Chee Kiong Tong

Identity and Ethnic Relations in Southeast Asia

Racializing Chineseness

Springer

Identity and Ethnic Relations in Southeast Asia

Chee Kiong Tong

Identity and Ethnic Relations in Southeast Asia

Racializing Chineseness

Springer

Chee Kiong Tong
Department of Sociology
National University of Singapore
03-06 11 Arts Link
Singapore 117570
Singapore
soctck@nus.edu.sg

Contents

Chapter 1
Racializing Chineseness

1.1 Introduction

At present, it is estimated that there are 18–20 million ethnic Chinese in Southeast Asia. In the context of the Chinese Diaspora, this constitutes about 80–85% of all Chinese found outside China. As such, any attempt to understand the Chinese Diaspora will benefit from an analysis of the Chinese in Southeast Asia, where the migrant Chinese find themselves co-existing in states with multiple different ethnic groups. The demographic profile and the position of the Chinese in these countries are quite different, providing a fascinating case study of ethnicity and ethnic relations. While Singapore has almost 80% of her population who are Chinese, Indonesia is home to over 300 ethnic groups with several hundred languages, and the Chinese constituting only 3% of the population. The sociological question is whether the different ethnic compositions and the different trajectory of the population result in different conceptions of Chinese identity. One of the main focus on this book, based on primary data collected in the various countries in Southeast Asia, relates to who and what is a Chinese. What are the markers of ethnic identity? How is ethnic identity presented? Are there similarities or differences on how ethnic identity is constructed in these different countries?[1]

Southeast Asian host countries exhibit very different stances and strategies in relating to and dealing with ethnic and religious minority groups. For example, Thailand is dominated by the "Tai" people who have allegedly assimilated the Mons, Chan, Lao, and the Chinese into Thai society. One supposedly witnesses a similar scenario in the Philippines. Malaysia and Indonesia, on the other hand, are marked by ethnic conflicts and discrimination against their minorities. This book critically re-examines the major hypotheses regarding ethnic relations in Southeast Asia. What are the ethnic policies of the various countries on the minority Chinese? What are the social consequences of these policies? Using intensive case interviews and fieldwork in various Southeast Asian countries, including Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, Myanmar, Vietnam and the Philippines, the book examines the nature and processes of ethnic relations and interactions between the members of the host countries and the Chinese population in these countries.[2] Using a

comparative analysis, it will explore the causes and consequences of ethnic relations in Southeast Asia. How is the "other" conceptualized?

Given the cultural and ethnic diversities of Southeast Asia, it is not surprising that many ideas, images and concepts have been developed in an effort to understand the ethnic mosaic of Southeast Asia. One of the earliest was the idea of dual society. Boeke (1961), a Dutch scholar and colonial administrator, argued that economic growth and developments in trade and commerce created two separate sectors of society. One sector was impoverished and underdeveloped, centering in traditional rural areas, and the other, westernized, affluent and capital intensive, was located in the urban areas. Countries in Southeast Asia that supposedly exemplify this idea are Malaysia and Indonesia. Boeke's model, however, seemed to have assumed that each sector of the economy is closed, clear cut, and mutually exclusive. Moreover, it failed take into account the interdependence of the rural and urban economies.

Furnivall (1956) suggested an alternative idea, that of plural society. He argued that Southeast Asia, towards the end of colonial rule, had "three social orders, the native, the Chinese and the Europeans, living side by side, but separately...save in the material and economic spheres." To Furnivall, plural society "comprises two or more elements of social orders which live side by side, yet mingling in one political unit." Promulgated in 1939, the plural society idea is still widely used today to explain ethnic relations in Southeast Asia, particularly Malaysia and Indonesia, as well as West Indian societies. Like that of Boeke, Furnivall's model is too rigid, with strict compartmentalization of groups along ethnic and racial lines. Moreover, it does not account for relations of power, interracial marriages, or acculturation. There is too much emphasis on the polarization of ethnic groups living in a single society.

The deficiency of Furnivall's model, at least to Skinner (1957a, 1963) is exemplified by the case of Thailand. Skinner argues that a majority of the descendants of Chinese immigrants in each generation merged with Thai society and have become indistinguishable from the indigenous population to the extent that fourth generation Chinese are practically non-existent. He suggests that the similarities of Thai and Chinese cultural inventory have many points in common, and as such, leads to the assimilation of the Chinese into Thai society.[3] I suggest that Skinner himself has overemphasized the power of the forces of assimilation. This is evident in the anomalies that were found during the fieldwork with regard to the situation of the Chinese in Thailand today.

Writing in the 1960s, Purcell proposed an ethnic persistence approach. He attempted to evaluate the prospects of assimilation of the overseas Chinese, and noted that the Chinese in Malaya remained very much Chinese in their outlook, speech, religion and cultural traditions. Although they readily accepted a framework of the local government in Malaya, they stubbornly refuse to cease to act and think as Chinese and were very conscious of themselves as a race: "Even now in the world flux of ideas the Chinese of Malaya remain very much as they have always been. About a tenth, maybe are converted to European values; the rest cling resolutely to their language and their religion; they retain their ideographs and their

superstitions; they prefer their own way of eating and drinking; their old style doctor has not been destroyed in competition with his Western educated brother" (Purcell, 1967: 290).

However, concepts such as assimilation, integration, and acculturation do not capture the complexities of ethnic identity and ethnic relations in Southeast Asia. One of the key aims of this book is to, based on the empirical data collected in the various countries in Southeast Asia, develop new conceptual models and to retheorize ideas of ethnic identity and ethnic relations in Southeast Asia.

1.2   Research Problematics

1.2.1   Identity, Hybridity, and Multiple Chineseness

Despite the voluminous literature devoted to the topic, a description of whom, or what, is a Chinese, and what constitutes Chineseness remains elusive. Wang (1999) notes that, "there is nothing absolute about being Chinese." Goodman (1997: 18) described it as a "fragile identity (even) for the ethnic Chinese themselves." Clearly, the terms "Chinese" or "Chineseness" remain problematic categories, embody many dimensions, and require further analysis. Moreover, given the Chinese Diaspora, would the conception of Chineseness be similar across different countries. For example, does a Chinese in Malaysia has the same conception of being Chinese as one who had migrated to and grew up in Thailand? Would a Chinese in Singapore share the same markers of Chineseness as one who lives in a village in China? If they are similar, then it is interesting to try to account for why this is so. If they are different, then, the question is what factors would account for the different conceptions of Chineseness. Is it historical and environmental factors? Is it due to the treatment of the Chinese migrants by the host population? Or is it the impact of the state policies of the host societies?

To understand Chinese ethnicity in Southeast Asia requires a nuanced grasp of the particular context framing the development of Chineseness across history and geography, as well as a critical recognition of the theoretical precedents in conceptualizing the Chinese. Central to such a discussion would be a revisitation of the theoretical debates surrounding the ethnic approaches of primordialism and situationalism, conceptions of assimilation, acculturation, integration and pluralism, and reconsideration of the role of the state in orchestrating the dynamics of ethnic relations in the light of how ethnic groups themselves determine their self identity and establish their boundaries in relations to other groups.

The book aims to recast the theoretical ideas surrounding the issues of ethnic identity of the Chinese based on primary data collected in the various countries of Southeast Asia. One of the key focus is to problematize the label, Chineseness. It will be suggested that Chineseness is a dynamic rather than a static concept, and that the Chinese do not constitute a homogenous group. In the same vein, the indigenous groups are also not homogenous. Labels such as "Thai," "Indonesian," "Burmese,"

"Filipino," are treated as problematic, not given. The discourse of identity and eth-
nicity, how individuals or groups of individuals, make sense of and negotiate their
identities in multi-cultural societies, is the main focus of this book. Analysis will
center on the "symbols" and "languages" employed to unite and demarcate groups.
Additionally, it examines how self-perception and others' perception are juxtaposed
and mediated. In the process, the ambiguities, overlaps, and varieties of ethnic
identity will be uncovered.

In the literature on ethnic identity, the distinction between primordial and sit-
uational perspectives of ethnicity has been much debated and become highly
polarized.[4] Primordialism, as originally coined by Edward Shils, was most notably
developed by Clifford Geertz as a means of accounting for the strength of ethnic
ties. According to Shils (1957: 122), "the attachment to another member of one's
kinship group is not just a function of interaction...it is because a certain ineffa-
ble significance is attributed to the tie of blood". Geertz (1963: 259) extended this
proposition by arguing that "a primordial attachment is . . . one that stems from the
'givens'. . . .[T]hese congruities of blood, speech, custom, and so on, are seen to
have an ineffable, and at times overpowering, coerciveness in and of themselves".
Like Geertz, Isaacs (1975: 30–31) believed that an ethnic group is composed
of . . . "primordial affinities and attachments" . . . [that] a person . . . acquires at
birth . . . [and] it is distinct from all other multiple and secondary identities [that]
people acquire. Basic group identity therefore comprises a "ready-made set of
endowments and identifications which every individual shares with others from the
moment of birth . . . of which the physical characteristics that make up the body and
the name are two important diacritical markers." Ultimately, primordialists believe
that what matters most is that these ties of blood, language, and religion "are *seen*
by actors to be . . . obligatory; that they are *seen* as natural" (Jenkins, 1997: 45;
emphases original).

Sociobiologists like van den Berghe (1978, 1995) have extended the primordial-
ist position by arguing that ethnicity is "both primordial and sentimental", hence
attention should be paid to the biological markers of race, because ethnic and race
relations are "extensions of the idiom of kinship" (1995: 359–368). Ethnicity (and
race) is "[the] main genetic mechanism for animal sociality. . . to maximize inclusive
fitness" (van den Berghe, 1978: 402).[5]

Thus, primordialism is based on the idea that ethnicity is very much "fixed,
fundamental, and rooted in the unchangeable circumstances of birth" (Cornell and
Hartmann, 1998: 48). It stresses the natural and fundamental characteristic of eth-
nicity to an individual or group and as such it has been viewed as a perspective
that resists the potential for dynamism and movement between ethnicities, or even
change and innovation within ethnicities. The primordial approach has been criti-
cized for presenting a model of ethnicity that is static and essentialized and lacking
in its explanatory powers. Brass (1991: 73) has argued that the primordial position
is inadequate because "even when there is a persisting core culture, knowledge of its
substance may not be of much use in predicting either the development or the form
of ethnic movements on behalf of the cultural groups in question". Vernon Reynolds
(1980: 312) argues against a case for the sociobiologist-primordialist perspective

because he believes that van den Berghe's only evidence for primordialism is that it is "based on genetic kin selection, and that it is an extension of that old kinship sentiment which can be simply expressed as 'help your own kin, not outsiders'" which leaves "the theory...at this very nebulous level and no further evidence in its favor is offered .... These statements are [thus] made a priori without supporting evidence".

Contrastingly opposed to the primordial model is that of situationalism (similarly known as circumstantialism or instrumentalism), which stresses instead the flexibility of ethnic ties over time, and views ethnicity as instrumental to an individual or group depending on the circumstance, and as established and maintained through the negotiation of ethnic boundaries (Barth, 1969). Ethnicity, in this case, has to therefore be considered in relation to other competing identities, values and interests, and as such, has to be recognized as socially constructed. This model of ethnicity emphasizes "a degree of plasticity in ethnic identification and in the composition of ethnic groups" (Jenkins, 1997: 44). As the term suggests, one of the central themes of the situational position is that individuals, or actors, are able to "break away" from their ethnic heritages and blend with another culture or even create their own individual or group identities (Bhabha, 1990). Thus, the "variability in the affirmation of ethnic identity may be dependent upon the immediate social situation" (Okamura, 1981: 452), so that an "individual's membership in a particular group in a particular situation is 'determined' by the values, interests, and motives that influence his behavior in that situation" (Gluckman, 1958, cited in Okamura, 1981: 453). Unlike the primordialists, situationalists believe in choice and proactivity in determining one's ethnic identity or ethnic group membership. Situational ethnicity is therefore "motivated[;] it comes into being for a purpose and its continued existence is tied to that purpose" (Banks, 1996: 39).[6]

With the emergence of situationalist approaches to ethnicity, there has been a marked decline in the use of primordial approaches in favor of the situationalist ones, especially upon further refinement of the situationalist perspective as not referring merely to the simplistic notion of individuals or groups choosing their ethnicities, but rather in recognizing that real differences in ethnic groups lie in potential identity markers that are "taken up and mobilized only where it suits the purposes of a particular encounter" (Wallman, 1979). However, there has also been a growing consensus that the sole adoption of either approach is limiting and flawed. The primordialists have been criticized for their static and naturalistic view of ethnicity (Eller and Coughlan, 1993), and the situationalists for defining ethnic interests in primarily material terms and in doing so "underplaying the affective dimensions of ethnicity" (Hutchinson and Smith, 1996: 9). This has led to attempts for a synthesis of the two, and considering how ethnicity may be shown to exhibit *both* primordial and situational attributes (van den Berghe, 1993: 360).

David Brown (1994: xviii) argues that this involves first challenging the antithetical conception of both perspectives, and then moving beyond simply taking a middle position between the two, to developing a distinct perspective. For him, ideology is proposed as a mediating concept which may be seen to feature in both primordial and situational perspectives of ethnicity. In primordialism, the rights

claim of the ethnic community rests upon the ideology employed, while in situationalism, ideology works for the ethnic community, which is conceived as an interest group that mobilizes group solidarity for political action (Brown, 1994: 6). Others such as Ratcliffe (2004: 30) have focused on broader forms of reconciliation, viewing ethnicity as multi-dimensional, layered and stratified, especially in line with contemporary global and transnational movements. Without necessarily reducing itself to post-structuralism, such a view recognizes how levels of primordialism and situationalism coexist, albeit on different planes, in a mutually complementary way. Such advances in reconciling the two allow for a theoretical movement beyond simply casting them as diametrical opposites.[7]

In revisiting this primordialist-situationalist debate, it is proposed that the arguments from both perspectives still remain relevant to studies of ethnicity today. While a theoretical synthesis of the two is demonstrably possible, the important question is in fact the extent to which these syntheses may be empirically helpful (Hutchinson and Smith, 1996: 9). The following chapters on the specific ethnic situation of the Chinese in their various countries demonstrate a strong empirical case for the salience of both perspectives in explaining the way in which ethnic identity is constructed, understood and maintained by the ethnic Chinese. In each case, primordialism remains central as the association with one's Chineseness rests foundationally on generational lineage as well as physical attributes. The book attempts to develop a model of ethnicity that synthesize both approaches in a single framework that incorporates historical processes and local contexts.

A recurrent statement made by informants across Southeast Asia on their ethnic identity is that of one being born a Chinese, and that being a fact that cannot be altered regardless of circumstance. Physical attributes of Chineseness, despite its problematic use, also continues to remain a predominant discourse in one's identification with Chineseness. This suggests that ethnicity is much more resilient than the situationist argue. Although external circumstances, as the various chapters in the book will show, may affect and shape identities, there is evidence that primordial and racial attachments remains very strong and central. Furthermore, this identity "provides an affective dimension to…ethnic solidarity…As long as ethnicity is *felt*, then, the concept of primordial sentiments is essential to our understanding of this experience" (Scott, 1990: 167; emphasis in original).

At the same time, however, the situationalist perspective proves to be equally useful and accurate in explaining Chinese ethnicity in the region, by casting light on what may be considered the other side of ethnicity that is fluid and flexible. The Indonesian case, for example, shows how ethnicity for some become instrumental, one that is flaunted when beneficial and discarded when it becomes dangerous, threatening or inconvenient to be Chinese. Clearly, both perspectives offer different insights into Chinese ethnicity in the region, and both must be considered together for a fair and complete depiction of what it means to be a Chinese in Southeast Asia.

That Chinese ethnicity is best understood in both primordial and situationalist terms suggest that a homogenous conception of Chineseness is not only self-limiting, but also inaccurate. Instead, the notion of multiple Chineseness captures most realistically the complexity and layered density of the relation

between the Chinese in the region and their ethnic identities. The case of the Chinese in Singapore provides a particularly appropriate example, where the many facets of Chineseness may be most aptly described as its many masks that may be adorned, yet always having one face. In addition, the Chinese residing within the geo-political boundaries of any particular nation-state cannot be seen as one unified and necessarily distinguishable group. The case of the Indonesian Chinese bears testament to this, where Chinese identities vary across regions within Indonesia itself. Similarly, in the case of Thailand, the levels of cultural assimilation through intermarriage further problematize the view of the Chinese as one homogenous entity. Taken from the point of view of a regional whole, Chinese ethnicity cannot be isolated by any particular identity marker or ethnic boundary, but rather manifests itself through the complex phenomenon of multiple Chineseness.

In the process of linking a primordial identity with the notion of multiple Chinese, the book suggests that ethnic identity should be conceptualized in a model as *center-periphery identity*. At the center or core, Chinese ethnic identity is viewed in primordial terms, that is, it is "deeply rooted, given at birth, and largely unchangeable" (van den Berghe, 1978: 401). By using physiological (fair skinned, dark hair, slanted eyes), genotypical (blood) and descent (born Chinese) traits, it suggests that Chinese identity is irreducible and ascribed, natural and a given. Not only is it primordial, at the center, identity takes on a more expressive nature, rather than being instrumental. Drawing from De Vos and Romannuci-Ross (1982), it can be argued that at the center, in such private places as home, community halls, clan associations and social get togethers, ethnicity is manifested expressively to meet personal social and emotional needs. Here, identity not only operates at the personal level, but at the same time is utilized at the group level for group cohesion (see Tong and Chan, 1998).

In contrast, at the periphery or on the fringe, as opposed to the center, ethnic identity is more instrumental rather than expressive. As opposed to the private nature of ethnicity at the core, at the fringes, in public places and where there are transactions and negotiations with other ethnic groups, particularly members of the host society, we observe a more situationist view of ethnic identity. Here, we find multiple Chineseness; ethnic identity becomes changeable, culturally and ecologically defined, and situationally sensitive. Ethnic identification becomes a "strategic" choice by individuals who, in other circumstances, would choose other forms of group membership as a means of gaining some power and privilege (Bell, 1975: 17). Thus, identity at the periphery is achieved, rather than ascribed. Depending on the social context, the Chinese present certain aspects of their ethnic identity to deal with the host population, and the business of living an everyday life as a migrant minority in a new host society. In the strategic use of ethnic identity, ethnicity becomes more fluid and more plastic.

