Leo Suryadinata, *Migration, Indigenization and Interaction. Chinese Overseas and Globalization.* Singapore: World Scientific Publishing Co., 2011, viii, 325 pp., index. ISBN – 13 978-981-4365-90-1 (hardcover).

The twelve chapters that make up this volume were selected among 80 papers submitted to the International Society for the Study of Chinese Overseas (ISSCO) for the 7th international conference, jointly organized by the School of Humanities and Social Sciences, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore and ISSCO. The conference was held on May 7–9, 2010. The 12 chapters are organized into four parts: the first part deals with migration and globalization, the second part with Chinese in North America, especially Canada, the third covers Chinese in South, East and Southeast Asia and the final part examines returned Chinese to China and how to approach the study of Chinese overseas in a global–national context.

In most chapters, the old notion of diasporic migration patterns surfaces. This is probably an intentional approach as this seems to constitute a point of departure for discussing contemporary modes of Chinese patterns of migration in a globalized world. The old mode of defining diasporic migratory movements revolves around three points organized in a triangle: the home country, the host country and the migrant himself or herself. According to theory, this triangular relationship turns the migrant into a citizen of the host country but only to a certain extent. On the one hand, deep inside the migrant there is a longing for a return to the original homeland, thus making his or her commitment to the host country a half-hearted one. On the other hand, local populations in the host country seem, historically speaking, to have had second thoughts about the Chinese, precisely because of their longing for the original homeland; they are thought of as having only 'partial loyalties' to the host country now turned into their new home country. For example, if one scrolls down through the political history of the ethnic Chinese in Southeast Asia, one finds many cases of local perceptions of the Chinese as showing only 'partial loyalties' towards the local community. The Chinese in Indonesia provide a strong case in point when looking at the period between 1965 and 2006 and even beyond (Efferin and Pontjoharyo 2006).

This leaves the study of the Chinese and their respective new host/home countries with the intriguing questions of whether the Chinese are assimilated or integrated into their new host/home country, and whether they really long for their ancestral homeland. Several of the

chapters discuss various processes of inter-ethnic assimilation. However, there is a question of whether we are talking about integration to various degrees, or whether we are talking about processes of assimilation. Assimilation means that we are actually talking about one group, in this case the Chinese, adopting and internalizing another group's normative values as their own at the expense of their original values.

Having studied processes of integration and notions of assimilation among ethnic Chinese in Indonesia, I have come to the conclusion that it is rather problematic to talk about assimilation, as those Chinese I worked amongst in Indonesia at no point would dream about renouncing their Chinese identity despite regarding themselves as Indonesian citizens, with Indonesian names and internalized Indonesian norms and values. Based on my own research, I have suggested that we should be focusing on *degrees of integration* into Indonesian mores as the original signifiers behind Chinese identity formation gradually became subdued in relation to their newly acquired—or should we say enforced—Indonesian identity. This did not, however, mean that their subdued Chinese identity was in danger of being dismantled or destroyed. On the contrary, it remained a latent force under the different layers of more or less enforced Indonesian-related identities. What allowed the original Chinese identity to resurface was determined by Indonesian political events that dictated how 'Chinese' the ethnic Indonesian Chinese were allowed to be. From 1965 to 1998, expressions of Chinese identity were not possible due to the policies of the Suharto regime. They gradually became legitimate after 1998 when Indonesia began democratic national elections and the original Chinese identities were allowed to resurface (Jacobsen 2005, 2007).

Returning to the main theme of the present book, the old notion of diaspora has been complemented by studies of how globalization has impacted Chinese migration patterns. According to the volume's editor, Leo Suryadinata, as globalization has intensified, so too have interactions between various ethnic groups. This has meant that migration, indigenization and what he calls exchange or inter-ethnic interactions, have been closely connected to each other (p. 5). He notes that one of the authors in this book, Tan Chee Beng, says that with the rise of globalization, Chinese migration has changed in its form and substance. Many Chinese are no longer confined to one region. Even the concept of citizenship is no longer fixed but much more relaxed than before. So-called 'multicultural citizenship' or 'transnational citizenship' has also been changing. Tan, in his chapter, further argues that many modern

migrants have more than one homeland; all of those places where they have lived for a certain period of time have become their 'homelands' (pp. 33-36).

We see here how the old notion of diaspora has become too narrow in its definition of how Chinese migrants move across borders. Furthermore, due to the more complex patterns of migration, we are also forced to dispense with the notion of assimilation, as the new migration pattern is based on flexible modes of integration into the new homeland and movements between several homelands. We are thus talking about various degrees of integration when talking about identity in relation to a given homeland, especially so knowing that many migrants have more than one homeland.

Chinese migrants, according to this book, not only move within the diasporic triangle over generations, but move beyond a triangular relationship depending on how many homelands the individual migrant has. The migrant can even move back and forth between two or more homelands depending on social and/or political events, not to mention different job opportunities. Another of the book's authors, Shibao Guo, states that it can be argued that returned 'Canadian Chinese' to Mainland China are both Canadians in China and returned Chinese migrants. They are thus simultaneously diasporic Chinese and returnees. This means that on the one hand they are Chinese returnees completing the cycle of the old notion of the Chinese diaspora, and on the other hand, the migration back to China is perceived as just a temporary stop before moving on to other homelands beyond China (pp. 315-317). They are what can be termed global nomads and not necessarily migrants in the old sense of the term.

Basically, what I have referred to as the old notion of diasporic migration patterns has become too narrow and confined a concept to catch the multiple impacts of globalization on modes of migrating. Perhaps the concept of diaspora itself has become obsolete precisely because of globalization! Tan writes that in this time–space compressed world, most people do not think of themselves as living in a diasporic situation. In this context, he asks the following rhetorical question (p. 35):

> Today a person who has migrated from China obtains an Australian passport and then works in Hong Kong. Is he or she in diaspora in Hong Kong? Is there any difference between him or her and a Hong Kong person who has obtained an Australian passport and works in Hong Kong?

This book is interesting as it puts a question mark on the conventional understanding of diaspora and the migratory patterns that this way

of thinking about migration indicates. The case studies in the volume involve Canada, the US, India, Vietnam, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and China. The more theoretical chapters offer a very good insight into and awareness of the different social, political and economic forces that drive the continuously integrating global community, and how the development of this community impacts migration patterns. Migration patterns are thus no longer confined to specific ethnic groups such as the Chinese, but to all human beings regardless of ethnic belonging, who are engaged in either global job seeking or in search of a new beginning in a foreign setting. Interestingly, the global job search or the search for a new beginning is perhaps the only remnant from previous understandings of the drivers behind migration. According to such a perception of migration, the search for a new beginning in itself is the only permanent element in an otherwise fast-changing world. Taking this as a point of departure, this book is highly recommended for those who are interested in studying how and why people engage in cross-border movements, movements that seem to be governed by forces that can be identified as being driven by a 'glocalized' international community.

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