion of them, at the doctoral level find positions in American colleges and universities. The purpose of this study was to seek to understand these Chinese professors' work experience in American higher education institutions. The marginal man theory was utilized as a framework to present the findings.

### **The Marginal Man Theory**

Robert E. Park (1928) advanced the concept of "marginal man" in 1928. Despite the expanded immigration wave in 1940s, the substantial legislature and policy changes due to the pressure for equal rights and equal opportunities in the 1960s and 1970s, and the promotion of multiculturalism in 1980s, the concept of the marginal man has received little attention in academe. Only a few sociologists have utilized it and then to study Jews and biracial hybrids. So, researchers have had to reference the originators Robert E. Park and Everret Stonequist who elaborated on the concept to gain insights about the marginal man theory.

According to Park, the marginal man is:

a cultural hybrid, a man living and sharing intimately in the cultural life and traditions of two distinct peoples; never quite willing to break, even if he were permitted to do so, with his past and his traditions, and not quite accepted, because of racial prejudice, in the new society in which he now sought to find a place. He was a man on the margin of two cultures and two societies, which never completely interpenetrated and fused" (p. 892).

Of essential importance to the concept of the marginal man is the notion of the marginal social situation. The definition of marginal situations was the focus of several studies (Stonequist, 1935; Goldberg, 1941; Antonovsky, 1955; and Berry, 1990). The most comprehensive definition of the marginal situation is provided by Antonovsky (1955), who classified a marginal social situation has the following characteristics:

1. Two cultures are in lasting contact;
2. One of them, the non-marginal culture, is dominant in terms of power and reward potential;
3. The boundaries between the two are sufficiently permeable for the members of the marginal culture to internalize the patterns of the dominant culture as well as that of their own;
4. These patterns cannot be easily harmonized;
5. Members of the non-dominant culture are attracted by the rewards of dominant culture; and
6. The members of the non-dominant culture experience the pressure against "betrayal" from their fellows.

Marginality in social situations can be divided into objective marginality and subjective marginality (Imamura, 1990). The objective marginality refers to cultural

values, norms and customs in the dominant culture that conflict with that of the marginal man, over which he has no control, nor does he have power to change them. Subjective marginality refers to the kind of cultural conflicts that stem from the marginal man's own lack of understanding of the dominant culture and inadequate ability, both linguistic and interpersonal, or even the unwillingness to integrate with the dominant culture.

Stonequist (1935) explored the personality of the marginal man when he stated

They all involve some cultural conflict and racial prejudice; and they have an unsettled problematic character. There is a pull and pressure from both sides . . . . His awareness of the conflict situation, mild or acute, signifies that in looking at himself from the standpoint of each group he experiences the conflict as a personal problem. . . . The two cultures produce a dual pattern of identification and a divided loyalty, and the attempt to maintain self-respect transforms these feelings into an ambivalent attitude" (p. 6).

The resulting personality has increased sensitiveness, self-consciousness, race-consciousness, indefinable malaise, insecurity, ambivalence, chronic nervous strain, divided self identity, and inferiority (Stonequist, 1935; Goldberg, 1941):

### **Chinese Professors as Marginal Men**

Several researchers have suggested the application of the theory of marginal man to intellectuals (Antonovsky, 1988; Yoshikawa, 1978), but the actual attempts are very few. The existing literature on the application of marginal man theory to intellectuals focus primarily on professional women (Dwordin, 1986; Atkinson & Delamont, 1990). Therefore, more efforts need to be devoted to the study of the marginality of intellectuals as a whole.

Before examining the marginality of Chinese professors, a brief introduction of Chinese culture is provided. China is a country that has been civilized for five thousand

years. During this time period China has produced, combined, and distilled all cultural elements into an essential core, Confucianism. The humanistic nature of Confucianism and its four fundamental principles, namely *ren* (humanism), *i* (faithfulness), *ni* (propriety), and *zhi* (wisdom), contrast sharply with the pragmatism of American culture. As an anthropologist suggested: "if an anthropologist were to choose one Western people to contrast with the Chinese, the American is clearly the right choice" (In Hsu, 1981, P.xv).