Thus, for the Chinese in Southeast Asia, there is a core primary identity, best expressed and nurtured in private. This is, in a sense, a master identity. The Chinese individual also has a secondary identity, one that displays different facets of its self in different social situations. Once the primary birth principle of classification at the center is satisfied, the secondary principle or plural conceptions of identity is often

invoked, stressing individualistic, voluntary and autonomous expressions. For the Chinese in Southeast Asia, ethnic identity is not either primordial or situational; it is both, at the same time (see Tong and Chan, 2001b).

Sociologically, however, the critical question is not that primordialism, or race, is used as a marker of Chinese identity in Southeast Asia, but rather why this is so. Why is there a racialization of ethnicity? There are various reasons. First, "racing" ethnicity allows the Chinese a mechanism for the exclusion of others. Using genotypical characteristics, such as bloodline and descent ensures boundary maintenance, controlling an individual's entry into and exit out of the group. Many informants, for example, made the point that one cannot become Chinese if not born Chinese. It is thus this constructed ethnic boundary that defines the group. Second, racial differentiation of the other becomes the basis of the construction of the self. By privileging skin color, and through contrastive effect, it allows for ethnic differentiation. Being migrants, and in close contact with other ethnic groups in everyday life, using primordial markers allows for the creation of a *contrastive identity*. A Chinese is a Chinese because he does not look Malay, or Thai, or Vietnamese. It can be suggested that in multi-ethnic societies, contrastive identity takes on greater significance. This is especially so when other ethnic markers such as language, religion and education becomes increasingly amorphous, and thus phenotypical distinctiveness gain functional salience.

By drawing on phenotypical and genotypical traits, ethnic identity, for the Chinese in Southeast Asia takes on a "naturalness" in quality. Naturalness suggests that identity is a given, permanent, a taken for grantedness and therefore not socially constructed. Invoking primordialism and "naturalness" is a consequence of the diasporic conditions of the Chinese. As Bauman (2000) argues, the need to put together and rearrange identity is stronger in the context of an immigrant population living as a minority in the host societies of others. However, in Southeast Asia, this arrangement must be seen in the context of having to deal with the imposition of identity, both by the state and members of the host society. Drawing on naturalness of ethnic identity allows the Chinese to mediate and resist the imposition of the state. By constructing ethnic identity as natural categories, identity takes on an objective reality. Once a Chinese, always a Chinese. Even when confronted with evidence of the subjective nature of phenotypical categorizations, informants are seemingly untroubled by the fact that there is a gradation of skin and hair colors among the Chinese, informants in the various countries in Southeast Asia insist on the primordial as the markers of identity. The hair and skin color may be slightly varied, but it is still Chinese blood. While it can be argued that primordialism is itself a social construction, and therefore of a subjective nature, what is important is that many of the actors take these subjective constructions as objectively validated: "it is in the blood, there is nothing you can do to change it."

Third, the colonial influence must be taken into account. In Southeast Asia, the colonial masters, including the British in Burma, Malaya and Singapore, the Dutch in Indonesia, the French in Indochina, and the Spanish in the Philippines, utilized essentialized racial classifications and policies of ascriptive ethnicity in the management of the indigenous population. For example, the British in Malaya

assigned economic and social roles based on race (Abraham, 1983; Stockwell, 1982; Trocki, 1992). The Malays were essentially peasants and rice-cultivators, with a few with aristocratic ties recruited into the lower ranks of the civil service. The Chinese were either mining coolies or middlemen engaged in trade and commerce; and the Indians labored on rubber estates or public works.

The colonial ascription of ethnicity was based on social Darwinist assumptions of the development of the human population. Indeed, the roles ascribed to the various ethnic groups were justified on such ideological grounds. In the colonial mind, for example, Indians were regarded as docile and well behaved, the Chinese on the other hand had more self reliance and the enterprise to rise above manual labor (Abraham, 1983: 24), and the Malays were regarded as rural, poor and backwards, most appropriate to the role of food producers and agriculturalists (Lian, 2001). These racial categorizations were carried over into post-colonial Southeast Asia. For example, even in present day Singapore, ethnic groups are classified along racial rather than cultural lines (see Benjamin, 1976; Siddique, 1990).

In using primordialist sentiments, ethnicity identity takes on an additional dimension of objectifying cultural values in racial terms. This operates at two levels. Firstly, by using descent and bloodline, it separates the insider from outsider in absolute terms. Secondly, and at a more subtle level, cultural values become racialized. Thus, cultural ideas, such as the Chinese being hardworking, filial, or are good in business, are seen as quintessentially Chinese, as if such cultural values or attributes are inherently, even genetically Chinese, differentiating them from the "natives" or indigenous people, who are carefree and not good with money, etc. The Chinese, in doing this, racialize the "other," as such stereotypes are conceived as inherent in the locals. This, interesting enough, is one of the reasons given by the informants for their resistance towards intermarriage with the indigenes, as intermarriage contaminates the purity of descent. As one informant exemplifies, "if a Chinese man marries a local, then their children will not be good businessmen."[8]

In doing so, there is a conflation of race and culture. Cultural attributes are not learnt, but intrinsically Chinese. Similarly, the natives are implicitly laid back, or not good businessmen, and not due to historical or environmental reasons. Through racialization, cultural attributes become natural or reflecting nature. Using physiological or genetic determinism, culture takes on an intrinsic or inevitable quality. Guillaumin (1995: 62) argues that using race as a scientific concept is fraught with dangers as it forms the basis of discrimination and oppression. However, whether the concept of race "obscure(s) real social relationships," or "conceals discrimination," is, in my view, irrelevant. Racialization acts as a mechanism for exclusion and exclusivity. In the fieldwork in many of the countries in Southeast Asia, the vocabulary of ethnic relations is always framed racially.

The critical question is then why, in Southeast Asia, do both the indigenous majority, and more importantly, the Chinese themselves, use the discourse of race for ethnic differentiation? It will be argued that racializing the other creates distinctiveness. Drawing on Guillaumin (1995: 65), using "natural entities" or "races" make the Chinese "genetically distinct and therefore, in the context of somatic determinism, politically, intellectually and socially homogenous, forming closed

entities (which) are fixed unchangeably, both in nature and in law." Race, in the context of boundary maintenance, and the use of ascriptive identity, makes change, or the possibility of change, impossible. In the fieldwork, there is a resistance to intermarriage. This resistance is framed in the context of maintaining racial purity, and viewed in almost numeric terms, such as half-Chinese or three-quarters Chinese.[9] In "blood" terms, intermarriage dilutes the authenticity of Chineseness. Thus, the rhetoric of intermarriage is often couched in derogatory terms, in an attempt to marginalize mixedness.

Just as it is sociologically important to account for why the Chinese in Southeast Asia choose to use primordial sentiments as the primary marker of ethnic identity, it is equally important to try to account for why they would draw on situational identity, or multiple identities in public discourse and everyday life. As Brubaker (2001: 15–16) noted, "it is not so much to make the observation that ethnic groups are socially constructed, but rather to specify how and when people identify themselves, perceive others and experience the world, to link macro level outcomes with micro level processes." What are the factors that mediate multiple identities? The book argues that ethnic identity is subjected to transformation, mediation and negotiation. Embedded within a web of interlocking forces and influences, ethnic actors constantly adjust their postures, strategies and identities (see Chan and Tong, 2001). Part of the reason for doing so is related to the strategies of survival as a minority group in a new homeland, dominated by the larger majority group which has political power. The discourse of being Chinese is thus influenced by the political constructions of the minorities in the host societies. Human actors continue to relentlessly meet their own needs by trying out myriad strategies in daily social transactions (Whitten and Whitten, 1972). It is also important to note that the policies of the state towards the Chinese minority and their reaction to them are not always the same throughout history.

As the book will show, in different historical periods and varying for different Southeast Asian countries, the Chinese were subjected to discrimination, at times forced assimilation, at others, massacre and deportation, and at still others, treated favorably because of their economic prowess and usefulness. In these different situations, the Chinese strategically emphasize or deemphasize different aspects of their ethnic identity for economic and political survival in an alien land. These different historical experiences also result in different constructions of the cultural content of ethnic identity in Southeast Asia. The Chinese in the different countries draw on different markers to differentiate themselves from the host population. In Thailand, for example, religion becomes a dominant marker, a Chinese is a Chinese because he practices Chinese religion, as opposed to a Thai who practices Thai Buddhism. In Malaysia, food becomes a marker of identity. As the title of the chapter, *Sama Makan tak Sama Makan*, literally "to eat together and not eat together" demonstrates, because of religious proscriptions, a Malay in Malaysia is a Malay because he does not eat pork, and a Chinese is a Chinese because he does.

In Singapore, language is a maker of identity, not simply in terms if differentiating a Chinese from a non-Chinese, but as contestations among the Chinese. Here, we see a divide between the English-speaking and the Chinese-speaking

Chinese, spawning sub-ethnic stereotypes. Chinese educated Chinese depict the English educated as "liberal," "sexually loose," an inferior kind of Chinese, while the Chinese-educated is viewed by the English educated as "ultra-conservative" and "unfashionable." A key point to make is that these different ethnic markers and contestations exist at the "peripheral" end of the center-periphery continuum. There is no doubt among all these groups that they are Chinese, by virtue of satisfying the first criteria of identity, of descent and bloodline. But, once this criterion is fulfilled, there are different presentations of ethnic identity.

1.2.2 Ethno-Racialization

The fieldwork in the various Southeast Asian countries suggest that the conceptualization of ethnic identity is complex, and not in the simple terms of assimilation, integration or acculturation. Nor is it a unilineal process of the Chinese becoming indigenous or retaining their identity. A concept that may provide a more accurate characterization of Chinese identity in Southeast Asia is *ethno-racialization*. Ethno-racialization is derived from an amalgamation of Cashmore's (1988) concept of racialization and Goldberg's (1992) concept of ethnorace. Racialization refers "to a political and ideological process by which particular populations are identified by direct or indirect reference to their real or imagined phenotypical characteristics in such a way as to suggest that the population can only be understood as a supposedly biological unity" (Cashmore, 1988: 246). Inherent in the concept of racialization is the notion that individuals distinguish and exclude others on the basis that the differences that exist between them and members of other races are natural (Lian, 2006). While race and racialization, as the data in the book will demonstrate, are significant in understanding inter-group relations in Southeast Asia, the question of the continuing relevance of ethnicity and how ethnicity is incorporated into the discourse of racialization needs to be addressed. Here, the concept of ethnorace (Goldberg, 1992: 553) which indicates that race and ethnicity need not be mutually exclusive in practice proves useful.

   The process of differentiating the "self" from the "other" does not necessitate enforcing a distinction between cultural and physical origins in order to distinguish themselves as either an ethnic group or race. This is conceptually important because it points to the idea that the process of in-group identification could rely on either a rhetoric of cultural content (ethnicity) or a rhetoric of descent (race). As I noted earlier, the strengthening of the rhetoric of descent is contingent on the naturalization or racialization of such constructions. Thus, ethno-racialization suggests that in addition to descent, ethnicity, or the cultural conception of race with language groups, religion, mores, are themselves the product of construction and group circumscribed values, can be naturalized through the process of discursive racialization. Conceptually, ethno-racialization suggests a deeper reflexivity and accords greater plasticity to the process of racialization since it is able to resolve and account for the empirical racialization or essentialization of culturally constructed ethnicity.

An individual's phenomenological definition and interpretation of any situation, which essentially constitutes a process of "reality constructions" (Berger and Luckmann, 1966) is done in reference to themselves as "ethno-racialized" members of a particular race group and as members of a particular race who "ethno-racialize" the other. Reality construction refers to the process through which human actors make their experience of the world around them orderly and understandable (1966: 112). The concept of ethno-racialization is particularly useful since, for the Chinese in Southeast Asia, their reality construction of their identity and ethnic relations with members of the host societies, is conceived on the foundation of the interaction with the orientational other, referring to the others in communication with whom an individual's or a group's identity is basically sustained or changed.

1.2.3 Cultural Contact, Positions and Ethnic Relations

When considering the basic positions of Chinese identity in Southeast Asia, it is crucial to bear in mind that ethnic identity and ethnicity exist partly because of the "systematic distinctions between insiders and outsiders; between Us and Them" (Eriksen, 1993: 18). In other words, to engage with scholarly issues concerning ethnicity is also to deal with matters concerning ethnic *relations*, since the existence of ethnic identity is based on an assumption (rightly or wrongly) of difference(s). Where alleged differences exist, social interaction (that is, ethnic relations) becomes potentially problematic. Thus the question of ethnic identity is not an isolated one. Its present and indeed historical reality has to be framed within the context of its cultural contact with the state, whose use of ethnic politics that draw from the adoption of assimilationist, acculturationist, integrationist or pluralist policies exerts a range of cultural and political pressure upon the identities of ethnic groups. These various positions represent the broad spectrum of ethnic politics, as well as the processual consequences that unfold in light of such politics, with the assimilationists and the pluralists occupying both extremes. In assimilation, the nature of contact is that of an asymmetrical process by which an out-group comes to accept the values of the dominant group, or at least incorporates those values into its own value system, through "processes of interpenetration and fusion" (Park and Burgess, 1924: 735). It is by this that many have sought to distinguish acculturation from assimilation. While both refer to the dynamic processes that take place between individuals and groups through cultural contact, acculturation is often understood as a two way process that does not require any change in values, while assimilation implies instead a change in values as accompanied by out-group acceptance (Teske and Nelson, 1974).

In such a view, whereas acculturation and assimilation are clearly two distinct processes, it may often be construed that acculturation connotes a comparatively benign outcome of cultural contact, while assimilation suggests a greater degree of absorption of a particular group into the dominant and prevailing value and cultural system as enforced usually by a dominant group. However, this unidirectional conception of assimilation falsely implies inevitability and irreversibility, and assumes

a rather simplistic view of both the assimilator and the assimilated as willing and cooperative parties, which is often not the case. Instead, as Chan (2005: 3) recognizes and points out, Parks and Burgess' notion of "interpenetration and fusion" should be central to the conceptualization of assimilation, and as such, assimilation should at the very least be a two-way process as well even if particular assimilationist policies intend it to be a one-way process of cultural imposition and dominance. Cultural contact of any sort cannot be limited to unidirectional influence and result.

While one strand is to celebrate primordial Chinese ethnicity through bloodline and descent, and another to develop multiple identities for the purpose of survival, a third strand is the development of a *layered identity*.[10] The book will show that, even within each country, it is important to differentiate between regions, that is, to take into account regional identity. In Indonesia, for example, a Chinese in Jakarta, in terms of identity, is layered very differently from a Chinese in Cirebon. Similarly, in the Philippines, it is important to differentiate between nationality and ethnic identity. Moreover, after years of cultural contact, new identities, which are neither similar to those of their ancestors nor the ones which the indigenous majority groups adhere to, will have developed. It is not a unilineal process of the Chinese assimilating or integrating into the dominant host society. As will be seen in the various chapters, best exemplified by the Thai Chinese, there has been a degree of intermixing and mutual influence, which over the course of time, have left the Chinese with something Thai, and the Thai with something Chinese.

In a sense, following Yancey et al. (1976: 397) this layered identity can be a form of emergent identity where ethnicity should be seen as a phenomenon that emerges from the "constantly evoking interaction between the nature of the local community, the available economic opportunities and the national or religious heritage of a particular group", thus making it highly malleable according to local circumstances.[11] The development of a layered identity is, in part, especially in the early years of migration, due to intermarriage. For example, in Malaysia and Indonesia, the Chinese migrants married indigenous women and, over time, developed a unique identity as "babas," or "peranakans." The Babas retained many of the cultural attributes of Chinese culture, but uses Malay with many loan words from Chinese, as their mother tongue. They also developed a new food culture, which draws on Malay cooking styles, but uses pork as a key ingredient. Similarly, the intermarriage of Chinese women with Caucasians in Singapore developed a distinctive Eurasian culture.

The concepts of integrationism and pluralism indicate a more liberal approach towards the issue of cultural contact, especially from the perspective of state ethnic policy. In his study of the patterns of ethnic political activity in Indonesia, Coppel (1976) identifies at one point the integrationist pattern, which is marked by an emphasis on representing the interests of the Chinese community and at the same time maintaining its ethnic and cultural distinctiveness. Integrationism thus may be best understood in terms of an incorporation of a particular ethnic community into the broader cultural setting of a prevailing society, whilst resisting the pressure to conform its identity and values. This may be contrasted with the pluralist approach, which clearly takes on a more democratized yet highly segregated form

of cultural contact. Cultural pluralism, in this case, draws heavily from Furnivall's (1948) theory of plural society, which serves to describe the condition of different ethnic compartments of society living together, yet separately within an overarching political unity. Pluralism is thus marked by an idealized tolerance of ethnic difference, and is often championed by states that adopt multicultural or multiracial policies, such as in the Singaporean case.

These features of cultural contact functions not so much as models through which the current study of the Chinese in Southeast Asia may be compartmentalized as they are theoretical frames of reference through which the salient issues of Chinese ethnicity are worked out and reckoned with. Indeed, the question of assimilation, along with these other notions of integration, acculturation and pluralism, has little explanatory value today as compared to what we have acknowledged as the more relevant question of how the Chinese go about conducting themselves in their daily social transactions as a group among themselves and with others (Tong and Chan, 2001: 37). Indeed, the question of cultural contact carries greatest significance in the Southeast Asian context when situated in the everyday negotiation of ethnicity in relation to the necessitated interaction between ethnic groups, in particular between the varied groups of Chinese communities with the other respective groups they are in contact with. On a broader level, this has very much to do with how the Chinese view themselves as a community, the way in which such ties are maintained and the extent to which group exclusivity is asserted. This of course has to be treated as a problematic in itself, where notions of static and heterogeneous ethnic community are constantly reshaped in relation to the various forms of cultural contact that develop. The general approach adopted in this collection is one that thus seeks to avoid the common essentialisms of Chineseness as fixed and singular. Also, a key question is whether the Chinese are allowed to assimilate, even if they had wanted to. It is not simply a question of personal choice and desire. For example, in Indonesia, as the title of the chapter, Between a Rock and a Hard Place suggests, the Chinese were not allowed to assimilate, even if they had wanted to.

