

**MICHAEL W. CHARNEY, BRENDA S. A. YEOH, & TONG
CHEE KIONG**

INTRODUCTION

Education, both formal and informal, has always had an importance place in modern immigrant societies. The education experience in these societies has also been very diverse. Certainly, the chapters in this volume will discuss different kinds of school (religious schools, ethnic schools, and so on), different sites for the transmission of education, different kinds of education (traditional knowledge as opposed to “modern” education, environmental education, and so on), and the differing impact of education and education policies upon Asian migrants. Today, as globalization further encourages the development of multicultural societies, the transnationalization of labor migration, the global marketing of educational opportunities, and challenges to traditional educational curricula, the relationship between education and migrants is becoming even more important, and more problematic.

This volume considers three questions central to the evolving relationship between immigrant societies and modern education. First, what is the role of education in mediating the negotiation between social identities and identifications (questions of gender or ethnicity, for example)? Second, how do educational systems and policies in immigrant societies approach the diverse cultural agendas of immigrant groups? Third, how do the various actors in the global marketing of skills and education, such as labor migrants, students, and policy-makers, balance the relationship between education and skills-training?

Educational systems, their policies, and schools are critical sites for the negotiation of identities of gender, ethnicity, and class in immigrant societies. They thus play a fundamental role not only in reflecting social change and identities, but also help to condition the terms of identity negotiation and (re)negotiation. Wang Gungwu, Anthony Reid, Robbie B. H. Goh, S. Gopinathan and V. Saravanan, and Hong Liu thus consider the critical interaction between learning and emerging immigrant societies. Wang provides the opening insights into these processes with a broad historical approach to changing cultural identities and attitudes among Chinese migrants to the Nanyang. Wang first discusses Tan Kah Kee, the Chinese entrepreneur who directed his fortune into the promotion of education in British Malaya and Fujian province in Mainland China. Tan Kah Kee represented a departure in Chinese migrant education, from the simple approach (limited to basic reading and writing skills and traditional forms of knowledge) of Chinese education in British Malaya during the early days of the British Straits Settlements, to an education that did not forget its roots, but also incorporated newer, more practical (economically) kinds of subjects that could be applied in developing British Malaya

and Southeastern China economically. Tan Kah Kee also saw in education the key to both community bonding and social freedom, and how education would determine what kind of community would emerge. Wang builds upon this aspect of the philosophy behind Tan Kah Kee's educational philanthropy, to discuss migrant communities in four kinds of societies, with varying degrees of freedom, and the role education has played in their emergence and maintenance.

Reid shifts attention to more contemporary social changes taking place currently in California. He begins by discussing the shifting fortunes of area studies in the United States and how Southeast Asian studies suffered in particular, primarily due to the Vietnam War. As Reid explains, times, and the importance of Southeast Asia area studies, have changed due to three results of globalization: growing economic integration of Southeast Asia with Northeast Asia and North America and thus economic growth; the end of the Cold War and the inclusion into ASEAN of former Communist states; and, perhaps most importantly, Southeast Asian migration, particularly the emergence of a large and self-aware Asian-American community. The growing influence of this migrant community and the kind of education they wish to have in California is having an increasing impact on education. As Reid explains, this emergence has prompted a readjustment of educational priorities in California, including the emergence of Asian-American studies and Southeast Asia-oriented university courses.

Goh turns to two mission schools in colonial Singapore and stresses the mission schools' mediating role in negotiating a western value system in service, in an Asian migrant culture and value system. Mission education appealed to a class of Chinese with a new kind of Chinese identity, involving both leadership and respect in the local Chinese community and an English education. The mission school did not utilize literature, its chief medium, to push for conversion. Instead, literature was viewed as a key to creating other conditions that would make it possible, at a later time, to encourage conversion. As a result, the mission school could transmit western values, without necessarily directly encouraging conversion.

Gopinathan and Saravanan discuss the challenges facing the Indian migrant community in Singapore in the context of globalization. Although globalization presents certain universalizing challenges it also allows opportunities to maintain ethnic knowledge and education.

Liu looks at the relationship between education and *huiguan* (Chinese voluntary associations) in 1945-1954 Singapore. The Chinese schools supported by *Huiguan*, Liu explains, were the sites for the formation and localization of Chinese migrant identities and social interaction. Liu supports his discussion with extensive data he collected on the *huiguan* and the dialect backgrounds of students and teachers in *huiguan*-supported Chinese schools in Singapore.

