

7. By integrating local, regional, and international trading networks, Chinese businessmen contributed to the integration of local units into the capitalist world economy.
8. Tensions with the local population(s) as well as with competing groups result from this economic and social role, both in colonial times and since independence.

These "Southeast Asian" findings (which in fact refer only to Indonesia and the Philippines) are finally discussed in the context of a general theoretical approach to the phenomenon of trader minorities in global(izing) capitalism. Buchholt's book thus reverts finally to the original theoretical questions from which the whole case study embarked.

Several groups of readers might consult this book with interest. Sociologists and political scientists with a special emphasis on social theories (especially theories of development), will find in Buchholt's study a well-written and well-researched comparative case study from an important area of the world. Since the approach is theory-led, its conclusions may also be of theoretical value. Another target group are Southeast Asianists from other disciplines, like history, anthropology, geography, or media studies. For these, some of the detailed information from the country case studies (based on extensive field-work) may prove interesting and valuable. Geographers or city planners, for instance, might find the comparative historical maps of the "Chinese" quarters of Bandung, Ujung Pandang (Makassar), Surabaya, and Manila quite useful. For media studies, the passages on anti-Chinese stereotypes in the Indonesian and Philippine media represent a good departure point for further research.

On the other hand, readers from the non-sociological disciplines may well criticize Buchholt's book, since many questions relevant in these other research contexts are not addressed. From the point of view of comparative Southeast Asian Studies a problem might well be the fact that the social position and the perception of the ethnic Chinese vary greatly from country to country in Southeast Asia. Are the Chinese in Vietnam, for instance, really a good example for the thesis of "trader minorities"? Or, how could one explain the difference in perception of that minority between, say, Indonesia and Thailand? Questions like these could lead to a different emphasis on the problem of perception, and hence the historical and cultural factor in general.

This possibly mixed reception of Buchholt's comparative case study on the Chinese minority in Indonesia and the Philippines is in itself probably a good indication of the relevance and complexity of the issues addressed in the book. Buchholt does indeed offer a thorough analysis, based on influential sociological theories. This makes his book commendable, even as teaching material for (controversial?) class discussions.

Arndt Graf

LYNN PAN (ed.), *The Encyclopedia of the Chinese Overseas*. Richmond: Curzon Press, 1999. 399 pages, maps, tables, photographs, US\$ 45.34. ISBN 0-7007-1122-8.

The Encyclopedia of the Chinese Overseas is an ambitious project of the Chinese Heritage Centre in Singapore under the aegis of the editor, Lynn Pan, and with the

contributions of a number of renowned scholars. It is an attempt to present a complete picture of the complex issue of Chinese migration, which can be traced back many centuries and has reached every inhabited continent.

The first third of the Encyclopedia offers a general overview of migration under four themes: origin, migration, institutions and relations. Under the first theme the origin of migrants is traced back to not only certain provinces but also to particular counties that have up to 50 percent of their population living abroad. Socio-economic changes in these places linked to the high migration rates are taken into account and are illustrated by vivid examples. The second section deals with the history of migration from the Song dynasty to the present, stressing the arrival of the European colonial powers in Asia in the 16th century as a crucial point in the development of Chinese migration patterns, since the expansion of trade, colonialism and later industrialisation fundamentally changed future migration patterns.

The third section, on institutions, sheds light on the central historical role played by Chinese associations abroad. The most common organisational structure was the *huiguan*, an organisation that helped newcomers to settle down and attempted to preserve Chinese culture and tradition. Under the title relations, the fourth section focuses on the question of the ties binding Overseas Chinese to their mother country as well as their relationships with respective local populations in their country of residence. The later issue is correctly linked to identity problems, but in the same context stereotype images of the Chinese Overseas as a very adaptable ethnic group are repeated. The Chinese tendency to live in separate communities is simply explained as a reaction to a threatening environment. In order to paint a more complete picture of often very complicated inter-ethnic relationships, the Encyclopedia would have needed to consider questions of cultural chauvinism and "sino-centrism". On another level, the Encyclopedia refutes the negative prejudice that constructs Chinese Overseas as a homogeneous mass cooperating as a worldwide business network (sometimes dubbed bamboo network) - this is, of course, the picture recently evoked by authors like Sterling Seagrave or Samuel Huntington.