In understanding the different presentations of ethnic identity, the concept of *positions* is important. Too often, the notion of the Chinese is that of a homogenous group, reacting in a homogenous manner to living in a new homeland and towards state policies on them. What this book argues is that there are many Chineseness, just as there are many presentations of the host societies; there are also many different Thainess, or Indonesianness. It is no longer possible, in the Skinnerian sense, to talk about the assimilation of the Chinese into Thai society.

The sociologically more interesting question is how the Chinese, as individuals and as a group, go about presenting themselves in their transactions with members of the host society and with other Chinese and why. For example, while many poorer Chinese in Thailand will send their children to Thai schools and learn the Thai language, as a means of economic survival and upward mobility, the Chinese businessmen in Thailand do not try to assimilate but rather enter into symbiotic relationships with the Thai political and administrative elites. These relationships are typically class- or interest- based, mutually beneficial for both parties. Thus, the presentation of identity depends, to a degree, on the positions they hold in the

society, trying to make the best of the social situations they find themselves in. A similar trend can be seen for the Chinese in Malaysia and Indonesia.

In making sense of the strategies for ethnic identify presentation, it must be kept in mind that these occur in the public sphere. As Alonso (1994: 394) has correctly pointed out, there is a "hegemony of the public space as the discourse of the dominant group, where the public space is equated with the nation." In such a situation, the Chinese minority has to resort to a variety of strategies to deal with their marginalization in the public sphere. In the private realm, as I have argued earlier, identity is less negotiable, and more expressive rather than instrumental. In the public spaces, the Chinese minority strategizes and manages their ethnicity; situations and exigencies of survival would need to be defined, constructed, and instrumentally used.

The Chinese present one form of identity in the private sphere, another in the public sphere. Similarly, as various chapters in the book will demonstrate, the Chinese present different strategies when dealing with the economic as opposed to the political sphere, and familial as opposed to the community spheres. While it is true that the hegemony of the state allows for the marginalization of the minorities, in the case of Southeast Asia, it is vital to differentiate between political marginalization and economic power. Particularly in Malaysia and Indonesia, the Chinese, for a variety of reasons, including choice, are marginalized politically, but retain a high level of economic power.

A clearer understanding of the Chinese in Southeast Asia requires moving away from the simplistic polarity of ethnic assimilation and ethnic persistence. Even so, what is sociologically interesting is that even though the Chinese migrants live in societies that are generally multiethnic or multi-religious, such as in Indonesia, Malaysia, Burma, and the Philippines, the Chinese as a group are particularly singled out for attention and discrimination by the host societies. The question is why is this so? One reason, which can partly account for why the Chinese are set apart, is that they are perceived to be economically powerful and as such the source of envy and resistance by the host population. In many countries in Southeast Asia, Chinese are viewed as parasites and pariahs, out to make money at the expense of the local population. While partly true, this, in itself, cannot explain the position and ethnic discrimination of the Chinese in Southeast Asia.

The interesting thing about discrimination is that even when evidence is presented that demystify the basis of discrimination, it persists. For example, in Thailand, data suggest that while there are many rich Chinese, for the population as a whole, the Chinese are no richer than the Thais. However, the ethnic stereotype that "all Chinese are rich," or "all Chinese are only interested in money," remains. Similarly, while there are many rich Chinese in Indonesia, data suggest that this is not true for the whole Chinese population. Thus, the interesting sociological question, which is addressed in the various chapters in the book, is that in the discourse of ethnic relations, the Chinese are deemed as a homogenized group, and treated as such. This setting apart of the Chinese allows the political and administrative elite of the host country to use them as a easy focus of "scape-goating," when the state is faced with domestic problems. As the chapters on the Chinese in Indonesia

and Malaysia will show, many riots were instigated by the local elites against the Chinese population.

Barth (1969) suggests that the study of ethnic relations must focus on the negotiations of boundaries between groups of people; ethnic groups are bounded entities: "...categorical ethnic distinctions do not depend on an absence of mobility, contact and information, but do entail social processes of exclusion and incorporation whereby discrete categories are maintained despite changing participation and membership in the course of individual life histories." What needs to be investigated is how boundaries around particular communities are drawn. The book argues that the construction of boundaries rests on the othering process. In the case of the Chinese, in many countries in Southeast Asia, they display a distinctly different phenotypical attribute. Thus, race is used to separate ethnic groups, and is regarded as more important than what is inside the group, that is, the cultural content of ethnicity.

From the perspective of the Chinese themselves, the cultural content of Chineseness is negotiable, affected by different historical experiences and circumstances in the host country, intra-ethnic differentiation, the effects of state policies, the Chinese person or group's position in society, and the necessity of economic and social survival. I will also show that the ethnic boundaries between groups are both fixed and fluid. It is fixed in the sense that the Chinese, and the indigenous population, use race as a basis of group boundaries, and thus, it is unchanging and unchangeable. However, at the periphery, and in the public spaces, where culture or cultural attributes are used for group boundaries, the ethnic boundaries are fluid and negotiable.

1.2.4 Community, Economic Identity and Racializing Economics

One important area addressed in this book is the nature of Chinese communities in Southeast Asian countries. What are the types of community organizations created by the Chinese? What are the roles of religious organizations? Are the community organizations different from those found in China? The very act of moving or movement of course suggests dislocation and transformation of the community. In the new homeland, they will inevitably create new social worlds. Often, new organizations are manufactured, not simply transplanted or imported wholesale from the homeland (Chan and Ong, 1995). While it is true that the immigrants bring along with them "original culture" which shape their initial behaviors, it is the structural conditions in the local context that will shape their long term adaptation to the new homeland.

The early migrants to Southeast Asia were "huaqiao" or sojourners, basically coming to Southeast Asia to make a living, and hopefully a fortune, and then to return to the homeland, to China. Thus, there was very little desire or need to sink roots or identify with the host societies. However, over time, the chances of going home diminished, and especially with the Communist take over of China in 1949, the option of going home was basically closed. This book examines the social

worlds and community organizations created in the new homelands, the types of social networks produced.

What constitutes the Chinese community for the Chinese in Southeast Asia is problematic. In many countries, the Chinese were able to succeed, and live peacefully in the new homelands, precisely because they kept a low profile, avoided political and social representations, and focused on economics and the business of earning a living. However, over time, and with the hopes of going back to China dashed, the Chinese began to set up organizations for social and community needs, as well as those which sought to defend what they considered their rights as citizens of the new homelands. This is particularly true in countries where the Chinese faced structural and social discriminations. For example, in Malaysia, Chinese community organizations were created to defend Chinese rights, particularly in education and language policies. Similarly, in Indonesia, organizations, such as Berpaki, were created. The book examines community organizations in all Southeast Asian countries. A critical point again is that these Chinese organizations are not homogenous, but have different agendas.

While these organizations exist, their usefulness is generally circumscribed. Political freedom is constrained by the public policies of the host communities. One consequence of this is that many Chinese in Southeast Asia, given the perceived limited usefulness of community organizations, shift their conception of community from community organizations to the family. The self, for the Chinese in Southeast Asia, has experienced a closer identification with family and family history rather than with community or community organizations. Identity has become more individualized and personalized. The data suggest that there is a privatization of community or even, in some cases, a loss of community. What can be regarded as traditional markers of the community, such as language, territoriality, and religion, given multiple Chinese identities, no longer serve that purpose for all Chinese.

One of the features regarding the Chinese in Southeast Asia is the preponderance of ethnic stereotypes and occupational differentiation. State policies, from colonial times, through independence and till present day, sought to undermine the economic influence of the Chinese and indigenize the economy, most clearly exemplified in the cases of Burma, Malaysia and Indonesia, and to a lesser extent in Vietnam and the Philippines. In the face of discrimination, the Chinese have had to resort to various strategies to cope with the economic hardship. In some countries, they developed complementary relationships with the indigenous elites. For example, in Thailand, the Chinese businessmen, in order to protect their financial interests, have formed alliances with leading Thai politicians and military men, who in turn retain high remuneration by serving as directors in such companies. In this sense, the Chinese and Thai elites can be seen as sub groupings of different ethnic categories which assume complementary economic roles, occupying exclusive economic niches in the local environment. They enjoy a selective advantage, for they reduce competition between culturally distinctive groups. Similarly, in Malaysia and Indonesia, "Ali-baba" companies are formed, owned and managed using Chinese capital, but drawing on indigenous political influence for economic success.

Another strategy is to focus on certain sectors of the economy. The Chinese were "forced" to become traders and middlemen. In these sectors, the Chinese resort to personal contacts to ensure success. One of the reasons the Chinese maintain their ethnic identity may be due to the utility of ethnicity and "cultural traditions," for business. Elsewhere, I have argued the importance of guanxi and trust in Chinese business. Chinese businesses are generally characterized by personalism; a tendency to incorporate personal relationships in decision making. Chinese businessmen prefer to deal with other Chinese as they are deemed to be more "trustworthy" (Tong, 1998). Chinese ethnicity becomes cultural capital, and ethnicity is invoked to ensure smooth business transactions.

As economic networks are important, ethnic identification takes on practical considerations. It can be argued that the Chinese maintain a coherent sense of ethnic solidarity as it is good for business. This can be termed as *economic identity*. To an extent, this economic identity is racialized. The construction of ethnic Chinese economic dominance is seen as ethnoracialized and inherent. Economic abilities which are "stereotypic behavioral traits" are ascribed to a particular race essentializing "ethnic" or cultural differences. Thus, Chinese are good businessmen because they are "naturally" so, and the indigenous population is not, also inherently so.

The 1970s and 1980s has witnessed the economic rise of China. This has had an impact on Chinese ethnic identity and Chinese business. As the discussions on the Chinese in Indonesia and the Philippines will demonstrate, being Chinese, or at least the ability to speak Chinese, has become a fad. For example, in Indonesia, there is a renewed awareness in Chinese Indonesians of their ethnicity and for many younger Chinese, an entirely "new" awareness of their heritage and identity. Similarly, in the Philippines, there is a revival of interest in Chinese culture and language, even among younger, and supposedly more "filipinized" Chinese. Being Chinese has become a form of ethnic networking, exploiting ties with co-ethnics, in the Philippines, as well as the Chinese in China, to do business. It has become advantages to emphasize shared notions of Chinese culture and language, strategizing ethnicity and ethnic solidarity (of being Chinese) for economic advantage; a symbolic or imagined community, as ethnics or co-ethnics sharing a cultural universe.

1.2.5 Ethnic Policies and the State

The relatively micro perspective adopted in capturing the everyday reality of the cultural contact between the Chinese and other ethnic groups has to be balanced with a more macro perspective that provides an insight into the structural conditions that influence the Chinese directly in terms of how they are dealt with by the state, and how the historical forces of social change have impacted the ethnic relations that the Chinese find themselves in. The role of the state, particularly in the administration of ethnic-based policies, has to be therefore considered a primary factor in the transformation of Chinese ethnicity.

The work of scholars such as David Brown (1994) has dealt mainly with charting out a comparative framework for understanding the development of ethnic politics in Southeast Asia. For Brown, ethnicity "refers directly to power structures of a society, and specifically to the focal point in that power structure, the state" (1994: 31–32). The ideological nature of the state's use of ethnicity in its larger political program suggests that it is not only state policy, but also its discourse, that contributes towards the development of both ethnic consciousness and tensions. Because ethnicity has often been subjected, in varying degrees across the region, to state control, management and even engineering, and since it must also be recognized that structural conditions, whether directly through state policy or through the broader influences of social change, shape the expression and form of ethnic relations, a structural approach that moves beyond a cultural one is necessary for ethnic relations to be accurately discussed. This is particularly so as many Southeast Asian states practiced bureaucratic racism, or structural racialization, using race as the basis of systematic discrimination.

It should be remembered that most of the countries in Southeast Asia are relatively new states, only gaining independence in the 1940s and 1950s, and for some, such as Singapore, in the 1960s. After many years of colonization, they had to promulgate an ideological basis for the new nation states. Chan and Evers (1978) noted that new Southeast Asian nations, faced with the need to establish an identity that is different from the colonial masters had two main options. One was to establish a regressive identity, in which the building of the national identity is based on the attempt to revive the long and proud cultural traditions of the country. Another approach was to establish a progressive identity. In such societies, the past is seen as a remnant of the colonial past and detrimental to progress.

In most Southeast Asian countries, including Burma, Malaysia, Brunei, and Vietnam, the formation of new nation states drew on a regressive identity. For example, Malaysia drew on the proud historical tradition of the Malay monarchy; the national culture is based on Malay indigenous civilization, and on Islam as an important element of the nation. Similarly, Burma drew on the past to define the new nation state; focusing on a process of indigenization and the primacy of the Bamah as the basis of the nation, despite its multi-ethnic composition.

While Thailand was never officially colonized, in the formation of the nation-state, it too relied on historical traditions. In 1914, King Vajiravudh (Rama VI) published a pamphlet entitled *The Jews of the East*. One aspect of the Thai nationalism which came into prominence at that period was an ethnocentrism which emphasized the differences between the Chinese and the Thai. The consciousness of such differences was indispensable to the state's ability to maintain a sense of Thai identity. Prior to this, the Chinese were one ethnic group among the multi-ethnic members of their kingdom. Their ethnicity did not mark them as different in terms of their access to royal protection. However, with the rise of Thai nationalism, the Chinese were increasingly seen as the other. As Anderson (1978: 212–214) remarked, "There is no word for the Thai that prevents them from semantically monopolizing the nation. 'Thailand' the term for the contemporary state ruled from Bangkok – product of the opportunistic chauvinism of the Phibunsongkram-Luang

Wichit ideological duumvirate of the late 1930s – is symptomatic. . ... We may note that the thrust of Jit Phumisak's last work was precisely to combat ethnic Thai chauvinism by showing the heterogeneous origins of the Thai themselves and the close interaction with non-Thai groups." Thus, the basis of the state depends on the conceptualization of the "other," and in most of the new states in Southeast Asia, the other was, due partly to their economic dominance, essentially the Chinese.

Moreover, the imperatives of nation-building require the state to essentialize and totalize (Chun, 1996: 70). To essentialize means to reduce something to its supposed pure form and to treat it as if it exists in reality. For example, states in Southeast Asia often essentialize ethnicity by assuming that ethnic groups possess inherently different cultural or behavioral characteristics; these are then used to distinguish them for the purpose of government. By way of illustration, the state essentializes "Chineseness" in Singapore as much as "Malayness" in Malaysia and "Javaneseness" in Indonesia. To totalize is to apply the classification to as many of the inhabitants as possible in order to facilitate government. In this way, the nation-state homogenizes, categorizes, and absorbs in order to eliminate ambiguity (Bauman, 1990: 165–166). Ethno-nationalism in Southeast Asia has led to the conceptualization of the Chinese as the other. For example, Thai nationalism and its push to build a nation state made it necessary to define "Thainess". The strategy to define "Thainess" was by identifying what "otherness" was. Similarly, there was an attempt in various Southeast Asian countries to curtail the economic influence of the Chinese. The policies of indigenization and assimilation forced the Chinese to develop various strategies, including redefining their own ethnicities to cope with ethnic discrimination.

Because markers of identity such as language, names and the celebration of cultural festivals play a big part in the identification with Chinese ethnicity across the region, these become variables with which state policy has been used to manage the Chinese communities. Through education policies, states have been able to encourage, control or restrict the development of Chinese vernacular schools – thus having a strong impact on cultural transference and the proliferation of the use of the Chinese language. The availability of Chinese language schools in Vietnam, for example, serve not as a replacement, but rather as a supplement to national schools, thus allowing some levels of cultural freedom without compromising the state-wide nationalizing project. This is in comparison to Indonesia during the Suharto era where Chinese schools were banned, and where the rigid assimilationist policies encouraged the changing of Chinese names to Indonesian ones. In fact, Indonesia during this period serves as a distinct example of one of the greatest levels of state ethnic control over the Chinese, where in addition to education and naming policies, even the public celebration of cultural festivals such as Chinese New Year were prohibited.

These assimilationist policies may be contrasted with the popularity of multiracial policies as present in the Singaporean case. What is of interest in this example, however, is that Chineseness has nonetheless developed across time in Singapore, varying with changes of state policy despite its proclamation of its broad adherence

to multiracialism. Indeed, while the ethnic Chinese community used to be divided based on dialect, locality and politics, "they are now divided by language, education and religion" (Tong and Chan, 2001: 18). On top of this, state policies over the past decades have often been vacillating between decreasing the significance of Chineseness in the 1960s and 1970s and promoting Chinese values such as through the adoption of Confucian ethics in politics in the 1990s. Eugene Tan traces this "waxing and waning of Chineseness" (Tan, 2003: 752), noting the recent rise in the promotion of the Chinese identity through language and culture, the creation of Chinese cultural elites and the "creeping Chineseness in Singapore's political discourse" (ibid: 763). In particular, Chinese identity is now most markedly expressed through its economic dimension, owing to the perceived benefits of identifying with China, the rising economic superpower.

Within this state conception of Chineseness in Southeast Asia, there has been a general treatment of the Chinese as the "Other", again with the exception of Singapore where the Chinese form the majority of the population and occupy most of the top government positions. This "Othering" of the Chinese may take a formal structure through institutional discrimination, as in the Malaysian case of affirmative action for the Malay majority, or a cultural form where it is cast as an "Other" culture in comparison to the dominant culture, as in the case of Indonesia or Vietnam. It is in the context of such "Othering" practices that the concept of a Chinese diasporic community becomes relevant. Again, in Singapore this notion of a diaspora loses its meaning since the Chinese have successfully become part of the dominant national culture in the country. In most of the other countries in Southeast Asia, ethnic identity has been cast in light of the dominant cultures of society. However, in Southeast Asian societies, we see resistances to the hegemony of the state.

As the various chapters will show, various strategies, including the privatization of ethnicity, moving from the public to the private sphere, as well as the reinvention of groupness or alternative modes of community, are used to resist the state. In Vietnam, despite the general integration to Vietnamese culture especially in the form of language, the Chinese still remain a distinct community, though this too is changing with the new generations of Chinese. Regardless of the end-result, the general "Othering" of the Chinese has had a profound impact on the existence of the Chinese as a distinct community in the different countries in Southeast Asia.