Chinese professors, like other groups of immigrants, converts, and foreigners, come to America more or less sharing the same aspiration: to pursue a better life. The accessibility of advanced knowledge, the opportunities of professional development, the democratic political system, the Constitution guaranteed human rights, and material abundance all have enormous attraction to Chinese professors. To them this land has much to offer and little to constrain.

The conditions in China also discourage Chinese professors to go back (Ackerberg, 1989; Smith, 1989; Johnson, 1991, Huang, 1985). These conditions include the following:

1. Traditional contempt of intellectuals. The Chinese communist party was created on the principle that communist revolution in China should rely on workers, unite with farmers, and isolate intellectuals. This principle was carried out to the extreme during the "Cultural Revolution" when thousands of intellectuals were forcibly removed from campuses and sent to factories and farms. The purpose was to make intellectuals learn from workers and farms. The essence of the "Cultural Revolution" is a revolution against intellectuals.

2. **Suppress of academic freedom.** After the "Cultural Revolution", Chinese intellectuals felt a sense of liberation. There was a period of renaissance in academia. When the Tianmen Square Movement occurred in which students cried for political reform, the Chinese government blamed the import of Western social and political theories as the underlying blasting fuse. Academe again confronts many "prohibited areas" in social and political sciences, issues which no one could and should do research.

3. **Poor and inequitable salaries.** China is known for its cheap labor. The situation for intellectuals regarding salary is even worse. Chinese intellectuals are not only underpaid but also bothered by the "reverted pay structure" by which intellectuals are paid significantly lower than blue collar workers.

4. **Inappropriate use of scholars' skills due to inefficient bureaucracy.** Highly centralized political structure has proven to be an obstacle for social development in China. A research project or other kinds of action plans often has to go through many layers of hierarchy before any action can be taken. The time and energy of many Chinese intellectuals are often wasted in the process of fruitless administrative scrutiny.

5. **Inadequate research facilities.** The research facilities in China are generally one or two decades behind that of Western countries. Many scholars are forced to abandon their research interests and expertise after returning to China from Western countries because of lack of equipment or facilities.

6. **Lack of professional opportunity.** The inadequate research facilities impede Chinese intellectuals professional development, while out-of-date communication technology prevents Chinese scholars from obtaining up-date knowledge and technology. Lack of

financial support for scholars to attend national and international conferences prove to be another obstacle.

In a sense, Chinese professors are pushed out by their homeland. The pull of American society and the push by their home country leads to the presence of Chinese professors in American higher educational institutions. Studies have demonstrated the existence of a positive relationship between value discrepancies and cultural adjustment (Furnham & Alibhai, 1985; Ward & Searle, 1991), but the vast differences between their Chinese cultural heritage and the American cultural structure make them "marginal men."

The purpose of this study was to explore the marginality encountered by intellectuals by using Chinese professors as a sample. The social situations that give rise to Chinese professors' marginality are identified; the impact of the marginality on the personality of the professor, and the compensatory mechanism that Chinese professors have developed to cope with the marginal social situations are described.

### **The Research Design**

The research was conducted in a Midwestern university. The university directory was used as a resource to locate potential informants. All faculty with Chinese surnames were located and individuals were contacted for their permission to be included in the study. Five professor with Chinese surnames agreed to participate.

The data were gathered through ethnographic interviews with these Chinese faculty members. All of them were males in their forties, four from pure science, and one from social science. None of them has obtained tenure. As they had been in their current

positions for an average of three years. The interviews lasted from two to two and a half hours. The interviews were transcribed within 24 hours after they took place. The research relied mainly on Spradley's (1979) "Developmental Research Sequence" (DRS) strategy to gather data. Essential to the DRS strategy is that the data gathering process interweaves with the data analysis process. Thus, the interview protocol was constantly changed as a consequence of analyses of previous interviews. To ensure the validity of the study, the preliminary findings and interpretations of data were presented to two of the informants for review. Their feedbacks was used as additional data and incorporated into the study.

### Findings

The analysis of data revealed four cultural themes from Chinese professors' work experience with regard to the marginality. These four themes are: 1. conservative environment; 2. the clash of two instructional study subcultures; 3. the aloofness in human relationships; and 4. linguistic marginality.