The second part of the book gives a detailed account of the different countries to which Chinese migrants have travelled, ranging from Southeast Asia to America, Australia, Europe and Africa. The country profiles differ in length and thematic focus but all encompass the history of the Overseas Chinese in each respective country. Although special attention is paid to historical and political developments, this is not at the expense of detailed consideration of religious and cultural matters. Furthermore, the portrayal of the countries is enriched by numerous special features focusing on more specific issues including biographies of well-known Chinese, the living-quarters of the ethnic Chinese in New York and old GMD soldiers from the civil war finally stranded in North Thailand. Numerous photographs, maps, graphs and tables accompanying the country profiles and the thematic sections at the beginning contribute to the attractiveness of the book.

The Encyclopedia aims at the general reader, so the authors have refrained from providing footnotes. Different bibliographies for the four general sections and the country profiles are presented at the end of the book. While the references given enable the reader to find further information on specific topics, they are inevitably incomplete. However, the glossary giving the Chinese characters for all names is

invaluable because of the numerous different European transcriptions of Chinese names.

The Encyclopedia of the Chinese Overseas offers a wealth of well-researched information, not only on historical events but also on very up to date issues, like secret (or illegal emigration), and new migration patterns, e.g. middle class Taiwanese moving their families to Western countries. The book's lavish design is reminiscent of a coffee-table book, however, the presentation of the many different topics is generally complete and balanced – doubtless thanks to the many noted contributors. Nevertheless, there is a slight tendency to deconstruct negative clichés of the ethnic Chinese Overseas and construct positive ones. This tendency probably reflects the role of the Chinese Heritage Centre as publishing institution, which is partly financed by large Southeast Asian companies who may have an interest in improving the image of ethnic Chinese in the region.

Christine Winkelmann

CHERIAN GEORGE, *Singapore. The Air-Conditioned Nation. Essays on the Politics of Comfort and Control 1990–2000*. Singapore: Landmark Books, 2000. 223 pages, S\$ 20.50. ISBN 981-3065-46-X

This is an interesting and well written collection of 'essays' on the state of Singaporean politics and society after more than 40 years of one-party rule and successful economic development. As the most Westernized of all Asian cities, Singapore no doubt has interesting lessons to teach, but also important experiences to draw on for its own future.

The success story is a familiar tale. Singapore, which since the 1960s could have gone the way of Calcutta or Manila, with a per capita income of S\$ 37,000 (2000) is second in Asia only to Japan. Reflecting its leftwing origins, the ruling People's Action Party (PAP) has opted for a middle class oriented distribution of wealth. A key element is majority home ownership in mostly upgraded housing estates, with low taxation, self financed pensions and only minimal social welfare (p. 91). With zero tolerance on corruption – a lesson learned from the Communists in the 1960s – and an emphasis on meritocracy in the public service, governance is good (p. 74), perhaps too good. According to Premier Goh, the government has to act as the custodian of its people's long-term interests – even if the citizens see these differently. Hence there was a thorough clean-up and relocation of all cottage industries, street hawkers and farmsteads following rather illiberal land acquisition policies (p. 19). Public satisfaction is undoubtedly high. The pursuit of material comforts (last but not least the air-con, which Lee Kuan Yew sees as decisive to enable tropical countries to catch up with Western productivity levels) is well taken care of (p. 11). For more than half a century, Lee and his PAP never lost an election. In fact, for some 16 years there were not even any opposition MPs in parliament. Elections were formally free but never fair, as the government never took any chances. According to a quoted US State Department report (though it may be difficult to see US presidential and senatorial elections as a guide for fairness) there was intimidation of the opposition, limiting of legitimate political discourse and action and ma-