Chinese identity and community in Southeast Asia are, to a degree, conditioned by their interactions with members of the host societies as well as the policies of the state. The book, in each chapter, traces the historical developments of the Chinese in each of the Southeast Asian countries, particularly in relations to state polices towards the Chinese and how they react, adapt, and strategize their identity and community in relations to these policies. The emphasis on a historical treatment is critical as too often, studies on the Chinese in Southeast Asia tended to treat the Chinese not only as a homogenized group, but also ahistorically. The different chapters show how, in different historical moments, there are differential treatments of the Chinese. The historical contexts condition the construction of Chinese identity and community in contemporary Southeast Asia.

1.3 Country Surveys

Having laid out the broad conceptual and empirical focus of the book, the next section will briefly outline the key arguments and findings on the Chinese in the various countries of Southeast Asia.

1.3.1 Rethinking Assimilation and Chineseness in Thailand

The dominant discourse on the Chinese in Thailand is one where the Chinese, peacefully and willingly, assimilate into Thai society. This is due in part to the influential work of G.W. Skinner (1963) and later scholars (Amyot, 1972; Ossapan, 1979) who argue that a majority of the descendants of Chinese immigrants in each generation merge with the Thai society.

This chapter argues that Skinner has overestimated the powers of assimilation and that the data gathered from contemporary Thailand show that the Chinese continue to exist as a separate community. Moreover, assimilation cannot be seen as a straight line, unilineal process of the Chinese becoming Thai. Rather, it is a two way process that in the long run will leave the Chinese with something Thai, and the Thai with something Chinese. The study of the Chinese in contemporary Thailand clearly demonstrates that we have to view ethnic identity as center-peripheral identity. Most Chinese in Thailand emphasize the importance of primordial ideas, such as descent and bloodline in defining their ethnic identity. However, at the fringes of ethnic boundaries, especially in the public spaces, where transactions occur between the Chinese and the Thais, the instrumental use of ethnicity emerges.

The Chinese in Thailand are bilingual, using Thai in certain social situations, while adopting the Chinese language in others, particularly within the home and in dealings with other Chinese. Most Chinese in Thailand today adopt Thai values, speak Thai, go to Thai schools, join Thai associations and celebrate Thai festivals. At the same time, they also speak Chinese, attend Chinese classes, join Chinese associations, and worship their ancestors, maintaining their identity and differentiating themselves from the Thais. The Chinese in Thailand cross ethnic boundaries, and at the same time, maintain a bicultural layered identity.

1.3.2 One Face, Many Masks: The Chinese in Singapore

As the title suggests, the Chinese in Singapore, at one level, maintains a very primordial sense of ethnic identity; using ascriptive elements to describe and account for their Chineseness. Regardless of age, birthplace, religion, language or education, birth and bloodline are used as the most important criteria for ethnic identification. There is a sense of singularity in defining Chinese ethnicity. Thus, one face. At another level, however, what are considered cultural markers of ethnicity, such as

language, education and religion, are contested terrains. For example, Chinese educated Chinese and English educated Chinese in Singapore, once the first principle of ethnicity is satisfied, have very different conceptions of what constitute the cultural markers of Chinese identity; many masks. Chinese educated Chinese tend to emphasize the importance of language, culture and traditions; the English educated Chinese tend to under-emphasize the role of language and focus on markers such as hair and skin color.

In Singapore, what used to be Chinese community has largely disappeared. In the past, the Chinese tended to live in close-knit and clearly marked out territorial areas. However, in modern day Singapore, territoriality, language and religion no longer serve as markers of ethnicity for all Chinese. Rather, these factors have become part of a contested discourse in defining ethnicity, resulting in great diversity, multiplicity and heterogeneity in conceptions of being Chinese. Identity becomes more individualized, personalized, and subjectivized. There is a loss of place and the Chinese in Singapore has experienced a closer identification with the family and family history rather than with the community or community organizations.

1.3.3 *"Sama Makan tak Sama Makan": The Chinese in Malaysia*

The title, literally, to eat or not eat together, is a reflection of, in a particular context, certain aspects of a culture which are appropriated as a marker of ethnic identity. Malaysia is a multi-ethnic society where the dominant population comprises of Muslims, with proscriptions on the eating of pork. Food becomes the critical marker of identity. In the same vein, religion becomes an important symbol, a Malay is Malay because he is Muslim, a Chinese is not. Like the Chinese in Thailand and Singapore, the Chinese in Malaysia describe their Chineseness in ascriptive terms. Birth and bloodline, hair and eye color are often invoked in self identification. This clearly delineated boundary is seen in the attitudes toward intermarriage. The intermarriage rate, particularly between the Chinese and Malays, is very low, and informants consider intermarriage to be undesirable and unacceptable. In fact, many Chinese informants maintain that children of mixed marriages cannot be considered Chinese. Barth suggests that ethnic boundaries, rather than the intrinsic culture with a group, are a key feature of ethnic identification. In Malaysia, food consumption as a cultural symbol delineates social boundaries between ethnic groups, and is used for boundary maintenance.

Most studies on ethnic relations in Malaysia tend to focus on the macro level, influenced by broad political issues involving the state and policies towards ethnic groups. The chapter suggests that such an analysis ignores individuals' subjective understanding of their identity, and how such an identity is negotiated in the discourses of everyday life. Analyzing ethnic identity and ethnic relations from both a macro and micro level, differential interactional patterns come to light and a more nuanced understanding of ethnic relations between the Chinese and the Malays in Malaysian society is possible.

1.3.4 Between a Rock and a Hard Place: The Chinese in Indonesia

Why is it that the Chinese are continuously being targeted by their fellow Indonesians and made scapegoats whenever there are problems, whether economic, political, or social, in the country? The Chinese are viewed as a separate and "special" ethnic group, although there are over three hundred other ethnic groups that make up the Indonesian state. The state, during the Suharto regime, tried to systematically erase all markers of Chinese identity. Chinese schools, Chinese organizations, Chinese newspapers, Chinese media, and Chinese cultural festivals were either banned or restricted. Given this, what markers do the Chinese use to define their identity? Is there a Chinese community in Indonesia today?

The chapter argues that despite the attempts to erase Chineseness, most Chinese in Indonesia today continue to regard themselves as Chinese. However, even those that choose to identify themselves as Indonesians, with some trying to assimilate into Indonesian society, they are not allowed to do so. After years of dealing with discrimination, the Chinese have learnt to be flexible in negotiating their ethnic identity in everyday life, compartmentalizing their public and private expressions of identity. The multiple Chinese identities are also evident when one analyzes the regional and local differences between various groups of Chinese within the Indonesian archipelago; different localities have very different ideas of Chineseness and Indonesian-ness, due to the varied influences and cultures which they are exposed to. While bloodline and descent are often used to define ethnicity, there is less agreement on the cultural markers of ethnicity. Chineseness could not be defined concretely in terms of language, speech groups, name, traditions, religion or appearance. Finally, the chapter argues that what is left of a community is an imagined community. It can be termed "economic ethnicity", where identification with other Chinese is based on economic networks, strategically advantageous, in certain situations, to facilitate economic survival for the Chinese in Indonesia.

1.3.5 Half Chinese or Three Quarters Chinese: The Chinese in Burma

Compared to the Chinese in other Southeast Asian countries, very little is known about the Chinese in Burma, even though, population-wise, there are over a million of them. Based on intensive fieldwork, the data suggest that although on the surface, many Chinese have adopted Burmese names, language and dress; the Chinese remain a distinct community in Burma. Despite the Myanmarfication policies of the state, the ethnic Chinese have not been assimilated into Burmese society and primordial attributes such as race and descent are still used as a means of ethnic differentiation.

Such primary markers constitute a "core" dimension in boundary formation as they are an easily visible and unambiguous basis for in-group identification. However, there is also a process of intra-ethnic group differentiation. In inter group

identification, primordial characteristics are invoked, in intra-group identity, cultural attributes come into play. Determining an individual's degree of Chineseness, or quantifying the extent to which an individual has resisted assimilation into Burmese society can be graded on a scale comprising the four main cultural attributes including practicing the Chinese customs and traditions, being knowledgeable of the importance of the traditions, speaking the Chinese language and having a Chinese name. Cultural attributes which are negotiable in the process of constructing inter-ethnic group boundaries become crucial elements when dealing with intra-ethnic group differentiation.

The projection of the Chinese as the "other" and the stigma attached to the ethnic Chinese identity has created a situation of ambivalence, fragmentation and outright discrimination. Therefore among the Chinese in Burma there has been an emphasis on cultural plurality as the basis for cohesiveness of Burmese society and the peaceful co-existence of the various ethnic groups.

1.3.6 A Love-Hate Relationship: The Chinese in Vietnam

Among all Southeast Asian countries, Vietnam is unique in that it is the only state that was under direct rule by the Chinese; the period of colonization lasted for almost a thousand years. This clearly will have an impact on the Chinese migrants in Vietnam. There seems, based on the fieldwork, an almost love-hate relationship between the Chinese and the Vietnamese. Like in other Southeast Asian countries, the Chinese in Vietnam more readily identify with the primordialist understanding of ethnic identity; most consider themselves Chinese because their ancestors were from China, and from the seemingly obvious fact that they were born into a Chinese family.

Marriage seems to take on a primary role in ethnic identification, occupying both a stabilizing and a destabilizing position. Marriage within the Chinese community is seen as one of the sites of expression for Chinese ethnic identity; as one of the ways in which Chinese traditions and culture is upheld. There is a high degree of resistance to intermarriage with the Vietnamese. Intermarriage is viewed as "mixing," therefore contributing to a form of contamination to the purity of one's Chineseness.

Like the Chinese in the Philippines, there is a generational divide. There is a general sentiment that the older generation Chinese guard their Chinese identity more closely, and to insist more on the continued adherence to certain Chinese customs, traditions and practices and a strong affinity to the Chinese community. To them, the younger generations are becoming less and less Chinese as a result of inter-mixing with the Vietnamese. Younger Chinese seem to be more open-minded and more accepting of Vietnamese culture. However, most of these younger Chinese still claim, when asked what their ethnicity is, that they are Chinese, or at most, will differentiate between ethnicity and nationality, calling themselves, Vietnamese Chinese.

1.3.7 Hybridization and Chineseness in the Philippines

In some ways, the Chinese in the Philippines exhibit characteristics that are different when compared to the Chinese in other Southeast Asian countries. For example, many of the Chinese have converted to Christianity. Also, unlike many Southeast Asian countries, such as Malaysia and Indonesia, the Chinese do not have to contend with overt ethnic discrimination by the state. The policy of mass naturalization of Chinese has encouraged them to become rooted to the Philippines and many studies argue that the Chinese in Philippines are now well integrated in Filipino society. However, a more nuanced understanding of the Chinese identity and ethnic relations show that many remain essentially Chinese. To them, bloodline and lineage serve as essential markers of ethnic identity.

However, years of generally peaceful co-existence of the Chinese in Filipino society has resulted in a degree of acculturation. In the realm of religion for example, there is an intermixing of traditional Chinese Taoist and Buddhist practices with Christian beliefs and rituals. The fieldwork seems to indicate that many of these Chinese are practicing Christians, attending mass or Sunday service. Yet, many of these same people tend to engage in traditional Chinese "customs", such as ancestor worship, burning of joss sticks, and observing the Qing Ming Festival. In the home, one often find a traditional Chinese altar, with images of spirits and ancestors, and the requisite Chinese ritual paraphernalia, together with images of Mother Mary and other Christian images and photos.

1.4 Research Methodology

This book is based on primary data using qualitative fieldwork methods in the various countries of Southeast Asia. Field trips, each lasting from ten days to a month were made to each of the countries included in the study. For example, seven fieldtrips were made to Thailand, in 1984, 1989, 1991, 2000, 2004, 2007, and 2008. Similarly, five field research trips were made to Myanmar, in 2001, 2002, 2004, and 2006. The fieldwork for Singapore was carried out in 1992 and 1993, and again in 2005. Five fieldtrips were made to Indonesia in 2002, 2005, and 2006, with two additional trips in 2007 and 2008. For Vietnam, several field research trips were made in 2005, 2006, and recently six field trips in 2007 and 2008. The data for the Philippines were collected in 1998, 2006, with three additional trips in 2007, and two more in 2008.

In each of these trips, the data was collected based on in-depth interviews with informants. Two major interview methods were used: focused open-ended, semi-structured interviews guided by an interview schedule; and casual interview-like "everyday life" conversations during the fieldwork. The interview schedule consisted of questions pertaining to, among other things, use of language(s), personal and family life histories, children's schooling and education, ethnic prejudice and social contacts between groups, and especially, meanings of being Chinese.

In addition to personal interviews, the fieldwork included visits to and observations of community organizations, including temples, clan associations, Chambers of Commerce, and schools. Together with interviews with "everyday" informants, there were also interviews carried out with community leaders, as well as Chinese businessmen. Though time consuming and tedious, with fieldwork in a large number of Southeast Asian countries, each speaking different indigenous languages, it was felt that the collection of primary data is critical for this study, in order to understand the personal and social processes of identity formation and the construction of the Chinese community.

The interviews were conducted in English, Mandarin, and a variety of dialects used among the Chinese in Southeast Asian countries. For example, in Thailand, many of the interviews were carried out in Teochew, the dominant dialect used in Thailand. In Vietnam, on the other hand, I tended to use Cantonese and Hokkien, the common dialects used in this country. In Indonesia, it is more prevalent to use the Hokkien dialect, while Cantonese is the lingua franca among many Chinese in Malaysia. Field notes were made during and after the interviews, which generally lasted from half an hour to three hours, with most of them averaging an hour and a half. In each of the countries, interviews were carried out with between 80 and 100 Chinese informants. In addition to the Chinese informants, interviews were also conducted with a select number of the indigenous population, to study the host societies' perception of the Chinese migrants, ethnic perception, stereotypes and discrimination. In each of these countries, an interpreter was used for interviews with informants who do not speak Chinese and during interviews with members of the host societies.

While making no claim to randomness, a whole range of informants were selected for the interviews. For example, in terms of occupations, interviews were carried out with Chinese businessmen, clan leaders, taxi drivers, civil servants, students, housewives, and blue collar workers. Visits were also made to the homes of Chinese families, to allow for the observation of parent child and between-generations interactions. Similarly, the study attempted to stratify the informants along age lines, with interviews with students in the 18–25 age range, to grandparents who were in their sixties and seventies. This is to ensure that there is a good representation of views across generations.

In addition to the in-depth focused interviews, the study drew on secondary and archival materials. In each of the country, visits were made to the archives to look at historical materials and official documents. For example, in Thailand, the library of Chulalongkorn University was particularly useful, housing many valuable and rich materials on the subject of inquiry. Similarly, in Myanmar, visits were made to the National Archives, which houses an array of historical documents, going back to the Colonial period and the pre-colonial Burmese kingdoms. Interpreters were engaged to translate the documents in the indigenous languages. In addition to the archives, issues of newspapers, archival records of clan associations and Chinese schools were useful, providing secondary data, especially of the history of the Chinese in the various Southeast Asian countries. For the Singapore chapter, the interviews were supplemented by a survey of 1025 Chinese conducted in 1989.

Notes

1. The task of researching and writing a book is long and arduous and required the support of a large number of people. First and foremost, I would like to thank my teachers, particularly the late Professor A. Thomas Kirsch, and the late Professor Milton L. Barnett, who not only spur my initial interest in this topic, but were always there to provide new insights and ideas as I went about reading and collecting primary material for the book. More than being teachers, they regarded me as a friend. I am forever grateful for their concern, advice, and friendship. As this book is based on primary field data collected in each of the Southeast Asian countries, I would like to acknowledge the help, in both data collection and research, of my research assistants. In particular, Ms. Elaine Wong was especially helpful in searching for relevant historical materials as well as archival research. Also, several research assistants helped in the interviews and collection of data, including Daniel Soon (Myanmar and Indonesia), Daniel Tham (Vietnam and Indonesia), Nafis Mohammad (Myanmar), Enrique Leviste (Philippines), and Helen Goh (Malaysia). I am grateful for their assistance. I would also like to register my appreciation to a number of my colleagues who read earlier drafts of the various chapters and provided excellent feedback and comments on how to improve the manuscript. They include Pattana Kitiarsa (Thailand), Daniel Goh (Philippines), Lian Kwen Fee and Tan Chee Beng (Malaysia), Vedi Hediz (Indonesia), Maitrii Aung-Thwin (Myanmar) and Bruce Lockhart (Vietnam).
2. This book covers all the countries in ASEAN, except Laos, Cambodia, and Brunei. The main reasons for excluding these countries are that the population of Chinese migrants in these countries is very small. For example Ng (2006) estimated that there are only 5300 Chinese in Laos. Rossetti (1997) gave a slightly higher figure of 10,000. In Cambodia, Suryadinata estimated that there are only about 109,000 Chinese. Niew (2006) suggests that there are only 37,600 Chinese in Brunei, as well as the constraints of time and space. Even so, I am presently carrying out fieldwork on the Chinese in these countries. These will be published subsequently.
3. A comprehensive review and critique of Skinner's ideas can be found in Chapter 2 of this book, in the discussion on the Chinese in Thailand.
4. A major reason surrounding the seeming confusion and misappropriation of the use of the terms "ethnicity" and "ethnic identity" is the failure to find a reasonable consensus as to "what the central concepts of ethnicity signify or how they should be used" (Hutchinson and Smith, 1996: 15). Some argue that "[e]thnicity seems to be a new term" (Glazer and Moynihan, 1975: 1), while others say that it is a "collection of rather simplistic. . .statements about boundaries, otherness . . . and . . . identity. . ." (Banks, 1996: 190). Others argue that the concept itself is "so vague, and so variously used. . .that its definition [is] only stipulative. . ." (Cohen, 1985: 107) – that it is "much more complex than earlier analyses allowed" (Epstein, 1978: 5), while others claim that ethnicity is part of the "identity formation process that is produced by and subordinated to nationalist programs and plans" (Williams, 1989: 439). Yet some maintain that despite its confusion, ethnic identity "is imperative . . . [and] cannot be temporarily set aside by other definitions of the situation" (Barth, 1969: 17). Still others deem that both "ethnicity and race (in the social sense) are. . .extensions of the idiom of kinship. . .and [they] are to be understood as an extended . . . form of kin selection" (van den Berghe, 1978: 403). One can continuously state and (re)evaluate the various arguments and counterarguments for and against the definition and its uses, but for the purposes of this book, we need only confine ourselves to more specific issues – that is, the various positions that have traditionally been propounded and adopted by scholars of ethnicity.
5. More recent developments in primordialist theories can be found in Eller and Coughlan's (1993) work, which stresses that primordiality contains "three distinct ideas: apriority, . . .ineffability, . . .and affectivity" (Anderson, 2001: 211).
6. Another strain of the situational approach are the ethno-symbolists, most notably Anthony Smith, who argues that myths and symbols play a vital role in unifying populations regardless of their location, thus ensuring that there is continuity over time. Ethno-symbologists

are concerned with the "persistence, change, and resurgence of *ethnies*, and with the role of the ethnic past or pasts in shaping present cultural communities" (Hutchinson and Smith, 1996: 8). Ethno-symbolic theorists thus see a strong link between nations and ethnic identities. This approach is often criticized by modernist theorists (such as Ernest Gellner, John Breuilly and Benedict Anderson), who argue that ethnic groups are pre-political and pre-modern units that cannot be transposed onto modernity. Myths and memories may underpin a collective *belief* in nation formation, but they do not stretch as far back in time as Smith and other ethno-symbolists argue.

