CHINESE BUSINESS NETWORKS
AND CHINESE ENTREPRENEURSHIP:
MYTHS AND PARTIAL TRUTHS—A REVIEW ESSAY

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INTRODUCTION

Have Confucian beliefs and corresponding social institutions, such as family and guanxi (connection), impeded or facilitated profit-making and capital accumulation among Chinese business enterprises? More fundamentally, do the Chinese share similar economic orientations and adopt distinct Chinese styles of business undertaking? Questions such as these have formed the foci of a long tradition of research among sociologists, anthropologists, historians, and management professionals. The surge of economic miracles in Hong Kong, Singapore, and Taiwan has further encouraged researchers to evaluate the significance of Chinese culture and social institutions. Numerous academic books and journal articles published since the 1980s have been dedicated to these ends (Berger and Hsiao 1988; Hamilton and Biggart 1988; Wong 1988; Redding 1990; Hamilton 1991; King 1991; Whitley 1992; Chen 1994; Brown 1995; Ong and Nonini 1995; Douw and Post 1996; Gates 1996; Hodder 1996; Tu 1996; Brook and Luong 1997; Orru, Hamilton and Biggart 1997; Hefner 1998; Hsing 1998; Smart and Smart 1998; Brown 2000; Yao 2002; Yen 2002).