#### Conservative Environment

Colleges and universities exist within a particular social context. More often than not, the nature of this social context with regard to diversity, along with the organizational atmosphere, displays great influence on faculty. Data were sought to depict Chinese professors' reaction to this aspect of their work. Two categories emerge from the data: the conservative Midwestern culture and the lack of multiculturalism in undergraduate education.

The Midwest of America, especially in the state this study was conducted, is a highly homogeneous regional, both racially and cultural. People are honest and show plenty of hospitality foreigners. At the same time they have not had opportunities to interact with people from other cultures. As a result, the Midwestern culture is perceived as "conservative", "local", and "monocultural" by Chinese professors. As one Chinese professor observed "Here people have stereotypes toward foreigners. They may be very, very nice to you if they know you."

News media such as newspapers and TV news coverage are representative of the conservative Midwestern culture. In the impressions of the Chinese professors, the local newspapers pay little or no attention to the issue of diversity in the community.

With regard to organizational culture, Chinese professors expressed the greatest frustration and disappointment with undergraduate students' lack of training in multiculturalism. They ascribed the problem to the geographic constraints. As one Chinese professor stated:

Most students are from rural xxx, who have not been exposed to other cultures. Most of them don't even have the experience of other states in the U. S.. The farrest places they have traveled might be one of the large cities within a 500 mile radius. They are very local and conservative.

The deficiency in multicultural training results in Chinese professors' perception of widespread albeit subtle racism among students. One Chinese professor revealed:

Chinese faculty are harder to be accepted by students. Some times my relations with students are OK, but some times not so good. Racial elements have something to do with it to some degree.

The same perception was shared by another Chinese professor:

Some times students are not fair. For example, some students complain that my grading is not fair. This kind of complaints wouldn't have been brought up if I were a white professor.

Racism in students even takes the form of ethnocentrism when one student commented in the student evaluation: "If I wanted a Chinese professor, why haven't I gone to China to get my education?"

It could be postulated that the conservativeness in the Midwestern culture predetermines the lack of multiculturalism in undergraduate students. Chinese professors generally agree that graduate students had a better understanding of multiculturalism than undergraduate students, either through institution or personal socialization with minority members.

On a whole, the conservative environment is objective marginality, which generates patterns of behaviors, in both the community and undergraduate students, that are considered unfavorable by Chinese professors for adjustment to the new environment. This marginality is perceived to be caused by the geographic location, which is out of Chinese professors control, as one of them said: "All of these are objective. They are there, you can't do anything about it."

### The Clash of Two Instructional Cultures

American colleges and universities have their own cultural norms and values as mirrored by traditions, bylaws, and regulations. Some are written but others lie in

traditions and practices. The tacit traditions and practices pose the greatest challenges to Chinese faculty. The American instructional culture is one of these traditions.

Instruction is the process in which a teacher interacts with students to accomplish a set of goals, including acquiring knowledge, mastering skills, and developing personality. Social interactions that are task-oriented, such as instruction, are carried out through the projection, exchange, and fulfillment of expectations. Participants of social interactions bring their own sets of expectations of what needs to be accomplished, how to accomplish it, and through what means it is accomplished. When different expectations are confronted and challenged, participants will experience frustration, stress, and dissatisfaction.

When Chinese professors enter an American classrooms, they find themselves facing an instructional culture totally different from the one with which they are familiar. The most paramount difference in the two instructional cultures manifests itself through instructional methodologies. Chinese universities and colleges generally utilize the lecture method of teaching. Professors give lectures or literally read lecture notes, and students take notes for the entire class period. The students are expected to memorize all the details of the lectures and be capable of reporting them on the examinations. American universities and colleges employ a format that emphasizes students' active learning, less lecture, more discussion and problem solving. As one Chinese professor said, "There is a big difference between these two instructional methods. Here, it is very open whereas in China professors have to follow teaching guidelines. Here teaching is much more active."

This sharp difference can create a real obstacle. As one Chinese professor observed, "We were taught by the forced-feeding method of teaching. We are so customized to this method of teaching that some times we use it unconsciously."

A cardinal core of Chinese instructional culture is that teachers assume absolute authority. Supreme respect for teachers has been the number one moral principle governing the relationship between students and teachers in Chinese culture since Confucius promoted it two thousand years ago. Consequently, Chinese professors perceive the democratic open and sometimes challenging relationship between student and faculty as threatening to their authority. One Chinese professor explained:

In China, you expect that the teacher has absolute authority on what to teach and how to teach. Here students have a lot to say on how you teach and what you teach. This is a cultural shock. People like me expect students listen. But this is not the case here.