7. Edward Spicer (1971) offered an oppositional model of ethnic theory that synthesized both the primordial and situational approaches. He argues that ethnic differences can persist because of inter-ethnic contact, especially if the contact is one of opposition. The oppositional approach therefore places ethnicity along a continuum of degree of ethnic solidarity, where the degree of an ethnic group's identity will vary in direct proportion to the amount of opposition encountered by the group. Hence, primordialism need not be seen as a single, "self-contained entelechy" by itself, but is in fact "causally tied to the circumstantial variable of opposition, while retaining its influence on ethnic attachments" (see Scott, 1990: 157–163).

8. This will be elaborated on later when discussing economic identity.

9. See Chapter 6 on the Chinese in Burma, and Chapter 8 on the Chinese in the Philippines, for instance.

10. I am grateful to the anonymous reviewer for suggesting the use of the term, "layered" identity.

11. The core of the analysis then is on the ways in which members of an ethnic group choose their ethnic identity in their daily interactions with others, in view of the *resources* or options that they are presented with. Ivan Light (1988, 1994, 1999) has used this theory extensively in his analysis of immigrant entrepreneurs. According to him, there has not been enough attention paid to the "demand-side" of ethnic entrepreneurship, and the "economic environment in which immigrant entrepreneurs function" (1988: 1). Instead, an interactive approach that takes into account both the supply-side (that is, the immigrants' internal ethnic and class resources) and the demand-side (the immigrant entrepreneurs' economic niche) so that a more holistic view can be ascertained.

Chapter 2
Rethinking Assimilation and Chineseness in Thailand

2.1 Introduction

Existing research literature on the Chinese in Thailand seems to suggest that the Chinese bear more attributes of social integration and assimilation into Thai society than of conflict.[1] Skinner (1963: 1), for example, argues that a majority of the descendants of Chinese immigrants in each generation merge with Thai society and become indistinguishable from the indigenous population to the extent that fourth generation Chinese are practically non-existent. Similarly, Amyot (1972) and Ossapan (1979) suggest that the lack of formal Chinese education has led to the assimilation of the Chinese in Thailand. Other writers on the subject (see Wongswadiwat, 1973; Yuesin, 1984) have corroborated these generalized statements on the Chinese in Thailand.

If they are right, and assimilation is taking place with regularity, then the Chinese cannot survive as "Chinese" in Thailand. The gates of immigration have been closed since 1949. It follows that the Chinese minority will be eroded away and, in two or three generations, there should be no ethnic Chinese community in Thailand. Yet, based on my fieldwork, it is clear that there are still a substantial number of Chinese in Thailand. Punyodyana (1976: 57) suggests that the ethnic Chinese form one tenth of the Thai population, or close to four million persons, and China born residents of Thailand who are aliens number nearly half a million. Similarly, Szanton-Blanc (1983), based on ethnographic data collected in Sri Racha, found that many Chinese still maintain themselves as sociologically distinct segments, and intermarriage between the Chinese and Thai is not as strong as previously suggested.

This chapter argues that Skinner has overemphasized the powers of the forces of assimilation which, in a sense, has colored his perception of the Chinese in Thailand. It will show that instead of assimilation, the Chinese in Thailand, in fact, maintain a separate identity from the Thais. At the same time, however, given the need to live as a minority in a society with a large Thai host population, the Chinese have adopted a series of strategies to cope with the realities of everyday life in Thailand. These include the development of bilingualism and bicultural education, complementarities in the socio-economic arena and occupational differentiations, as well as using religion and traditions to maintain a separate and distinct Chinese identity. Conceptually, it raises questions about the applicability of assimilation

theory, which typically operates as a one way unilineal process, in the direction of the dominant group. Instead, the chapter argues that we have to understand Chinese ethnic identity as both primordial and situational. At the core, the Chinese maintain and affirm, using phenotypical and genotypical markers, an expressive identity. This is seen as immutable, maintaining boundaries and ensuring group cohesion. At the periphery, in the public sphere, and in the transactions with the Thais, ethnicity identity is more negotiable, and negotiated. There is an instrumental use of ethnicity, changeable and situationally sensitive.

2.2 History of the Chinese in Thailand

In order to understand the situation of the Chinese in contemporary Thailand, it is important to trace the historical relationship between the Chinese and the Thais. The ties between China and Siam goes back a long way. As far back as A.D. 650, emissaries were sent by the Thai king to the Chinese emperor in the Tang dynasty. For many centuries, China regarded Siam as a vassal state and demanded tributes from it. Although there is a political relationship, the main nature of the relationship between the two states was essentially commercial. Chinese annals record an early voyage made by a Chinese ship to the land of the Thai in A.D. 608. From 1281 to 1400, the Thai sent tributes to China. Presumably the ships which carried the tribute also carried some commercial cargo (Landon, 1941: 5). According to Siamese tradition, King Ramkamhaeng himself visited Peking and returned with some Chinese artisans to set up pottery production in 1300 (Jiang, 1966: 40).

By the seventeenth century, the Chinese had already achieved economic importance in Siam through the thriving trade with China. The Chinese were the most important foreign traders and enjoyed full privileges as Siamese themselves. In 1687, a Frenchman La Loubere who visited Siam estimated that there were about 3000 Chinese living there. These early Chinese settlers included sea-going merchants, political refugees, soldiers and a large proportion of poor peasants. Chinese labor was often preferred by the Siamese kings for construction projects because they were deemed to be more efficient than the Siamese corvee labor (Jiang, 1966: 43–5). The position of the Chinese improved in the last half of the eighteenth century when Taksin, a descendent of a Chinese father and Thai mother, became King, and ruled for fourteen years until 1782. While he was in power, Taksin encouraged the migration of Chinese from his father's native land, which was a Teochiu speaking area in Southeastern China. Taksin was later ousted by his half Chinese son-in-law who started the present Chakri dynasty, Rama I (Hamilton and Waters, 1997: 263).

2.2.1 Perception of the Early Chinese Immigrants

During the reign of Rama I, the tributary trade with China continued unabated. A large proportion of the revenue in Thailand was derived from the royal trading monopolies. Right up to the middle of the nineteenth century, the Siamese kings

acted as merchants and were engaged in the profitable trade, the most important of which was with China. The Thai kings were dependent on Chinese commercial, financial and maritime skills. After 1630, the king's factors, warehousemen, accountants, supercargoes and sailors were almost exclusively Chinese (Skinner, 1957a: 240).

Many Chinese merchants also made their fortune by obtaining from the king's monopolies over the country's products, such as tobacco, timber, fisheries and mining, which were farmed out to various officials and Chinese merchants. There were many opportunities for Chinese businesses in Siam, who were not subjected to legal restrictions and were free to enter into trade and commerce, to clear the land and grow crops, to exploit the mines and to establish their homes in Siam. The Chinese managed to obtain such a privileged position because they were useful to the Siamese court and were important in generating wealth for the country. Historically, the Thai monarchs pursued a policy of attracting Chinese to Siam by ennobling prominent Chinese immigrants and drawing them into the fold of the Thai elite.

In a statement made in 1907, King Chulalongkorn clearly pointed out that the monarchy regarded the Chinese in Siam "not as foreigners by as one of the component parts of the kingdom" (quoted in Skinner, 1957a: 242). Before the advent of the modern nation state, the traditional Siamese kingdom was a multi-ethnic state in which a large number of Lao, Khmer, Malays, Mon, Thawai, Yuan, Persians, Portuguese and Chinese mingled with the dominant Thai population as common subjects of the Siamese King (Tejapira, 2001: 52).

The degree of a certain ethnic group's integration into Thai society was not determined by their cultural assimilation into Thai society but rather their political assimilation into the *phrai* (serf) system of the state. Thai society divided people into two basic categories: *nai* (masters) who controlled the manpower and the *phrai* (serfs) who were members of the lower stratum of society. Thus the Chinese who served as either *nai* or *phrai* were not perceived as foreigners. The Chinese *phrai* would have their wrists tattooed, registered with a *nai*, and performed corvee labor. Officially these Chinese were called *Jin phrai* and were allowed to wear their pigtails and Qing dress. Their distinctive appearance set them apart physically from the other *phrai* and to Skinner (1957b); the pigtail signified non-assimilated Chinese-ness in Siam.[2]

Tejapira (2001: 53) rejects Skinner's assumption that the pigtail represented Chinese-ness and argued that as far as the Chakri state was concerned, the Chinese *phrai* were Thai despite their wearing of pigtails. Although some of the Chinese probably did see pigtails as a symbol of their Chinese-ness, as far as the state was concerned, the Chinese who had been tattooed on the wrist and registered with a *nai* were neither considered Chinese nor treated as such. In addition, pigtails were not necessarily a sign of Chineseness because there were non-Chinese males who wore pigtails even though they did not consider themselves Chinese at all. These people were called *Jin plaeng*, that is, transformed or "fake" Chinese and were a result of opium addiction. The Siamese monarchs banned opium from 1360. However, under the state regulations, the Chinese were allowed to smoke opium freely but not the

other Thai subjects (Tejapira, 2001: 55). For the non-Chinese opium addicts who could not be rehabilitated, the King allowed them to smoke opium if they changed their outward appearance to resemble the Chinese. They had to wear their hair in a pigtail, register with a local official, wear an official wrist tag and pay a special, higher tax (Tejapira, 2001: 58). Thus this category of pigtail wearers had nothing to do with Chinese ethnicity but was based on opium addiction.

The point regarding pig-tails and how they are identified as being Chinese markers when in fact they do not necessarily mean that demonstrates two important issues which will be elaborated on in this chapter. One is the issue of what represents Chineseness in Thai society. As I will show, both the Chinese and Thais have different conceptions of what are the markers of Chinese and Thai identity, and the conception of the "other". Second, these supposed markers are then used as a basis for stereotyping and ethnic discrimination between the Chinese and the Thais which persist till today.

2.2.2 Rapid Expansion of the Chinese Community in the Nineteenth Century

The nineteenth century saw an influx of Chinese. By 1884, there were an estimated 1.5 million Chinese out of a total population of 5.9 million. In fact, in Bangkok, the Chinese population was double that of the Siamese. By the time of the first census taken in 1919, the Chinese were the largest minority group in Siam. The turning point for the large scale migration of Chinese had come after the Bowring treaty of 1855. From the late seventeenth century, Thailand's monarchs had closed off commercial trade with the Europeans because of their fear of Western domination. However in 1855 Sir John Bowring managed to negotiate a treaty which gave the West virtually unrestricted trade with Thailand (Coughlin, 1960: 16). As a result, there was an increased demand for Chinese labor with the opening of western business houses and in mines and plantations. Other types of employment which attracted the migrants included unskilled labor and craftsmen for infrastructural development of road, railways and canals throughout the country.

The Chinese immigrants also became useful middlemen between the European import and export traders and the local population. Although both the Chinese and the Westerners were involved in commerce, there was little competition between the two as they enjoyed a symbiotic relationship. Often, the European companies exported manufactured goods to Thailand but depended on the Chinese traders to market and distribute the goods to the local population. The Chinese dominance in the retail trade led Coughlin (1960: 2) to comment that virtually any article bought or sold in Thailand passed through the hands of one or more Chinese middlemen.

Despite the rapid expansion of the Chinese immigrant community, the Siamese did not seem overly concerned about the numbers. The Thais believed that the ethnic Chinese minority was in no position to put up a resistance against Thai authority. Moreover, the involvement of the Chinese in business and commerce did not arouse

resentment of the average Thai native because he had little interest in such activities himself (Dibble 1979: 151). Jiang (1966: 39) attributes the Chinese domination of both the domestic and foreign trade for over a hundred years to the attitude of the Thais who have always preferred agriculture and government service to trade. As will be seen in the later part of this chapter, this perception of the Chinese as businessmen as well as occupational stereotypes persist till today.

2.2.3 The Character of the Chinese Society

By the beginning of the twentieth century, the Chinese community in Thailand was well established. Many Chinese arrived in Thailand in the 1920s, attracted by the economic boom. This period also coincided with the civil unrest and natural disasters which struck China. During that period, more than 35,000 Chinese arrived annually in Thailand and by the 1950s at least half of the China-born Chinese there had arrived between 1928 and 1931. Still there were few restrictions placed on immigration until 1947 when the government imposed an annual quota of 10,000. The Chinese who arrived in Thailand were a diverse group and differed in the provinces of origin, spoken dialects, customs and traditions. The Teochew speakers accounted for slightly more than half of the Chinese migrants. In 1950, the Hakkas comprised 16% and the Hainanese 12%. The Cantonese and Hokkien made up 7% of the Chinese population while the remaining 2% was divided among several groups (Thomson, 1993: 400).[3]

2.2.4 The Chinese as the Other

The rapid economic advancement brought about by free trade and deliberate modernization decreed by the monarchy brought the revenue farms and Chinese secret society leaders to the peak of their power. These secret societies were gradually replaced by legitimate, formally organized Chinese associations. These included surname associations, regional or dialect group associations, occupational associations and charitable organizations. According to Coughlin (1960: 33), they "direct the life of the community". The associations helped the competitiveness of businesses, mediated disputes, provided a social security network and acted as intermediaries between individuals and the government. They established schools, clinics, temples, cemeteries, recreational facilities and hospitals. The first major community-wide organization was the Tien Hua Hospital which was set up between 1904 and 1906. The hospital had a board of directors which was constitutionally selected to ensure speech group representation (Skinner, 1958: 12). As the chapter will elaborate later, these associations continue to play an important role in the lives and maintenance of Chinese identity in present day Thailand.

By the early twentieth century, the Chinese society became a community in its own right. It had its own newspapers, supported viable community-wide business

and social welfare organizations and had influential leaders who could speak up for the Chinese as a whole. It was also around this time that the overseas Chinese became more conscious of their identity as a Chinese ethnic minority. The first nationalist stimulus came from China, by Sun Yat-sen and other nationalists, in the early twentieth century. There was a strong move to stress a Chinese identity, stimulated by the Chinese Nationality Law of 1909 which gave *jus sanguinis* citizenship to all overseas Chinese and by the 1911 Chinese revolution (Reid, 1997: 52). This made the overseas Chinese more conscious of their homeland and aroused in them a sense of Chinese nationalism (Dibble, 1979: 154).

In 1910, in an unusual show of unity, the Chinese business community decided to stage a general strike in protest against a new tax law in Bangkok. As a result, life in Bangkok came to a halt as most of the shops were closed. Riots broke out but were quickly suppressed. The businesses re-opened soon after but this could not repair the damage done to the relationship between the Chinese and the Siamese. The Siamese came to realize that a large extent of their country's commerce was completely out of their control as it was in the hands of an alien community. There was now a growing awareness of the differences between a "Chinese" and "Siamese", with the unpleasant connotations of racism (Dibble, 1979: 155).

The racial consciousness between the Thai and the Chinese was further provoked in 1914, when King Vajiravudh (Rama VI) published a pamphlet entitled *The Jews of the East*. The pamphlet was very critical of the ethnic Chinese in the Kingdom and portrayed them as inassimilable, opportunistic, two faced, treacherous, secretive, rebellious, Mammon worshippers and economic parasites (Tejapira, 2001: 61). The pamphlet alleged that they had no sense of loyalty towards Thailand but viewed the country simply as a place to make a large fortune which they subsequently remitted to China (Jiang, 1966: 56). From that period, the stirrings of anti-Chinese feeling took root as Thai nationalism gained momentum. The perception that they were of an "other" race disqualified the Chinese of any share in a Thai-monopolized nation-state (Tejapira, 2001: 62).

King Rama's VI view of the Chinese was significantly different from those of his predecessors, Rama IV and Rama V. To the earlier kings, the Chinese were one ethnic group among the multi-ethnic members of their Kingdom. Their ethnicity or outward appearance (for example the wearing of pigtails and Chinese dress) did not mark them as different in terms of their access to royal protection. However, King Rama VI began to see the Chinese as an alien minority within the recently conceived Thai nation (Tejapira, 2001: 61). Ironically the difference in ethnicity became politicized even though the Chinese had begun to cut off their pigtails in the 1911 revolution.

Rama VI began a campaign to rouse feelings of nationalism by pointing out the short-comings and potential of the Thai people and comparing them to the Chinese. One aspect of the Thai nationalism which came into prominence at that period was an ethnocentrism which emphasized the differences between the Chinese and the Thai (Skinner, 1957a: 243). According to Burusratanaphand (2001: 77), the consciousness of such differences was indispensable to the state's ability to maintain a sense of Thai identity. Thai culture and identity was not easy to define since

Siam comprised different regions and encompassed people who had different traditional attitudes, languages and ways of life. However, Thai nationalism and its push to build a nation state made it necessary to define "Thainess". In the absence of a definite "Thainess", the Thai proceeded in the reverse way. In other words, the Thai strategy was to define "Thainess" by identifying what "otherness" was. Burusratanaphand (2001: 78) claims that the most important "other" for the Thai has been the Chinese. This was probably due to the economic dominance of the Chinese in Siam.

