

and of the many attempts (mostly with mixed success) to suppress it; as an architectural analysis of the process of the conceptualization and creation of the integrated resorts and of the whole largely unknown sub-field of casino design and its spatial theories of how to extract the most profit from gamblers of different categories; and as a fresh rereading of the ‘nation-building’ process in postcolonial and contemporary Singapore. While its theoretical interest lies in the latter, the historical detail certainly provides a fascinating account of the extent of a ‘vice’, early policing, the subsequent “normalization of the punitive” (p. 245) in post-independence Singapore and the fact that “ultra-pastoral modernism” (p. 236)—modernity without crisis or dispute—rarely if ever exists, and certainly not in Singapore.

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*Chinese Indonesians in Post-Suharto Indonesia: Democratisation and Ethnic Minorities.* By Chong Wu-Ling. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2018. ix+244 pp.

Chong Wu-Ling’s book is one of the latest additions to the growing number of titles dealing with the Indonesian Chinese in the post-Suharto period. The book was based on her dissertation submitted to the Department of Sociology at the National University of Singapore in 2014. It seems though that the book has not been sufficiently updated. It includes the July 2014 Presidential Election (on page 127, about half a page), but not the April 2014 parliamentary and local parliamentary elections.

The book is divided into two parts. Part I (pp. 25–60) covers the history of the ethnic Chinese and the resultant creation of a Chinese “pariah class” (p. 13) in Indonesia. This is followed by a discussion on recent developments of post-Suharto Chinese communities as

well as democratization and ethnic Chinese in Indonesia. Part II (pp. 61–167) deals with the Chinese, especially businesspeople who became more visible after the fall of Suharto, together with their role and participation in electoral politics. These two parts are not well integrated; there is rich and interesting information on the post-Suharto Chinese Indonesians but it is not directly relevant to the major theme of the book.

The last section of Part II (pp. 120–67) is actually the core of the book. It focuses on the political participation of ethnic Chinese, particularly Chinese businesspeople in Medan and Surabaya where the author conducted her fieldwork. This part of her study is original and hence makes a new contribution to the existing literature. She also noted that Chinese Indonesians are not homogeneous culturally, arguing that Medan Chinese are more likely to speak Chinese while Surabaya Chinese are more likely to speak Indonesian. This division has coloured local Chinese politics.

As I see it, the author wanted to achieve two objectives in this book: to test Anthony Giddens' theory of structure-agency against the post-Suharto Chinese Indonesian situation on the one hand, and to establish the relationships between democratization and Chinese businesspeople on the other. She noted that Giddens' argument is largely correct, as Chinese businesspeople were not passive actors but were active actors in the political process in protecting their business interests.

The author argues that the Chinese Indonesian businesspeople were a "pariah class" (pp. 61–62), as they could not be independent and needed protection in order to survive and develop. They therefore needed to continue old practices, i.e., to collaborate with the indigenous elites/power holders, using bribery and even gangsterism to achieve this objective. As a result, the author maintains that Chinese Indonesians continued to be seen as playing a negative role in the 'democratization' process in the country.

The author divides local Chinese politicians into two types, the reform-minded on the one hand and the self-interested and self-centred on the other. The former consists of social activists while

the latter comprises businesspeople. The local Chinese associations were also divided in their support for the Chinese candidates. There was no ethnic solidarity amongst the Chinese. The divided Chinese votes and political environment eventually led to the victory of conservative non-Chinese candidates in the local elections.

In the author's view, Chinese businesspeople "on the whole ... are both the victims and perpetrators of the muddy and corrupt business environment" (p. 116). She also notes that "many, if not most, Chinese businesspeople in post-Suharto Medan and Surabaya are agents of status quo instead of agents of change" (pp. 118–19).

To substantiate her arguments, she selected seven local Chinese politicians, three from Medan (namely Hasyim aka Oei Kien Lim, Sofyan Tan and Indra Wahidin aka Huang Yinhua) and four from Surabaya (Dede Oetomo aka Oen Tiong Hauw, Eddy Gunawan Santoso aka Wu Jiping, Simon Lekatompessy and Anton Prijatno; the last two do not have Chinese names or surnames). She tended to identify Hasyim, Sofyan Tan and Dede Oetomo as reformists, while the rest as politicians who were more concerned with their personal interests. Of the seven examples, the discussion on Sofyan Tan and Indra Wahidin is most detailed (eighteen pages). It was a pity that the political role of Surabaya's businessman Alim Markus (Lin Wen'guang) was not highlighted, and there was no mention of the role of Surabaya's media tycoon Hari Tanoesoedibjo (aka Chen Liming) or of Medan's 'social activist' Eddie Kusuma (aka Ng Soei Chong).

Although the emphasis was on the two cities, the author also brought in the 'broader scene' beyond Medan and Surabaya. After discussing "Money Politics" (pp. 129–32), she inserted a short section on "Political Achievements of Chinese Indonesians" (pp. 132–34). She listed the names of many Chinese cabinet ministers (e.g., Kwik Kian Gie, Mari Pangestu aka Mari Pang), mayors (e.g., Karman Hasan aka Huang Hanshan), deputy governor/governor (e.g., Basuki Tjahaja Purnama aka Tjoeng Wan Hok or Ahok), national parliamentarians (e.g., Alvin Lie, Murdoyo Poo aka Poo Tjie Kwan), and popular electoral candidates who were not elected (e.g., Dede Oetomo aka

Oen Tiong Hauw). This section was immediately followed by the discussion on political participation in Medan and Surabaya. The ‘broader scene’ is not directly relevant to political participation nor ‘democratization’; it does not contribute to her major arguments.

There are two factual errors in the book: On page 9 the author notes that in the 1920s and 1930s no Indonesian political parties, except the Partai Komunis Indonesia (Communist Party of Indonesia, or PKI), accepted ethnic Chinese as members. In fact, a left-wing party, Gerindo, opened its membership to Peranakan Chinese in 1939. Also, on page 90, the author notes that the requirement for being president of Indonesia in the old 1945 constitution was being *pribumi* (meaning “indigenous”, a new term used since Suharto’s New Order era). In fact, the term used was *asli* (meaning “indigenous”, a term used prior to the New Order era), not *pribumi*.

Despite the shortcomings of the book, the author should be congratulated for writing on a difficult and challenging topic. It helps us understand Chinese businesspeople and politics in the two Indonesian cities of Medan and Surabaya.

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*Love, Money and Obligation: Transnational Marriage in a Northeastern Thai Village.* By Patcharin Lapanun. Singapore: NUS Press, 2019. ix+198 pp.

Transnational marriage is a growing sub-field of migration studies, and Patcharin’s monograph is a significant contribution to it. Its most important innovative trait is that it does not—as most studies in the sub-field do—look just into the dyadic relationship between a Thai woman and a foreign (*farang*) man, but it broadens the perspective by investigating the complexities provoked by such marriages in