The clash of the two instructional cultures reflects the differences of two larger cultures. In some case, the cultural conflict result in conflict. One Chinese professor had an argument with a student in class over the grading of the student's assignment. At the beginning of the class, the Chinese professor set up a rule for grading that skipping one question would result in loss of one point. This student lost 8 points out of 20 questions because he skipped some questions. The student thought the rule was unfair, lost his temper in the class, and vulgarly objected. The professor then "threw him out of the class". He said "Things like this that are disrespectful are not what you expected."

Chinese professors have unrealistic expectation with regard to student academic preparation. They bring into their classrooms the standards of college students in their home country where only a very small percent of students go on to college. Not

surprisingly they often found that American students lack basic knowledge in the areas of mathematics, history, world geography, and culture. A second concern was a lack of effort on the part of students. Finally, their general impression was that American students did not study as hard as foreign students. One professor said:

Chinese students study very hard. Here, students don't study nearly as hard as Chinese students, although the degree of effort may not differ very much. It also depends on what kind of course you teach. My courses are their favorites. But, if a course is not their major curriculum, they will get it done in a careless manner. Additionally, students here have to work, which makes a big difference.

The clash or conflict between the two instructional cultures generates frustrations and dissatisfactions for both students and Chinese professors and this fact is often reflected on student evaluation. All Chinese professors expressed disappointment about student evaluation. Some quotations read

The most negative experience I would have ever had is probably the students' evaluation about your teaching. This has to do with culture difference.

Students' evaluation is unfair. Some times I teach some real substance of a subject, students complain that the content is too hard to learn, or the tests are too difficult.

Some students blamed their failures on the professor's language while the real reason was that they did not study hard enough.

To sum up, faculty have the threefold responsibility of teaching, research, and service. On the average teaching accounts for up to 50% of their time. Thus, teaching is the central part of their job responsibilities and one source of objective and subjective marginality. The differences between Chinese instructional culture and American instructional culture involve components of objective marginality. The Chinese

professors experience unfamiliarity with the open, active instructional culture. They are troubled by the American students' perception of student-professor relation. At the same time, they also experience the internal conflict of wanting to adopt American teaching method on the one hand, and the deep-rooted influence of Chinese teaching methods on the other.

### The Aloofness in Human Relationships

Literature shows that the Chinese culture and the American culture contrast with each other along multiple dimensions. The most studied aspect is individualism-collectivism. According to Hofstede (1980), individualism is the emotional independence of individual persons from groups, organizations, or other collectives, and collectivism is the degree of attachment individual persons assign to certain collectives. He found that Chinese and American culture are located at two polar opposites on the individualism-collectivism continuum, where the Chinese culture represents the extreme collectivism while the American culture exemplifies individualism.

Some researchers further define collectivism (Yum, 1988, Chinese Culture Connection, 1987). Hui and Triandis (1986) distinguished two ways of using collectivism: 1. as a concern for a particular group such as family members, and 2. as a concern for any general group of people. Yum argued that East Asian culture emphasizes proper social relationships and their maintenance rather than any abstract concern for a general collective body. Researchers also argued that Chinese culture lacks the concept of "self-

identity" as it is used in Western culture, and proposed that self-identity in Chinese culture be defined as "relational self" (Markus & Kitayama, 1991).

The notion that Chinese culture emphasizes social relationship can also be found in Confucianism. "Confucianism is a philosophy of human nature which considers proper human relationships as the basis of society." (Yum, 1988, p. 377). The core of Confucianism is the concept of *ren* (humanism), which means warm human feelings between people. The fostering and maintenance of these feelings are achieved through reciprocal assistance and favor-giving.

Coming from a cultural background that places so much weight on human relationship, Chinese professors found themselves living in an extremely aloof society.

As one professor complained:

When I first moved into an apartment in the south of city, I was pleased with the quietness of the surrounding neighborhood. Later on, I felt something wrong with the neighborhood. I mean I did not know who lived in the same complex, their names and their children. There is a Chinese proverb saying "The relationship with a neighbor should be closer than a distant relative." In China, it won't take a few days before you know your neighbors very well.