After 1910, what made a person Chinese in Thailand was no longer his or her outward appearance but his or her politically defined race. Under such racialized ideology, the Thai nation was divided into two: the Thai race and the "other" which was the non-Thai or Chinese race. Thus even if a Chinese managed to adopted some Thai qualities in their speech, behavior or religious beliefs, they would still be considered non Thai since an intermediate Sino-Thai identity was unthinkable (Tejapira, 2001: 62). As King Rama VI wrote in his article: "one is either a Chinaman or a Siamese; no one could be both at the same time and people who pretend that they are so are apt to be found to be neither" (quoted in Tejapira, 1997: 77).

2.2.5 Discriminatory Policies Towards the Chinese

The discriminatory treatment of the Chinese exacerbated after the coup d'etat in 1932 transformed the country from an absolute monarchy into a constitutional monarchy governed by the military. This period marked the beginnings of hypernationalism in Thailand. Thai nationalism was encouraged as a means of unifying the people (Coughlin, 1960: 149). This created a great deal of anxiety among the Chinese as they were uncertain of their future with a new government which saw minority ethnic group as a divisive force in the new Thai nation.

Anti-Chinese policies and discriminatory laws reached their peak under the government of Phibun Songkhram in 1938–1945. Phibun's reign as prime minister began by excluding, culturally and politically, the Chinese as well as the other non-Thai ethnic groups. The aim was the wholesale ethnicization of Siam in order to make it exclusively Thai. One of the first moves was to rename the country Thailand (Tejapira, 1997: 78). "Thai" not only meant "free" or to be "free" in the language, it also referred to the racial cognomen and could be used for nationalist purposes (Dibble, 1979: 186). Thai policy towards the Chinese centered on integrating the Chinese by restricting Chinese education and the weakening the economic dominance of the Chinese in the Thai economy (Thomson, 1993: 404). The government embarked on a plan to replace the Chinese with the Thais in industrial and commercial enterprises. This was done by restricting Chinese immigration and imposing heavy penalties on the Chinese businesses. Control over existing foreign owned enterprises had to be shared with new indigenous directors and managers, with quotas set for foreign businesses through licenses and other means (Thomson, 1993: 404).

The Thais were urged to eat food produced from Thai manufacturers, to wear clothes manufactured by Thais and preferably of Thai material and to assist fellow Thais in trade and industry. In 1940, Phibun also encouraged Thais to marry Thais and declared that no official could marry an alien without special permission (Jiang, 1966; 58). In certain areas of Thailand, all aliens were rounded up and ordered to vacate their land. Some 18,000 Chinese were forced to move from their homes in order to make way for Thais who bought them at a fraction of their prices at the government's insistence (Dibble, 1979: 265).

The discriminatory measures directed at the Chinese forced them to band together and brought about extensive organizational activity within the Chinese community. Business and welfare organizations sprung up and community associations were re-organized and strengthened during the 1930s. Community leaders stepped up to their responsibility in the community and provided welfare measures which were not available to the general population, protected their followers from the full impact of the repressive measures and fought for the interests of the community (Skinner, 1958: 14). The other Chinese response was to form secret societies which were usually organized along speech groups in order to preserve each group's share of the diminishing wealth (Pongsapich, 2001: 91).

After 1950, the Thai elites started a policy to nationalize the economy. The military government took possession of the infrastructure and resource-based areas of the economy and tried to set up import substitution industries. The Ministry of Communications developed the airlines, the Ministry of Industry built the petroleum refineries and the electricity generators, the Ministry of Finance controlled the tobacco industry while the Ministry of Defense and the Ministry of Finance opened banks. Although the nationalization of the economy affected private enterprise, it actually benefited many of the Chinese entrepreneurs. After the Second World War, the military government was short of capital. In order to establish their industries, they turned to the Chinese businesses. Leading Chinese businessmen were able to mobilize their resources and they formed new business alliances with the Thai elite. This generated sufficient capital for the nationalistic projects and enabled the Chinese businessmen and Thai officials to make more money for themselves (Hamilton and Waters, 1997: 270).

Thus began a symbiotic relationship between the Chinese and the military administration. The pay of the civil and military officers in Thailand is low and many of them depend on the Chinese businessmen for extra income. Many Chinese businessmen appoint powerful Thai politicians to the Board of Directors or re-organize firms to enter into Sino-Thai ventures with Thai officials supplying protection, privileges and government contracts. This mutually beneficial relationship has ensured that the Chinese businessmen do not suffer from the restrictive policies, but in fact some actually prosper under them. The Chinese entrepreneur cannot be eliminated because his business activities help to support the lifestyles of the political elites. Neither can he be totally assimilated and be vested with the rights and privileges of a Thai national because this would be a financial loss for the political elite who are relying on handsome payoffs (Jiang, 1966: 64). This complementary relationship between the Chinese businessmen and Thai elites continues to the present day.

By the late 1980s, Chinese Thai families in Thailand such as Sophonphanich, Tejapaibul-U Chu Liang, Lamsam Wang Lee and Ratanarak formed conglomerates which owned 62% of the financial firms and thirty seven of the one hundred largest companies in the country. The more prosperous ethnic Chinese have also entered politics, representing the sizeable middle class community which now makes up about 40% of the urban population (Szanton-Blanc, 1997: 267–268). In northern Thailand, the Chinese (many of whom are Yunnanese), have become major players in Chiangmai's gem business. They also own fruit orchards, restaurants and shops and have prospered from Chiangmai's land boom (Hill, 1998b: 13).

Another series of restrictions on the Chinese was in the area of education. The military government firmly believed that the Chinese schools were a major obstacle to the integration of the Chinese. This was true to a certain extent. Guskin (1969: 14) contends that the main purpose for the creation and maintenance of the Chinese schools was to reinforce Chinese identity and developing an attachment to China. Before the twentieth century, Chinese youth mostly received familial instruction and there were few Chinese schools. The private Chinese schools received very little notice from the government. By the early twentieth century, the Chinese schools became more organized, buoyed by the growing Chinese nationalistic fervor. The number of Chinese schools grew rapidly, due to nationalism, economic opportunism, shortage of alternative educational institutes and the availability of Chinese teachers who had migrated from China. By 1933–1934, there were 271 Chinese schools in Thailand. The peak student enrolment was from 1937 to 1938, when there were a total of 16,711 pupils in the Chinese schools. Subsequently in 1939, the number Chinese schools and student enrolment fell drastically due to the crackdown by the military government (Coughlin, 1960: 145–147).

The restrictions placed on Chinese education and the stress on the Thai language was part of the government's policy to draw the Chinese children into the Thai community. The government required all children (regardless of their ethnic group) within the compulsory age group to study in the Thai language for a prescribed number of hours per week. Chinese was regarded as a foreign language and would be restricted to a few hours per week. The Chinese reacted strongly to the restriction initially but their protests died down when the Chinese schools coped with the new policy in their own way. The schools would accept the government schedule but ignore it except for the days when an official came to inspect. In time, the government took stronger enforcement action and many recalcitrant Chinese schools were closed. However this did not discourage the Chinese parents, especially those who were wealthy, from sending their children to China or Malaya to pursue their Chinese studies. In some cases, the children went in a group with their own teachers and started schools again outside of Thailand (Landon, 1939: 117).

After the Second World War, Phibun was forced to resign and he was replaced by the Seni administration. The new government was eager to re-establish diplomatic ties with China to forestall a veto of Siam's entry into the United Nations. In January 1946, the Siamese-Chinese Treaty of Amity was signed in Bangkok and this provided an exchange of consular services and an expression of goodwill in both countries. The treaty provided greater flexibility for the Chinese in matters of

education and immigration. The Chinese were given the liberty to establish schools for the education of their children according to the regulations of the country. After a lapse of eight years, the government also allowed the Chinese language to be taught as an optional subject in public schools. In 1947, the Thai government gave further concessions concerning the Thai language examination for Chinese teachers, the selection of text books and the use of Chinese in teaching geography and history (Jiang, 1966: 58). During this immediate post war period, the Chinese schools flourished and Guskin (1969: 15) estimated that one in every twelve Chinese children attended Chinese schools at that time.

The government seemed to be easing restrictions on the Chinese when there was a coup d'etat on 8 November 1947. The leadership then went to ex-Premier Phibun half a year later. Phibun cracked down on Chinese schools. The poor enforcement by the previous government of the Private Schools Act gave him the justification to raid and close schools during May and June 1948. Teachers and principals were arrested on the grounds that public subscription, even for educational purposes, was illegal without government license (Jiang, 1966: 59). Thus began, again, a policy of nationalizing the economy, reinstating the nationalist fervor of the Thai nation state, and the attempt to assimilate the Chinese into Thailand.

2.3 Assimilation and the Chinese in Thailand

It is in the context of the national policy of assimilating the Chinese into Thai society that Skinner conducted his research on the Chinese in Thailand.[4] Skinner (1963: 5) asserts that, other things being equal, there has been a fairly constant rate of Chinese assimilation in Thailand over a period of a century and a half. The assimilation rate of the Chinese in Thailand is at least of the same order of magnitude as that of Europeans in the United States. He notes that one may cite similarities between Thai and Chinese cultures as important pro-assimilation factors: "The Thai cultural inventory has always had many points in common with that of the Southeast Asian Chinese. The preferred food staples for both peoples, for example, are rice, fish and pork. The Thai commitment to Theravada Buddhism was no barrier to social intercourse or cultural reapproachment in view of the familiarity of the Chinese to another form of Buddhism. In addition, the differences in the physical appearance between Chinese and Thai are relatively slight."

In his comparison with the assimilation patterns of the Chinese in Java, Skinner (1973: 399) singles out certain factors as having primary effect on the assimilation rate of the Chinese in Thailand. First, he suggests that the historical experience of the Thai, with no direct subjugation by any colonial power, has resulted in the Thai's sense of pride and security in the manifest excellence of their tradition. Thus, Thai culture, by virtue of its vigor and continuity, was attractive to the Chinese, which in turn accelerated the assimilation process.

Skinner (1973: 311) also points to the fact that the Chinese in Thailand were free to reside and travel throughout Thailand. He observes that "throughout the new

residential suburbs in Bangkok, Chinese are found residing among the Thai in a random arrangement [and] show no sign of neighborhood segregation". Even families headed by Chinese immigrants have moved to such suburbs. This changing pattern facilitates the development of social intercourse between the Chinese and the Thai. If we accept the hypothesis that the assimilation rate is related to the size and composition of the ethnic community, then this greater access and contact of the Chinese with the Thai will result in a faster rate of assimilation. Moreover, the Chinese in Thailand were free, on reaching maturity, to identify as either Chinese or Thai. One of the reasons for the acceleration of assimilation in Thailand is the availability of "structural avenues" which were conducive to and, in fact, encouraged the absorption of the Chinese into the dominant indigenous culture.

Skinner asserts that, except for certain periods, the Thai government reacted favorably toward the Chinese and adopted a pro-assimilationist policy. This can be seen in its educational and economic policies. Skinner (1957b: 365–372) notes that as early as 1898, the Thai government had adopted a scheme for national education which actively sought to integrate Chinese schools into the national educational system. Bearing in mind that education represents a major source of socialization, and at an age when the individual is most susceptible to behavioral and character molding, the acceptance of Thai language and education by the Chinese will greatly accelerate the assimilation of the Chinese into Thai society. As one Thai author (in Skinner, 1957a: 250) puts it, "without a doubt, compulsory education in Bangkok, where most Chinese congregate, is one means of assimilation. In compulsory education lies an instrument which is infinitely useful for our purposes. It would ensure that the second generation of Chinese will, to all intents and purposes, be Siamese."

Economically, the Chinese play a vital role in Thailand. The Chinese migrants were needed to provide manpower for agriculture, shipping and for expansion of trade. Skinner notes that in Thailand, unlike the Javanese case, mass migration has meant that the Chinese were spread out in all strata of Thai society. This promoted, or at least did not pose a barrier to, the assimilation of the Chinese. Moreover, the ruling and administrative elites in Thailand were dominated by Thai, as such the Chinese businessmen identified with this group. Thai leaders also advocated a policy of giving citizenship to the migrant Chinese. The Nationality Act was amended "in conformity with the government's liberal policy toward the Chinese so that all persons born in Thailand were automatically Thai citizens" (Skinner, 1973: 378).

These measures, Skinner notes, assured the Chinese in Thailand that they were desired and thus gave the Chinese a sense of security. Thus, Chinese culture in Thailand underwent changes in the direction of Thai culture, gradually closing the gap between the two ways of life and rendering the "Chinese way" less sharply distinguishable from the larger Thai society. By the 1950s, the basic administrative distinction between the Chinese and Thai was wiped out. The children of mixed marriages grew up as Thai and the social visibility of the Chinese decreased vis-à-vis the Thai. Skinner thus concludes that first and second generation Chinese might be more Chinese oriented, but by the third and fourth generations, the Chinese in Thailand are, in all practical considerations, Thai.

2.4 Bilingualism and Bicultural Education

I suggest that Skinner has overemphasized the powers of the forces of assimilation. This can be seen in the anomalies that arise when we looked more closely during the fieldwork at the situation of the Chinese in Thailand today. On the issue of language acquisition, for example, it has been suggested that the adoption of the language of the dominant group and the extent of its use is often indicative of cultural assimilation, since language acquisition is often accompanied by the adoption of the cultural values as well as by entry into the social institutions of the society. Undoubtedly, and Skinner is correct in pointing this out, many Chinese in Thailand have acquired the use of the Thai language. But most Chinese in Thailand are not monolingual. In fact, Punyodyana (1971: 13) found that although every Chinese person he interviewed speaks Thai, nearly all of them also speak Chinese. Moreover, a large number of his respondents also speak one or more additional Chinese dialect besides their parents' mother tongue, though the majority of them learned to speak their parents' dialects first and later acquired the rest. This is important as it suggests that for this group of people, Chinese cultural values are internalized first and Thai cultural values come later. This fact furnishes significant proof of the cultural influence of parental language on the respondents' early socialization. During the fieldwork, when respondents were asked why Chinese was used, some of the common reasons given were, "It is more natural for me to speak Chinese in my family because we are Chinese," "Chinese is the business language – if you don't speak Chinese, how can you do business?" or "I try to speak to my children only in Chinese so that they can learn from me."

During the fieldwork, there were many instances of a bilingual use of language. In one interview with a family (middle-aged parents and two children, one 9 years old and the other, 6), the parents were speaking to one another and to their children in the Cantonese dialect. However, when the children answered the parents, it was a mix of Cantonese and Thai. This was also true when the siblings spoke to one another, although there was a greater usage of Thai rather than dialect in this situation. In another instance, during an interview with a shopkeeper, he spoke to his customers in Thai; but to the shopkeeper next door, he spoke in a Chinese dialect (Teochew). These fieldwork observations corroborated the following statement of one of the informants:

> There are many families who still speak Chinese dialects at home. Of course, this is more so among the older generations, but I know many third generation Chinese who still know Teochew and speak Teochew to their parents and grandparents. There are, in fact, shopping centers in Bangkok where most of the shopkeepers speak Teochew and Cantonese to one another.

Thus, in Thailand we observe the use of different languages as codes in different environments to signify and maintain ethnic identity:

> Teochew is used between Chinese and among young people you know. When Chinese businessmen do business with one another, it is in the Teochew dialect or Cantonese. Because of necessity, I allow my children to attend Thai school. This is the fate of an Overseas Chinese. It is better if they know the language (Thai). To get ahead in Thailand; you have to

do this. My wife is Thai. My children speak to her in Thai. However, I taught my children
to speak Chinese (Mandarin) from when they were very young. So now, I can speak to them
in Chinese.

Although it can be argued that the Chinese in Thailand use Thai language in
public social discourse, the learning of Thai has not led to the demise of the
Chinese language. Instead, there is the development of bilingualism whereby differ-
ent languages were used in different social situations. In the domestic environment,
Chinese had a high percentage of usage, especially when speaking to parents and
older relatives. Chinese language was also more widely used when talking with
other Chinese. Outside the home, especially when dealing with Thai bureaucrats
and Thai in general, there was a greater necessity to use Thai. Punyodyana's data
indicated that for the "Group One" Chinese, over 76% of the respondents said they
used Chinese more than Thai at home.[5] Though there was a reduction in the usage
of Chinese at home for the "Group Three" respondents, that is, those who were sup-
posed to be the "most assimilated" group, a significant 20% still claimed that, in the
domestic environment, they spoke Chinese more often than Thai.

Closely related to the problems of language acquisition is the role of education
in the process of assimilation. I have already noted Skinner's argument that the inte-
gration of Chinese schools into the national educational system, and the influx of
Chinese into Thai schools where Chinese students are strongly persuaded to speak
Thai and pledge allegiance to Thai symbols, facilitated the assimilation of the eth-
nic Chinese into Thai society. In a later study, Guskin (1969: 67) arrived at the same
conclusion: "[Given] the results of the law of Thailand, the cultural values related
to education, the norms and values related to respect for teachers and the school
regulations which must be followed if the student desires to succeed, [Chinese chil-
dren] are committed to attending Thai schools and, it would seem, are normatively
integrated into them."

It is true that Chinese education has been affected by Thai government poli-
cies. There is the realization on the part of many Chinese parents that there are
practical values to be accrued from a knowledge of Thai and also the recognition
that Thai education is an important source of upward mobility. But this view is
not held by all Chinese in Thailand. In fact, according to the informants, there
were still some Chinese parents who deliberately avoided sending their children
to Thai schools, preferring to send them to Chinese schools instead. There were
even some parents who preferred keeping their children from attending schools for
the sake of having extra labor for business and commercial activities. Contrary to
Skinner's position, Coughlin (1960: 141–168) argues that Chinese education was in
a stronger position in the 1960s than in the 1930s and 1940s. He noted that although
there was a marked decline in the number of Chinese schools, there were, how-
ever, more children attending Chinese schools: 17,000 in 1938 and 63,000 in 1960.
There was also no evidence that the Chinese community had given up its desire
for separate Chinese schools. The existence of Chinese schools helped perpetuate
Chinese culture and nationalism. This has been the basis of the government's oppo-
sition to these schools from the beginning, but it is also one reason for the Chinese
community's desire to maintain them. Chinese schools provided virtually the only

means by which spoken and written Chinese can be learned (Coughlin, 1968: 158), though the home would serve the function of reinforcing the use of the spoken language.

