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## Game Analysis –CHINATOWN

Chinatown is a competitive business simulation board game. In the game, players take the role of a businessman who tries to make as much money as he can. According to the rulebook, the game wants its players to experience the business expansion war through negotiation, strategy planning, and cooperation.

The game has complicated rules, but it uses dramatic elements like good business representations for game contents to make the rules easier to understand. There is a large game board with 85 building plots to represent the Chinatown. Each round, players will get five plot cards, on which there is a number represents the corresponding building plot on the game board. Player choose which 3 of 5 plot cards they want to keep and place their player pieces on the corresponding plots, in which they announce their ownership of those plots. Then, players will get three business tiles. One business tile could be placed on one building plot to indicate that that building plot is building the business shown on that business tile. There are in total 12 different kinds of business tiles, each of them has different required number of adjacent building plot that needed to completely setup the business. For example, you need six adjacent building plots and six restaurant business tiles to complete the setup of the restaurant business on these six building plots and start earning money from this business. After getting those building plots and business tiles, players start the negotiation phase, which is the most exciting part of the game. Players need enough adjacent building plots and business tiles of the same type to complete the setup of a business, but it is hard to fulfill those requirements just by drawing. Therefore, it becomes important for players to trade with each other to what they want. This is when players utilize their intelligence and strategy to win the game, and when the game gives its players a business war experience.

The formal elements play a significant role to contribute the experience goal with the help of dynamic element of players' behaviors. The rules of required number of building plots and business tiles to complete business setup push players to get involved in the negotiation. Players need to think what they want and what their opponents have and want, and then try to negotiate with each other to win as much money as they want. However, different players have

different preferences, personalities, and ways of thinking, together composing the dynamics of the game. For example, you need to think how you can negotiate with another player to get one of his building plots –maybe he wants one of your building plots of business tiles, or you could ally with him to defeat the other players. The dynamics enable the game to provide infinite possible outcomes for different players even with a fixed game system. In general, it is the formal elements that create the negotiation phase and provide the premise of the intense business war experience, and it is the dynamic element to ensure the uncertainty of negotiation, which is the most interesting part of the game.

As mentioned above, dramatic elements are deeply combined with the formal elements to make the game easier to start with and create a business war atmosphere. Other than the business representations of game contents, the game provides a really good background story: The world economic crisis is over, and the city is rebuilding again. Particularly in Chinatown, in downtown New York, one can see the new upswing: immigration is booming and businesses begin to flourish again. Whatever the business, Chinatown brings opportunities to those wanting to make money (Chinatown Rulebook). This let players warm up with a business mood even before the game starts. Besides, the art of the game corresponds with the game premise well. The game board is a top down view of the New York Chinatown, and all texts in the game are written in a Chinese-style English font. The dramatic elements are not the core of this game but they significantly improve the game play experience.

The rulebook is the drawback of the game. The author of the game simply lists out all rules in order in rulebook with few picture though the rules are complicated. There is no quick start, no sample round, no setup pictures, no sample pictures for game contents, and even no illustration of the game. Only rules are in the rulebook. Admittedly, there are some examples with pictures for certain important rules. To some extent, it helps players to understand some part of the game but not enough to allow them quickly be familiar with all mechanics. The rulebook is not effective regarding the teaching purpose, and the main problem about it is the overuse of text without enough visual explanations.

Chinatown is a great choice for a group of 4 to 5 people that want to experience the intense business war. All its game elements work well with each other to contribute to this experience goal. However, before playing the game, watching some video tutorials of the game instead of reading the rulebook would be a better choice to learn about the game rules.