The aloofness is abundant in work setting as well. The majority of Chinese professors felt like they were not included as members of the American faculty circle. One Chinese professor stated "You can't be in relationship with American professors as harmonious as they are." The Chinese culture also equips Chinese professors with expectation of quality relationships that encompass the closeness, the reciprocity, and the non-contractual nature (Yum, 1988). This is not the case, however, in their work environment. Chinese professors identified three kinds of relationship among colleagues:

personal, professional, and one in between. They thought their relationship with colleagues leaned towards professional. A representative quotation read like this: "My relationship with colleagues is not at the personal level. We maintain it at a working level."

Chinese professors inherit from their culture the high emphasis on warm feeling in human relationships, and the uncooperativeness, and even discrimination by American colleagues hurts them most. The majority of them were troubled by the subtle discrimination or racism on the part of their colleagues. When asked about his relationship with colleagues, one Chinese responded:

Americans play game all the time. They say one thing today, but tomorrow they would say that is not what they meant.--- They play words. They bully foreign faculty all the time. If there is an argument, they either say 'I didn't say it', or 'you misunderstood me.'

One Chinese professor emotionally described a recent incident. One day a piece of equipment broke down. He sought assistance from an American colleague. The American colleague said he didn't know how to solve the problem. The Chinese professor knew he was telling a lie because the record showed that he had handled the same problem. When asked "Did he behave like this only to you or also to other Americans?", he replied "He is especially uncooperative to foreign faculty members."

Lack of knowledge and understanding of socialization in American culture also causes marginality for Chinese professors. They constantly felt a sense of uncertainty about how to greet the chair, colleagues, staffs and students. In American culture, people frequently call their colleagues and chairs first names. But in Chinese culture, only very close friends or family members call each other by their first name. Chinese

professors are continually puzzled by subtle elements in American culture. One Chinese professor said:

I always feel uneasy with greeting people. When I come to office to pick up mails, where there are three secretaries working, I never know whether should I say "good morning" to them or just get my mails and slip out the office, because I don't want to interrupt people when they are working. Part of it is that I don't know whether I should greet them one by one, or just say "good morning everyone."

To sum up, Chinese professors' strong desire for warm human relationship in the work setting as well as in life is confronted with aloofness and opposition from American culture, resulting in a constant struggle on the part of Chinese professors. The subjective marginality exists when Chinese professors demonstrate the lack of understanding of interpersonal norms and strategies in American culture. The objective marginality as reflected by the perceived discrimination and opposition by American faculty plays a role in Chinese professors' exclusion from membership of American faculty "ingroup" and the low quality relationship between Chinese professors and American professors.

### Linguistic Marginality

Language as a communication vehicle takes prior importance for a marginal man to integrate into the dominant group. This is more true for foreign professors who rely mainly on language, verbal and written, to discharge their job responsibilities. The fact that English is a non-native language presents a major source of marginality for Chinese faculty.

The linguistic marginality displays itself through various ways. First, Chinese professors were overwhelmingly self-conscious about their English. One illustrative

episode occurred during an interview with one Chinese professor. Before I started the interview, I asked him what language, Chinese or English, he preferred to use. He said he did not care. I then suggested we talk in Chinese and he agreed. During the interview, when I asked questions in Chinese, he always responded in English. In fact, his spoken English was not adequate, which was evidenced by numerous grammatical mistakes and incomplete sentences.

Second, linguistic marginality may take the form of denial. All of the Chinese professors interviewed had earned their Ph.D. from American universities. They seemed to equal their Ph.D. credentials with their language capacity without acknowledging that Ph.D. is not a language certificate. All but one denied that English was a problem for them, while at the same time citing numerous incidents that were attributable to their language.

Third, if language is loosely classified as verbal and written, both created problems for Chinese professors. Writing in English took more time for them than American professors. Some indicated that their research papers were excellent in designs, insights, flow of thoughts and findings, but poor in writing style. Ordinary conversation posed more problems to some than others. Chinese professors found it difficult to follow a conversation in a group of Americans, partly because of their lack of knowledge of American pop culture. More importantly, formal oral presentations such as lecturing and scholastic presentation produced the greatest challenge to all of them.