What is significant is the fact that, even today, there are still many Chinese schools in Bangkok and some in the regional provinces. According to the informants, many Chinese parents still prefer to send their children, or at least some of their children, to Chinese schools. There are even parents who send their children to Taiwan to receive what they consider a proper Chinese education (Szanton-Blanc, 1983: 109). These can be taken as indications of the Chinese desire to retain some degree of Chinese identity.

During the fieldwork in Thailand, it was found that there were 83 Chinese language schools in Bangkok alone. For the whole of Thailand, they numbered 264. Due to government policies, they are no longer called huaxiao (Chinese schools), but are known as minxiao (people's school) or kongxiao (public school). These schools, according to one informant (a school teacher), follow the regular curriculum of Thai schools. The significant difference is that classes are conducted in both Chinese and Thai. Chantavanich and Somkiat (1995) suggest that while these schools have to follow pedagogical demands set by the government authorities, many Chinese schools get around these restrictions by resorting to a "hidden curriculum" that ensures the transmission of Chinese culture in the classes.

The continued existence of so many Chinese schools in present day Thailand attests to the importance parents in Thailand place on a Chinese education. Moreover, other than these public schools, many parents, especially the richer Chinese, send their children to private schools where Chinese language is used as the medium of instruction. Also, according to one informant, Chinese parents who sent their children to Thai schools would engage private tutors to teach their children Chinese. Another popular alternative is for their children to attend Thai schools during the day and take Chinese classes in the evening. Said one informant:

> There are fewer Chinese schools today compared to the past. This is due to government policy. They do not encourage Chinese education. The Chinese are a very practical people. If they see that it is better to have their children in Thai schools, they will send them there. But they will find ways to maintain the Chinese language and Chinese education. As Chinese education in Thailand is only available for the first six years of schooling (it is possible for an optional 3 more years), parents who want their children to have higher education in Chinese will send their children overseas.

Said one Chinese:

> In the past, many Chinese sent their children back to China or, if they are pro-Guomindang, they will send the children to Taiwan. Many Chinese parents today, I don't know exactly how many, but I think many, still send their children to Taiwan for higher schooling. Recently, they also send them to Malaysia and Singapore. It is not because of nationalism that they want to maintain Chinese education. Chinese is an economic language, a language of survival. Chinese language is very useful for doing business in Thailand.

On deeper analysis, there are really two issues here: affordability and desire. Parents who can afford to will send their children overseas for higher education, often to Taiwan. Many send the children to Malaysia, and this is not very expensive. But the

point to be made here is that many of the Chinese parents interviewed have a strong desire for their children to have a Chinese education, or at least some of it. It is also important to remember that Chinese schools in Thailand today do not teach the type of nationalistic Chinese education prevalent in the 1940s and early 1950s. There is a growing recognition that education cannot be entirely Chinese if it is to be of any use in Thailand. Thus, the curricula in these schools are fitted to the needs of the Chinese in modern Thai society, incorporating the teaching of Thai language and history with that of Chinese language and culture. One strategy that is adopted by many Chinese parents is to send some of their children to Thai schools and the rest to Chinese schools. This is based on the premise that a Thai education would lead to the acquisition of an administrative post in the Thai bureaucracy while the children in the Chinese schools would acquire Chinese values that can help in the business enterprise of the family. It is often said that nothing can be more advantageous than for a Chinese businessman to have a brother who holds a high position in the Thai administrative or political elite.

In a sense, the Chinese in Thailand attempt to maintain a dual identity. At the core, and in terms of primary identity, the Chinese celebrate their Chinese identity. At the periphery, in the public spaces, the secondary identity is less stable, and the product of negotiated relations, to deal with the complexities of everyday life. Burusratanaphand argues that the problem with Skinner is that the assimilation of the Chinese into Thai society is based on the assumption that descendents who do not fully follow their own traditional culture are not fully Chinese. If this was the case, then there would be no "Chinese" in Thailand within three generations. However, he contends that what constitutes "being Chinese" is debatable and identity and the perception of an ethnic group should not be necessarily bound to any fixed culture. It is sensitive to a changing environment and is adaptable to social and cultural changes. Thus Chinese migrants and their families will remain Chinese as long as they believe in their "Chineseness", even if parts of their culture may be different from those of their predecessors (Burusratanaphand, 2001: 70).

2.5 Socio-Economic Organizations and Occupational Differentiation

If Skinner is correct in his analysis of Chinese assimilation in Thailand, the Chinese would have undergone a process of what Gordon (1964) meant by "structural assimilation," that is, there must have been a large-scale entry of Chinese into cliques, clubs and institutions of Thai society. Coughlin (1960: 32–66) argues that the very commercial success of the Chinese in Thailand was due in large part to the development of tight social and economic organizations which served the functions of encouraging cooperation among the overseas Chinese and providing protection for them in a hostile environment. These Chinese associations, tying together individuals with similar interests (familial, economic or religious), were the very backbone of the Chinese community in Thailand. He further noted that "these overseas

associations in their totality are influential in perpetuating social distinctions between the Thai and Chinese population groups that their continued vitality as growing institutions beyond the immigrant generation can only be the indefinite postponement of any major move towards a more thorough assimilation of the Chinese minority in Thailand." During the fieldwork, many informants indicated that they regularly send money to their relatives in China. This is an indication that there are still ties with the homeland (Botan, 1977).

During the period of the fieldwork, I found that there were about 200 Chinese associations (based on clan, region or dialect) that continue to serve important social and community functions for the Chinese. Most important of these are the economic organizations, such as the Chinese Chamber of Commerce[6] and occupational guilds. It is noted that Chinese businessmen still make substantial financial contributions to these associations. In a sense, this is an indication of their usefulness, as the Chinese would seldom put money into any organization that has passed its usefulness. Furthermore, these associations still provide the social prestige structure for the Chinese community. For example, the top offices in the Chinese Chamber of Commerce are still highly valued by Chinese businessmen as they carry with them prestige and power within the Chinese community.

Although the continued persistence of these associations is significant because they indicate a failure of complete "structural assimilation," this point should not be overemphasized. Most of the Chinese businessmen who join Chinese associations are also members in Thai associations, such as the Thai Chamber of Commerce. Undoubtedly, this is because of an awareness among Chinese businessmen that in order to succeed in Thailand they have to cooperate with the Thai elites, who control the political, military and administrative arenas, but lack the economic base to bolster their political and military powers. Thus, alliances are made between the Thai elites and Chinese businessmen, a complementary relationship which serves the interests of both groups. Chinese businessmen reorganized their commercial corporations to include Thai elites with "good connections": Many Chinese Thai ventures were set up utilizing the capital and entrepreneurial skills of the Chinese, with the Thai officials providing "protection" and giving official privileges and government contracts.

So, not only do many Chinese join Thai associations for pragmatic and economic reasons, some in fact sit on the Board of Directors for both Thai and Chinese associations. As an example of this cross-representation strategy, it is noted that Vichien Tejapaibul (from a wealthy Chinese banking family), was the Deputy Honorary Treasurer of the Thai-Chinese Chamber of Commerce. At the same time, he was Vice President of the Thai Chamber of Commerce and Treasurer of the Board of Trade of Thailand. Similarly, Boansong Srifeungfung sits on the Board of the Thai-Chinese Chamber of Commerce as well as the Board of Trade of Thailand. Even when the person is not represented on both boards, there is often representation through other members of the family. For example, one member of the Lamsam family (Thai Farmers Bank) sits on the Thai Chamber of Commerce while a relative sits on the Thai-Chinese Chamber of Commerce.

Furthermore, there is the existence of a strong sense of occupational division of labor between the Chinese and the Thai that persists even in present day Thailand. There seems to be a high degree of consensus among the informants that Thais tend to enter the bureaucracy and the army while the Chinese are in the business world. "The Thais become soldiers, policemen and teachers," said one informant, who continued, "In fact, most civil service jobs are taken by Thais. The Chinese are businessmen and merchants. They tend to engage in free-lance activities." Another informant said, "80% of all doctors in Thailand are Chinese. They also control the restaurant business." One Chinese said, "The value of being a soldier is not highly regarded by the Chinese."

Punyodyana (1971: 26) notes that "it is clearly evident in the interview responses which point in a matter-of-fact way to an a priori state of affairs in which some occupations are Chinese occupations and others are Thai occupations. Furthermore, it seems largely taken for granted that Thai should do certain kinds of work and Chinese other kinds." Close to three fourths of the respondents in Groups One and Two in Punyodyana's survey said that Chinese mastered greater skill in trade and commerce than Thai. Perhaps more significantly, 58.3% of those in Group Three, that is, Chinese government employees, agreed with their statement. Similarly, in Sri Racha, the Chinese tended to define their Chineseness in terms of the degree of commercial orientation and business success (Szanton-Blanc, 1983: 109).

Both the Chinese and Thai seem to accept the ethnic stereotypes that the Chinese are better businessmen and the Thai are better governmental administrators. Some reasons given by the respondents were: "Trade and commerce fit well with the character of the Chinese people," or "Chinese are gifted merchants." On the Thai side, it is believed that "government work is the work of the Thai people," or "Thai have contact (phuak) and relatives (yaat) in the government." Ethnic prejudice remains a strong undercurrent in Thai society today. The existence of these prejudices indicates a lack of cultural assimilation. An editorial in the Bangkok Post, a major English language newspaper in Thailand, clearly illustrates this prejudice. Under the headline, "Chinese Connection and Money," it reads:

> The true Thai as a race form a typical warrior society with typical conservative values. They prefer to accumulate position and prestige. They hate to touch and discuss money. Even Thai farmers with their earthly wisdom would still want their sons to be civil servants, rather than have anything to do with money. . . . The Chinese take over money matters. Thai people of Chinese descent continue to have a stranglehold on business and money. Chinese-Thai pour money into acceptable charitable organizations to get recognition and royal decorations. All of them search sophisticated dictionaries to find lengthy Thai names and surnames in order to appear more Thai, with the result that now one can recognize really the true Thais only by their short surnames.

One Chinese businessman said:

> The Chinese are the masters of the business world. When the Thais feel that they cannot get into business, they say that the Chinese are crude, only interested in making money.

One Thai person remarked:

People realize that there are differences between the Chinese and the Thais. The Chinese are the rich people.'[7]

Another Thai informant said:

The Thai government likes to give rank and position to the Chinese. If you are chairman of a bank, or give money to charity, you will be awarded titles. But this does not make them Thai. ... They are simply ornaments. The Thais feel that they have to work 30–40 years before they get an award, but when the Chinese give money, they get titles. Do you know half of those with the title kunying (ladies of the Court) are Chinese women from rich families?

The continued existence of ethnic stereotypes can be taken as an indication that ethnic differences still persist in Thailand today. Coughlin has taken a stronger position and argues that the occupational separation of the Thai and Chinese is a major source of friction between the two peoples. He (1960: 116) reasons that "this occupational separation has given the Chinese minority immense economic power, but at the same time has excited fear, resentment and a growing measure of intolerance on the part of many leading Thai. Their present economic position, related as it is to so many fundamental institutions and values, is the major obstacle to the further integration of the Chinese minority." There is certainly some degree of truth to this statement, especially if we are referring to the period between the 1930s and 1950s, where strong Thai nationalistic fervor led to criticisms of the economic control of Thailand by the Chinese. The Chinese were perceived as subtly undermining the livelihood of the Thai people.

Occupational separation, to a large degree, still exists in Thailand today, but the availability of Thai education for the Chinese has meant that more and more Chinese are finding jobs in the Thai administrative service. There is also a growing awareness among many Thais who feel that "Thai can be businessman too" and are increasingly engaging in commercial activities. But, it can be argued, at the elite level, that this occupational differentiation is maintained. The situation is not one of tension, but of complementary functions. As pointed out earlier, the Chinese businessmen, in order to protect their financial interests, have formed alliances with leading Thai politicians and military men, who in turn retain high remuneration by serving as directors in such companies. Thus, a case can be made that there is no desire or necessity for the Chinese elites to be assimilated into Thai society as this will disturb the finely balanced relationship between the two groups. On the Thai side, the assimilation of the Chinese elites could be seen as an intrusion and would threaten their interests.

If we were to look at the ethnic Chinese minority in Bangkok today, it is likely that a large proportion of the remaining ethnic Chinese are the wealthier people who, in a sense, have more to gain by maintaining the status quo. "Becoming Thai" would lead to a conflict of interests with the Thai elites. In this sense, the Chinese and Thai elites can be seen as sub groupings of different ethnic categories which assume complementary economic roles in the local environment. They enjoy a selective advantage, for they reduce competition between culturally distinctive groups. By

occupying exclusive economic niches, these groups maintain their separate cultural identities (Golomb, 1978: 162). At one level, the wealthier Chinese in Bangkok thus would have more to gain by remaining Chinese. However, at another level, the fact that they interact more with the Thai elite will have many subtle, though largely unclear, influences on their abilities to remain Chinese. In reality, the poor Chinese are more likely not to change because they have little to gain by becoming Thai.

Most Chinese businessmen in Bangkok enter into symbiotic relationships with the Thai political and administrative elites. These relationships are typically class- or interest-based, mutually beneficial to both parties, and are intrinsically precarious in terms of power balance maintenance. The prevailing stereotype of the Chinese is, as one Thai succinctly put it, "All the Chinese in Bangkok are rich." The Thai elites have political and administrative control while the Chinese have and are also perceived to have financial and economic resources. These ethnic stereotypes separate the Chinese from the Thai and retard assimilation. In actual fact, I argue that wholesale assimilation of the Chinese upper economic echelon into the Thai political and administrative elites would lead to an imbalance in a potentially precarious, though at present, finely-tuned, relationship. Assimilation would result in an overlap in roles and, therefore, subsequently threaten the interests of both groups. It has been suggested that the Thai economy is dominated by a handful of large commercial banks owned by leading Chinese families. One of the biggest banks in Thailand is owned by a Chinese. Many seats on its Board of Directors, however, are occupied by Thai political and military elites (see Gray, 1986).

Among those Chinese outside Bangkok, in the provinces, such as the farmers and small businessmen in the northern and northeastern regions and in the highlands, many of them maintain contacts with lowland urban Chinese relatives or friends to retain their Chineseness. These more marginal Chinese are even less assimilated than the well-off Chinese in Bangkok. For example, Huang's (2007: 182) study on the Yunnanese Chinese in Thailand has shown that they exhibit a determination to retain their Chinese cultural heritage. Villages such as Banmai Nongbua maintain an active school program for Chinese education, including language instruction, Chinese history, culture and literature, supplementing the public school curriculum run by the Thai government. While the youth are prepared to be integrated into Thai society, they still maintain certain Chinese cultural traits such as hard work, respect for education, and the competitive spirit that their parents have instilled in them. These traits set them apart from Thai society and Huang (2007: 185) believes that these Yunnanese Chinese have successfully converted their Chinese ethnicity into selected cultural markers which they retain. This would allow them to compete successfully in Thai society and occupy distinct social classes associated with professional and middle class niches such as wholesalers, educators, financial managers, manufacturers, real estate developers and trade agents etc.

There are also those who utilize their ethnic background as Chinese for personal advancement or to build business networks. For example, some Yunnanese youth have managed to gain admission (often with tuition subsidies) to colleges in Taiwan by emphasizing their historical links to Taiwan as descendents of soldiers abandoned

by the Nationalist government. Many continue to live there permanently as legal residents. Chinese ethnicity is also a useful tool for transnational business networking which provide the basis for trade and investment (Huang, 2007: 185–186). For many of the younger generation Yunnan Chinese, Chinese ethnicity is perceived as symbolic capital. Instead of passively preserving their Chinese ethnicity, the younger generation actively cultivates certain aspects of their ethnicity for their own career, migration and social opportunities.

Similarly, in a study of Srisamrong, Sukhothai, Onozawa (1990: 27) found that the Chinese have their own graveyards and performed Chinese funeral rites rather than Thai Buddhist ceremonies. In ancestor worship, they attach more importance to Chinese rites rather than Thai ones even though they may perform both of them. Annual ceremonies were performed at the Chinese shrine under the co-operation of three dialect groups. The Chinese private school was well supported and its maintenance was deemed as important enough to be the concern of the entire Chinese community. Hill (1998a: 46–47), based on her fieldwork observation in Northern Thailand, found flourishing Chinese communities, with prosperous voluntary organizations, packed theaters featuring Chinese films, numerous Chinese book stores, restaurants and banquet rooms patronized by the ethnic Chinese. Yamklinfung (1990: 21–24) in his study of the northern Thai town of Phisanulok, found that there were seven Chinese associations serving about three to four thousand households of Thai born Chinese. The existence of these associations indicated the importance the Chinese place on their community.

2.6 Religion, Tradition and Ethnic Intermarriage

With regard to religion, Skinner (1973: 408) suggests that the basic similarities between Chinese and Thai religious life are conducive to assimilation: "The Chinese popular religion, with Mahayana elements, is similar to Theravada Buddhism. Chinese religious sentiment is eclectic and syncretic rather than exclusivistic. Thus, religion is no barrier to Chinese assimilation in Thailand." However, to say that because both Thai and Chinese practice Buddhism and, therefore, religion is no barrier to assimilation is like saying that since both Protestants and Catholics are Christians, they should get along very well. There are significant differences between Thai Theravada Buddhism and Chinese Mahayana Buddhism. The Thai, for example, worship at Buddhist "wats," while the Chinese worship at deity temples. The Thai cremate their dead in the wat, while the Chinese prefer to bury their dead. More significantly, the Thai have no ancestral duties while the Chinese are duty-bound to carry out such rituals. There are other differences as well. For example, Chinese Buddhism is less strict with members of the monastic order, compared to Thai Buddhism. As such, Chinese Buddhist teachings put less emphasis on ascetism and combine many more Chinese folk beliefs and rituals with Buddhist ones. Thai Buddhism, on the other hand, places greater emphasis on the purity of the religion.