One of the most important challenges facing educational systems in migrant societies is the diverse educational and cultural agendas of different migrant groups and the difficulties of incorporating them into a single educational system. Elwyn Thomas, Christopher Pang Yew Huat, Jennifer Wang, Karen Leigh Harris, and Tan Liok Ee focus on how educational systems in different immigrant or multicultural societies have approached these challenges and what impact these processes have had on educational systems themselves, as well as foundational assumptions of what

education is and what its functions should be. As Thomas explains, migrant communities need a culture-sensitive education, that is, an education that can both accommodate their special cultural needs and prepare them for life in an increasingly globalized world. To meet this need, Thomas discusses planning strategies and the special role of teachers in transmitting this education. As Thomas warns, however, a culture sensitive education is continually threatened by the dominance of the West and religious traditions, such as Islam, Buddhism, and Hinduism in global cultural flows.

Pang raises the problem of modern, especially new and migrant, societies being unable to face the challenges of environmental issues. Some claim, for example, that these societies lack the right approaches to the environment or suffer from the inability to develop the proper “eco-ethic.” To meet this problem, Pang draws the discussion back to the continued relevance of traditional education to contemporary issues facing a shrinking world: how immigrant societies and their diverse storehouses of traditional knowledge can inform current approaches to environmental management. In order to develop the necessary eco-ethic, migrant and other societies need to utilize old traditions relevant to environmental preservation in their production of modern education.

Wang (Jennifer) problematizes the uniformity of immigrant approaches to traditional medical knowledge and health education, by focusing on the reliance upon Western medicine by the Hmong in Sydney, in sharp contrast to the reliance upon traditional medicine among the Hmong in the United States. As Wang explains, health education is necessary for the improvement of health in any community, especially in migrant communities, as socially disadvantaged and marginalized groups. As Wang finds, health choices, and better health, occur within the context of the migrant community, including the availability of Asian doctors for Hmong migrants. However, although the entire community may be exposed to health knowledge, how they make use of it is clearly a result of individual choices.

Two chapters focus on the tensions with tradition among Chinese migrants. First, Harris looks at the Chinese migrant community in South Africa and explains how the commitment of Chinese migrants to a specifically Chinese education has evolved out of shifting needs. At first, the emphasis on Chinese education was a result of the importance of education per se in Chinese culture and a way to keep the community together. In more recent times, however, a commitment to Chinese education developed out of the need to maintain living standards and to avoid succumbing to the detrimental effects of racial legislation. As Harris demonstrates, traditional cultural influences among the Chinese not only persist even when Chinese schools per se are not available, but can be a critical factor in their success in adapting to a host society, even within a non-traditional educational system. Second, Tan interrogates the role of educational change in shifting social roles and gender perspectives among Chinese women in Malaysia, elsewhere outside of China, and within China, from traditional restriction to the greater opportunities of the present. To do so, Tan integrates the narrative of four generations of females in her own family within the overall historical framework to provide a better understanding of the transitions that Chinese women, and their relationship with education, have undergone.

As skills and educational programs are increasingly marketed on a global level, labor migrants, students, and policy-makers in global (izing) cities increasingly consider education and skills training alongside transnational migration as interconnected phenomena. Christine Inglis, Robyn Iredale, Johanna L. Waters, and Ravindra Jain examine the special challenges of education to transnational migrants and migrant diasporas. Stressing the mediating role of schools, Inglis analyzes the problematics of educational policy-making in the context of the intersection of mass education and increasingly mobile, transnational populations. An important problem involves the need by migrant groups to have their special cultural and religious needs recognized and provided by schools in host societies.

Migrants possess a diverse range of educational backgrounds and skills. In the increasingly global economy, the movement of highly educated and skilled migrants has produced a new kind of migration system, welcomed by advanced economies, especially in the Asian, Pacific Rim states. Iredale looks at "skilled professional migrants" and the international agreements and national policies that encourage the increasing flow of highly educated/skilled labor across national boundaries. As part of this process, Iredale provides a critical examination of policies intended to assess the level of skills education among transnational migrants.

Waters addresses the problems resulting from the phenomenon of the "Satellite children." These children are sent from Hong Kong to live in Vancouver in order to benefit from educational opportunities available in Canada. Waters includes her interview material, which yields valuable insights into the perspectives of these children, whose existence is conditioned by the intersection of education and migration.

Jain examines the importance of "self knowledge" among youth in the Indian Diaspora as this youth attempts to find its own identity while simultaneously interacting with local cultures in host societies. This knowledge, as Jain explains, is produced in India through sociological and anthropological research, which has prompted the Indira Gandhi National Open University to harness current information technologies to develop and transmit a curriculum oriented to the Indian diaspora.

Asian Migrants and Education

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