The problem of verbal language involves three aspects: (1) fully understanding; (2) fully expressing oneself; and (3) the filter function. The problem of fully

understanding and fully expressing oneself is easy to comprehend because people can only communicate to the degree to which their mastery of language allows. The filter function occurs when a person speaks a foreign language, causing his or her thinking to be filtered by the conscious effort to pick up right words or expressions. All the colorful, subtle elements of language are lost in this conscious process. The Chinese professors mentioned that some times they had to stop and think of a right word, which interrupted the flow of thoughts or resulted in the loss of train of thought.

Fourth, language carries a tremendous amount of cultural connotations. A foreigner may not be amused by the American soap operas when Americans think they are very funny. The difficulty with communications was common in many Chinese professors' experiences. One Chinese professor correctly pointed out:

The language problem is mainly a culture matter. The bottom line is cultural difference. Sometimes you thought you had explained (the subject) well but in fact you did not get the point across. For example, sometimes I tried to make a joke to relax the learning atmosphere, Chinese and Malaysian students laughed but not the American students. You think it is funny, but they don't think it is funny at all. . . . The language problem in its essence is a problem related to culture.

The cultural connotations as conveyed through language are the real reason for misunderstanding in cross-cultural communication. One Chinese professor was asked to take charge of a task by his supervisor. Because of his Chinese cultural background which strongly emphasizes the virtue of modesty, he replied "I would take the job only with your guidance and help". He did not say he would not do it, in fact he wanted the job very badly, but his response was misinterpreted as "No".

Thus, the fact that English as second language creates a marginal situation for Chinese faculty. This linguistic marginality differentiates Chinese faculty from other minority faculty who were born in or immigrated to America at an early age. The linguistic marginality involves both subjective and objective components. Chinese professors' inadequate English capacity and lack of knowledge of American culture require that Chinese professors make an effort to improve the subjective marginality. When linguistic marginality relates to misunderstanding due to divergence in cultural implications, both Chinese professors and their American counterparts need to make an attempt to rectify the situation.

#### Compensatory Mechanism

Stonequist (1935) suggested in order to cope with the marginality in social situation, the marginal man must develop compensatory mechanisms to minimize the internal conflicts and to secure acceptance by the dominant culture.

Chinese professors in this study perceived themselves as a group of competent scholars. One theme emerges from the interviews: " We don't want to be treated special as long as we are treated equal." They recognized and worried about the marginality that prevented them from satisfactorily performing their duties. They offered one solution: "Both foreign faculty and the university should meet half way."

Chinese faculty can control only the subjective marginality that derives from internal conflicts of values, expectations and capacity. Some of them wanted to learn more about the "open", "active" American instructional culture. They requested that more workshops on teaching and learning be set up for foreign faculty. Those foreign

faculty who have succeeded in American classrooms could be invited to give exemplary presentations.

Some have found strategies to remedy their language inadequacy. One Chinese professor revealed: "language is for communication. There are other forms of media that can be used to help instruction. I often use the techniques of adding more graphics and writing more notes on the blackboard." Others sacrificed their own time to make up language deficiency by making more office hours available to students. They also thought that they should be more open and aggressive. As one said:

Chinese faculty usually do a fine job in research because it depends on your own creativity. But Chinese are not out-going, which prohibits them from socializing and networking with others. Chinese professors need to force themselves to be sociable, approachable, and aggressive. We blame the society for not being open to us, but at the same time we don't open ourselves. The inevitable consequence is a vicious cycle.

Although the objective marginality is out of the control of these marginal men, Chinese professors suggested that the university use strategies involving institutional policy, organizational culture, and long term planning. They all acknowledged the existence of the institutional "tokenism" in American higher education. Research on "tokenism" has indicated (Kanter, 1977; Dworkin, et al., 1986) that the small number of minority faculty who often serve as "tokens" are extremely visible and subject to special scrutiny and different treatment. American higher educational organizations have developed the internal logic to channel minorities into a limited opportunity structure in academe (Acuirre, 1987). The "glass ceiling" of industry and business can also be found in academe. There exist far more obstacles for minority faculty to make it to administrative and senior faculty positions (Menges & Exum, 1983).

