

ADVANCED READING

PASSAGE 1

In contrast to traditional analyses of minority business, the sociological analysis contends that minority business ownership is a group-level phenomenon, in that it is largely dependent upon social-group resources for its development. Specifically, this analysis indicates that support networks play a critical role in starting and maintaining minority business enterprises by providing owners with a range of assistance, from the informal encouragement of family members and friends to dependable sources of labor and clientele from the owner's ethnic group. Such self-help networks, which encourage and support ethnic minority entrepreneurs, consist of "primary" institutions, those closest to the individual in shaping his or her behavior and beliefs. They are characterized by the face-to-face association and cooperation of persons united by ties of mutual concern. They form an intermediate social level between the individual and larger "secondary" institutions based on impersonal relationships. Primary institutions comprising the support network include kinship, peer, and neighborhood or community subgroups.

A major function of self-help networks is financial support. Most scholars agree that minority business owners have depended primarily on family funds and ethnic community resources for investment capital. Personal savings have been accumulated, often through frugal living habits that require sacrifices by the entire family and are thus a product of long-term family financial behavior. Additional loans and gifts from relatives, forthcoming because of group obligation rather than narrow investment calculation, have supplemented personal savings. Individual entrepreneurs do not necessarily rely on their kin because they cannot obtain financial backing from commercial resources. They may actually avoid banks because they assume that commercial institutions either cannot comprehend the special needs of minority enterprise or charge unreasonably high interest rates.

Within the larger ethnic community, rotating credit associations have been used to raise capital. These associations are informal clubs of friends and other trusted members of the ethnic group who make regular contributions to a fund that is given to each contributor in rotation. One author estimates that 40 percent of New York Chinatown firms established during 1900-1950 utilized such associations as their initial source of capital. However, recent immigrants and third or fourth generations of older groups now employ rotating credit associations only occasionally to raise investment funds. Some groups, like Black Americans, found other means of financial support for their entrepreneurial efforts. The first Black-operated banks were created in the late nineteenth century as depositories for dues collected from fraternal or lodge groups, which themselves had sprung from Black churches. Black banks made limited investments in other Black enterprises. Irish immigrants in American cities organized many building and loan associations to provide capital for home construction and purchase. They, in turn, provided work for many Irish home-building contractor firms. Other ethnic and minority groups followed similar practices in founding ethnic-directed financial institutions

PASSAGE 2

All of the cells in a particular plant start out with the same complement of genes. How then can these cells differentiate and form structures as different as roots, stems, leaves, and fruits? The answer is that only a small subset of the genes in a particular kind of cell are expressed, or turned on, at a given time. This is accomplished by a complex system of chemical messengers that in plants include hormones and other regulatory molecules. Five major hormones have been identified: auxin, abscisic acid, cytokinin, ethylene, and gibberellin. Studies of plants have now identified a new class of regulatory molecules called oligosaccharins.

Unlike the oligosaccharins, the five well-known plant hormones are pleiotropic rather than specific; that is, each has more than one effect on the growth and development of plants. The five has so many simultaneous effects that they are not very useful in artificially controlling the growth of crops. Auxin, for instance, stimulates the rate of cell elongation, causes shoots to grow up and roots to grow down, and inhibits the growth of lateral shoots. Auxin also causes the plant to develop a vascular system, to form lateral roots, and to produce ethylene.

The pleiotropy of the five well-studied plant hormones is somewhat analogous to that of certain hormones in animal. For example, hormones from the hypothalamus in the brain stimulate the anterior lobe of the pituitary gland to synthesize and release many different hormones, one of which stimulates the release of hormones from the adrenal cortex. These hormones have specific effects on target organs all over the body. One hormone stimulates the thyroid gland, for example, another the ovarian follicle cells, and so forth. In other words, there is a hierarchy of hormones. Such a hierarchy may also exist in plants. Oligosaccharins are fragments of the cell wall released by enzymes: different enzymes release different oligosaccharins. There are indications that pleiotropic plant hormones may actually function by activating the enzymes that release these other, more specific chemical messengers from the cell wall.

PASSAGE 3

In 1977 the prestigious Ewha Women's University in Seoul, Korea, announced the opening of the first women's studies program in Asia. Few academic programs have ever received such public attention. In broadcast debates, critics dismissed the program as a betrayal of national identity, an imitation of Western ideas, and a distraction from the real task of national unification and economic development. Even supporters underestimated the program; they thought it would be merely another of the many Western ideas that had already proved useful in Asian culture, akin to airlines, electricity, and the assembly line. The founders of the program, however, realized that neither view was correct. They had some reservations about the applicability of Western feminist theories to the role of women in Asia and felt that such theories should be closely examined. Their approach has thus far yielded important critiques of Western theory, informed by the special experience of Asian women.

For instance, like the Western feminist critique of the Freudian model of the human psyche, the Korean critique finds Freudian theory culture-bound, but in ways different from those cited by Western theorists. The Korean theorists claim that Freudian theory assumes the universality of the Western nuclear, male-headed family and focuses on the personality formation of the individual, independent of society. An analysis based on such assumptions could be valid for a highly competitive, individualistic society. In the Freudian family drama, family members are assumed to be engaged in a Darwinian struggle against each other—father against son and sibling against sibling. Such a concept projects the competitive model of Western society onto human personalities. But in the Asian concept of personality there is no ideal attached to individualism or to the independent self. The Western model of personality development does not explain major characteristics of the Korean personality, which is social and group-centered. The “self” is a social being defined by and acting in a group, and the well-being of both men and women is determined by the equilibrium of the group, not by individual self-assertion. The ideal is one of interdependency.

In such a context, what is recognized as “dependency” in Western psychiatric terms is not, in Korean terms, an admission of weakness or failure. All this bears directly on the Asian perception of men's and women's psychology because men are also “dependent.” In Korean culture, men cry and otherwise easily show their emotions, something that might be considered a betrayal of masculinity in Western culture. In the kinship-based society of Korea, four generations may live in the same house, which means that people can be sons and daughters all their lives, whereas in Western culture, the roles of husband and son, wife and daughter, are often incompatible.