These research findings are congruent with the five Chinese professors' observations. They all acknowledged the importance of having a critical mass of minority faculty. Among the many suggestions they made are the following:

- universities need to make systematic efforts to increase the proportion of minority faculty through concentrated recruitment;
- efforts should also be made to improve minority faculty' status; and
- administrators should find new ways to involve minority faculty in the decision-making process.

One Chinese professor suggested that chairs, deans, and central administrators should reach out for suggestions because Chinese faculty usually do not volunteer opinions and that appropriate recognition should be given.

Miscommunications were ascribed in part to the lack of sensitivity on the part of American faculty. Universities need to educate faculty, staff, students, and governing boards to be more sensitive and acceptive to diversity. One Chinese professor urged:

We should strengthen multicultural education in undergraduate education. . . It is important that the university introduce multicultural education as early as possible. . . . If we keep trying, it will get better. If we stop trying, (multiculturalism will) never happen.

### Conclusion: "Comparative Edge" and Others

The above description of subjective and objective marginality experienced by Chinese professors does not justify the conclusion that Chinese professors are "unhappy men." Stonequist (1935) has warned the danger of the misconception that regards the marginal man as "abnormal," "unhappy," or "unfortunate." In fact, the interviews showed that Chinese professors are generally satisfied with their jobs. They are happy to be

working a university setting. To them, working in the university offers great access to knowledge, academic freedom, flexibility in time, a chance of doing research of their own interest, and an opportunity to communicate with colleagues around world. They are also satisfied with the research facilities, content with salaries, and impressed with the library service.

Marginality in social situations is not necessarily detrimental. The marginal man can perceive it as an obstacle or as a challenge. If they take the latter stance, the marginal man will positively respond to the marginality and use it to their advantage.

When analyzed the problem of "double-consciousness" of blacks, Du Bois wrote

the Negro is a sort of seventh son, born with a veil, and *gifted* with second-sight in this American world--a world which yields him no true self-consciousness, but only lets him see himself through the revelation of the other world (emphasis added) (p. 3).

In the case of Chinese professors, they seemed to have developed a "comparative edge" that was conducive to their work performance. The "comparative edge" refers to the acquired ability to weight the pros and cons of two cultures gained through his or her dual knowledge and experiences. Chinese professors opinions on the Chinese instructional method and the American instructional method were characteristic of this "comparative edge":

The American culture emphasizes format. The good thing is that teaching is very active. But format is not equivalent to knowledge and science. A TIME magazine article describes how a math class is taught in America, students dress as ancient Grecians or Romans to learn the Pythagorean theorem or other theories. It is probably wonderful to employ this method once or twice. However, I don't think this can work if the whole course is taught this way.

Chinese and American teaching methods each have advantages. Chinese instructional methods are more systematic and substance-oriented. American instructional methods are more conducive to thinking and creativity. American instructional methods may have a weakness of not being able to provide systematic learning opportunity. The combination of these two would be the ideal.

This "comparative edge" derives from Chinese professors' openness and their willingness to embrace both cultures. The Chinese professors didn't abandon all aspects of their cultural heritage. Nor did they unselectively espouse every component of American culture. Rather, they made comparative judgements on the Chinese culture and the American culture based on their observation of the advantages and disadvantages associated with these two cultures. One Chinese professor synthesized the strengths of Chinese culture: "Chinese culture teaches people to work hard, be sincere, be serious." Another symbolized the same appreciation of Chinese culture by saying "Chinese culture helps me a lot with regard to my teaching and research. Chinese culture requires that people always act after giving the second and third thoughts about the action they plan to take." Some characteristics in American culture receive praises from Chinese professors, such as openness, aggressiveness, and creativity.

The degree of marginality of Chinese professors varies, contingent upon the configuration of organizational structure and acceptance of diversity in organizational culture. In some departments where the percentage of foreign faculty is high, faculty manifested less marginality, especially objective marginality. More data, however, is needed to support this hypothesis.

The degree of marginality of Chinese professors also related to the length of time in which they have been in the position. As a group, there seemed to be stages of

marginality that they went through. Although there were some supporting data, the small number of years all had been in their positions does not allow time to be one cultural theme of Chinese professors' marginality. Further studies need to expand the career path of Chinese professors' work experience to examine the stages of their marginality.

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