Differences between Thai and Chinese religious beliefs are not irreconcilable, but their similarities should not be exaggerated. In Thailand today, we still find a large number of Chinese who continue to carry out ancestral rituals. This observation receives support from Punyodyana's survey, which indicated that nine out of ten Chinese respondents were engaged in ancestor worship. This figure is for Group One respondents, but even among Group Three respondents, supposedly the most assimilated, 63.3% claimed to be ancestor worshippers (Punyodyana, 1971: 34). The observance of ancestral rituals is central to Chinese religious life and contributes substantially to the integration and perpetuation of the family as a basic unit of Chinese social life. Moreover, ancestor worship is linked to the idea of xiao or filial piety, according to which children owe their parents obedience and are committed to its perpetuation for the family name and lineage. 60% of the Chinese in Thailand still practiced the rituals of burying the dead. The informants said that many Chinese in Thailand still practice the rituals of ancestor worship; many continue to go to the temples for worship. There are numerous Chinese temples in Bangkok, particularly in the Saratburi area. In addition, the Chinese in Thailand also maintain the celebration of Chinese religious festivals. The Chinese New Year continues to be celebrated on a grand scale in Bangkok, Phuket and the southern provinces. Other important festivals which are celebrated include the Qing Ming, Chun Yuan and Mid-Autumn festivals. One Thai informant noted:

> The Thai people know that Qing Ming (during which is practiced a Chinese ritual of cleaning the graves, like the Christian's "All Souls Day") is around, because at that time, there will be bad traffic jams as the Chinese make their way to the graveyards to pray to the ancestors. This is especially true in the Saratburi and Chonburi areas, where there are many Chinese cemeteries. The Chinese festival of "praying to the moon" is also popular. We Thai know about this festival because we eat the moon cakes too. Almost everywhere you see moon cakes. In fact, I think the biggest moon cake in the world was made in Bangkok. I think it is in the Guinness Book of World Records.

Another informant asked a rhetorical question:

> If there are no Chinese in Thailand today, who are those people celebrating Chinese New Year and praying to the ancestors?

The continued practice of ancestor worship and the widespread celebrations of religious festivals point to the persistence of Chinese cultural values in present day Thailand. Chinese religion and rituals have emerged as important markers of ethnic identification in Thailand. One of the Thai informants said that he could easily tell whether a person is Chinese or Thai simply by observing the way the person carries out religious rituals. Many Chinese continue to hold on to the tradition of having reunion dinners and handing out hongbao (money wrapped in a red packet). The giving of hongbao is a traditional Chinese custom to signify a gift of good luck. However, the very same Chinese who continue to practice Chinese religious rituals also perform rituals at Thai wats. Many Chinese claim that they make donations to the Thai wats on a regular basis. The Chinese in Thailand celebrate both the Chinese New Year and the Thai New Year. Even in funerals, we see Chinese performing rituals which are distinctly Chinese in origin and content, but are carried out in Thai

wats. Undoubtedly, Chinese ritualistic behaviors observed in a Thai setting testify to an overt admixture of Chinese and Thai customs. Yet this intermixing does not mean the demise of Chinese rituals nor its replacement by Thai ones, but a modification and adaptation of both customs to become "part Chinese and part Thai."

Finally, intermarriage and family life. Here we find some discrepancies in empirical observations. On the one hand, Skinner notes a high degree of intermarriage between Chinese and Thai, especially before 1893, when there was a dearth of Chinese women immigrants to Thailand. Likewise, Punyodyana (1971: 57–58) has found that between 30.3% (Group One) and 63.7% (Group Three) stated that they had Thai members in their households. However, Coughlin (1960: 75–83) argues that intermarriage between the Chinese and Thai, especially in the Bangkok area, was not as prevalent as many had been led to believe. In his random survey of 145 marriages, representing a full range of socioeconomic levels, he found no instance in which a Chinese girl had married a non-Chinese and only two men who had married Thai girls. He suggested that the reason for this was partly due to the trend toward numerical equality of the sexes and the cultural differences between the two: "The Thai consider the Chinese uncouth and raucous in public … and are grasping, excessively materialistic, interested only in making money" (Coughlin, 1960: 75–83).

Conversely, the Thai are characterized by the Chinese as indolent, untrustworthy and slippery in business dealings. More specifically, there are cultural differences between the two ethnic groups regarding marriage rules. For example, Chinese are generally patrilineal and patrilocal, whereas Thais are matrilineal and neolocal. Marriage rituals are also very different, with different values and expectations between the two groups. Such cultural differences underpin and intensify feelings of ethnic prejudice. Chinese consider Thai girls marrying into Chinese families as a form of upward mobility, giving the Thai better economic conditions as well as business linkages. But, Chinese girls marrying into Thai families, except for royal and military connections, are often considered as economic and social retrograde. Nevertheless, it is significant to note that a large percentage of the Chinese in Thailand today claim that they would prefer to marry another Chinese instead of a Thai. Punyodyana noted that over 60% (Group One) said that they preferred Chinese spouses. Some reasons given for this attitude were: "My parents would approve of it and would be happy with a Chinese in-law" or "As Chinese, we would understand our customs better." One Chinese informant, 65 years old, almost defiantly asserted his ethnicity in this way:

Many Chinese have acquired Thai citizenship (he also estimated that about 200,000 have retained PRC citizenship). In legal terms, they are Thai. Even in public, most of these people will say that they are Thai. But, in cultural terms, from their way of life, they are still Chinese because they retain many elements of Chinese culture. It is like milk and coffee. When you pour milk into coffee and stir it, they mix. It is very difficult to distinguish the milk from the coffee. But, they are still two different things. I can speak Thai like any other Thai, but I am Chinese. To be Thai is not to deny my Chineseness. To stress Chineseness is not to deny my Thainess.

2.7 The Rise of China

Recent political changes in China, especially the rise of its economic prowess have also affected the way the Chinese view themselves. There is an increasing consciousness of their Chineseness. Many of the Thai Chinese are beginning to express their culture and Chinese identity more openly, after decades of being suppressed and discriminated against and having to adapt their ethnicity and culture to suit the prevailing political situation. There has been a renewed interest in China, especially from an economic point of view. The People's Republic of China has become one of Thailand's largest trading partners and transnational networks of Chinese conglomerates in Thailand as well as their successful joint ventures with Japanese and Western firms have played a major role in the facilitating Thailand's economic growth. The driving force is China's economic boom, but as Vatikiotis (1996: 22) pointed out, the impact goes beyond money. Chinese culture is enjoying a revival among the ethnic Chinese who once seemed to be destined for continued assimilation.

More Chinese people are also beginning to flaunt their ethnic backgrounds. Thai business magazines openly hail the achievements of the *lukchin* businessmen while many Chinese use their Chinese surnames instead of their (adopted) Thai names when doing business in China. In 1996, certain candidates of Chinese descent even used their Chinese names while campaigning for elections in areas with a concentration of ethnic Chinese. Many see China as a rapidly emerging market and an opportunity for entrepreneurs and professionals, especially those who speak the Chinese language and understand its culture.

In 1992, the Thai state lifted restrictions on Chinese language teaching. The Chinese language is being re-introduced into Thailand's schools and universities after a period of official discouragement and lack of interest (Jory, 1999: 343). To meet the demand for Chinese language instructions, about 310 schools in Thailand started to offer Chinese language courses since the early 1990s while Rajabhat Institute and Mae Fah Luang University offer Bachelor's degrees in Chinese languages as well as short courses such as Chinese for business and tourism. A new broadband internet service was also launched that provides distance learning Chinese lessons (Bao, 2007: 96). A more comprehensive and detailed analysis of the impact of the rise of China on identity and ethnic relations of the Chinese in Southeast Asia can be found in Chapter 9: Whither Chineseness?

In conclusion, contrary to Skinner's assertions, for the Chinese in Thailand, assimilation, at least as defined in American sociological literature, as a unilineal process of the Chinese becoming Thai, has not taken place. Rather, the relationship between the Chinese and the Thai, and the definition of Chinese identity is more nuanced and complex. The data collected on contemporary Thailand suggests that, for the Chinese, they seek to maintain their ethnic identity whilst, at the same time, deal with the exigencies of everyday life as a minority group in Thailand. The Chinese continue to maintain a core ethnic identity. This core identity is primordial, largely based on phenotypical and genotypical markers. It functions to maintain,

affirm, and express Chineseness, and serves to resist the forces of assimilation, as well as provide emotional basis for ethnic identity.

At the same time, being a minority group where political and social powers are in the hands of the majority group, the Chinese have had to adapt, constructing and presenting ethnic identity for economic and social survival. At the fringes, and in daily interaction with the Thais, in the public arena, the Chinese in contemporary Thailand manage and strategize their ethnicity. At the periphery, ethnicity becomes instrumental. While it is suggested that the Chinese in Thailand are not assimilated, at least not to the degree suggested by Skinner and others, it is also true that most Chinese in Thailand today can speak Thai, go to Thai schools, join Thai associations, celebrate Thai religious festivals and would consider themselves Thai citizens, and except for a small group, not citizens of China.

There is a degree of integration into Thai society and social life. At the same time, many Chinese are able to speak Chinese, attend Chinese language classes, continue to participate in Chinese clan associations, and enter into symbiotic relationships with the Thai political and administrative elite. Most Chinese in Thailand speak both Thai and Chinese, worship in both Thai wats and Chinese temples, and join Chinese as well as Thai associations. Yet, one also witnesses the tenacity and survival of a primary Chinese identity: Chinese schools and associations persist, and Chinese religious rituals are still being practiced on a daily level. Coughlin (1960) calls this "double identity," an essentially static concept that fails to view the person as an active being who understands and respects his group allegiances; uses his ethnicity expressively and instrumentally; conducts himself in ways he sees most appropriate and advantageous in private and public places; knows the distinction between primary and secondary identification, and uses the distinction strategically. Two other markers of expressive and instrumental ethnicity are use of language and ancestor worship. Chinese, and this is most clearly seen in the behavior of shopkeepers, talk to one another in Chinese, often Teochew. However, in their dealings with Thais, they would use Thai. Similarly, Chinese is most often used in the home, as opposed to Thai in the public area. Unlike Thais, Chinese worship their ancestors. This is used by many Chinese to maintain their identity as it differentiates them from the Thais. It also acts as a reinforcement of their historical linkage with China.

Notes

1. A shorter version of this paper, co-authored with Chan Kwok Bun, was published in International Migration Review, Volume 27, Number 1, 1993. I would like to thank the editors of International Migration Review for permission to use the paper. This present chapter, however, has been extensively revised and expanded, including the addition of a historical review of the Chinese in Thailand, as well as additional fieldwork carried out in Thailand in 2004, 2007, and 2008. The new data has been incorporated into the analysis.
2. Originally, the pigtail was imposed onto the Chinese males by the Qing dynasty as a symbol of submission to the new dynastic rule. However, with the passage of time, the pigtail became a unique part of the Chinese appearance and what used to be a sign of an alien Qing symbol became a Chinese cultural nativism (Tejapira, 2001: 45).

3. Besides the Chinese who came by sea from the southeastern coasts of China, there were also Yunnanese Chinese who had settled in Thailand. After the Communist take over in China in 1949, some units of the Nationalist army and their families fled over the border into Burma and the hills of Northern Thailand. Most of them were *Han* Chinese, and *vis-à-vis* the local population in Northern Thailand, they considered themselves as participants of a larger abstraction of Chinese culture (Hill, 1998b: 108).

4. Skinner's contribution to the study of the Overseas Chinese in Southeast Asia is indisputable. His use of historical analysis, particularly in his works on the Chinese in Thailand, still remains the standard methodological tool for interested scholars. Skinner was among the first to attempt a comparative analysis of the Overseas Chinese. He advocated the need for cultural analysis, adopting a more holistic approach rather than reducing everything to economic and political factors. He derided as social mythology the general belief that the Chinese in Southeast Asia can be seen as a general category of people. More than anyone else, Skinner rekindled interest and discussion in the study of the Chinese in Southeast Asia. However, this paper argues that Skinner himself was colored by his own bias in his analysis of the Chinese in Thailand. The dominant discourse, at that time in Thailand, was very heavily influenced by the state's discourse of assimilating the Chinese. These found their way into the analysis of his own data, leading to an overemphasis on the supposed assimilation of the Chinese.

5. Punyodyana divides his respondents into three groups: Group One-less educated non-government employees; Group Two-more educated non-government employees; Group Three-government employees. He suggests that there are differential rates of assimilation for the three groups. Though his findings are significant, it must be pointed out that his selection of respondents falls into a tautological trap. He purports to indicate that government employees show the greatest assimilation. But the very fact that they are government employees could be taken to mean that they have already been assimilated into Thai society.

6. The Chinese Chamber of Commerce was founded in Bangkok in 1908. Its ostensible raison d'etre was to promote Chinese business interests. This was done by combating adverse government policies and furnishing trade information to merchants. Beyond its business activities, the Chamber also provided many essential services to the Chinese community as a whole. It promoted Chinese education and acted as an intermediary between the minority ethnic Chinese population and the government. Most of the high ranking officials of the Chamber were wealthy Chinese with a reputable social standing. These officials were usually recognized by the government as leaders in the Chinese community (Coughlin, 1960: 53).

7. It is important to make a distinction between perception and reality. There is a stereotypical perception that the Chinese in Thailand are rich and have achieved this status through exploitation of the Thai people. Statistics available in 1965 showed that, in reality, the average income of the Chinese was significantly lower than that of the Thai. This data, however, will not alter ethnic perceptions.

Chapter 3
One Face, Many Masks: The Chinese in Singapore

3.1 Introduction

Singapore is sociologically interesting in the study of Chinese ethnic identity as, of all the Southeast Asian countries with Diasporic Chinese; it is unique in having a Chinese majority. Seventy six percent of the Singaporean population is Chinese. However, this majority is tempered by the fact that Singapore is a multi-ethnic society, with 15% Malays, 7% Indians, and 2% Eurasian and others. Moreover, Singapore is a small nation state[1] situated in a geopolitical region where the majority of the neighbors are Malays or Indonesians.[2]

This chapter examines how Chinese identity is constructed in Singapore. Are there any differences with other Southeast Asian countries where the Chinese are often the minority? Similarly, is the nature of ethnic relations with members of the host society different? What are the markers of Chinese identity in Singapore? How have these markers changed over time? It argues that, like the Chinese elsewhere in Southeast Asia, most Chinese resort to primordial markers for ethnic identification, hence the "one face," in the title. However, beyond physical and genetic markers, such as blood and descent, Chinese identity in Singapore is contested terrain. The Chinese in Singapore are bifurcated along language, educational, generational, and religious lines, hence "many masks".

3.2 History of the Chinese in Singapore

Chinese migration to Singapore in the early nineteenth century was the result of various push-pull factors. The Chinese who came to Singapore were mostly from the southern provinces of Kwangtung and Fukien, two provinces which were more receptive to migrating because of their early contact with the British tea traders who came for the tea grown in these provinces. Moreover, the floods, famines and droughts frequently experienced in China, made life difficult. For example, in 1911, a severe famine, coupled with a flood killed thousands of Chinese (Yen, 1986: 2). China was also characterized by civil unrest; the Taiping Rebellion in 1857–1864, and the Boxer Rebellion in 1900. Adding to this misery, the large population and the

inability to find employment induced many Chinese to migrate. The majority of the ethnic groups who arrived in Singapore were the Hokkiens, Cantonese, Teochews, Hakkas and Hainanese. Typically the migrants were males between the economic age group of 15–40 years.

Singapore attracted many of these immigrants because of the tremendous economic opportunities which the island offered. With the establishment of the port, the volume of trade grew and the island prospered. British trade and capital poured into Singapore and Malaya, especially when tin mines and rubber plantations were developed. This provided substantial employment prospects and made Singapore attractive for many living in the surrounding areas to migrate to Singapore (Loh, 1988/1989: 6). Immigration was also encouraged by the British, for they knew that the Chinese could contribute to the wealth and growth of the trading centre as Chinese labor was cheap and abundant.

According to Yen (1986: 4), at least two patterns existed in the Chinese immigration to Singapore and Malaya. The first was kinship based and the other developed around the credit ticket system. Kinship ties were very important in establishing a business in Singapore. Employers needed loyal workers who could be trusted with the running of their shops. Due to dialect differences, most shop owners would prefer to employ workers from their own home village in China. The credit ticket system was another way in which Chinese immigrants arrived in Singapore. Coming from impoverished homes, some of these immigrants could not afford to pay for their passage to Singapore. Passage money was advanced to the would-be immigrants in China by labor brokers, junk captains or labor agencies. Upon arrival in Singapore, these immigrants were hired off to prospective employers who would pay the passage fee. The immigrant would have to indenture his labor to his benefactor for some years in order to pay for his passage. The credit system of immigration was widespread in the nineteenth century, enabling many Chinese immigrants to make the journey to Singapore and Malaya. This thriving immigrant trade, known as the coolie trade, was notorious for its exploitation of the immigrants as many employers tended to keep their coolies for longer than the agreed period (Yen, 1986: 5).

By 1849, the Chinese had become the majority race in Singapore. In 1901, the percentage of Chinese increased to 72.1% (Saw, 1970: 57). At that time, the sex ratio in Singapore was very unbalanced as most of the migrants were males who had come to Singapore in search of employment opportunities. For example, in 1836, the number of Chinese males per thousand females reached a peak of 14,642. The unbalanced sex ratio meant that the increase in the Chinese population was mainly due to immigration and not natural increase. Early Chinese migrants who established themselves in the Straits Settlements inter-married with the local Malays. This resulted in a group of people called the Straits Chinese who developed a distinct Sino-Malay culture. The Straits Chinese considered themselves to be Chinese and continued to adhere to Chinese customs such as ancestor worship. However, they also adopted many Malay customs such as the wearing of Malay-style costumes (Chan, 2003: 61).

In the twentieth century, the Chinese population continued to grow, increasing ten fold from 1901 to 1957. Up to the 1921 census, the population increase among the Chinese had been solely due to an excess of immigrants over emigrants. However from 1921 onwards, the Chinese experienced a natural increase followed by a decrease in immigration from the 1930s (Loh, 1988/1989: 14). In the meantime, Chinese women were allowed to enter in increasing numbers to fill available jobs. This female migration continued until it too was restricted in 1938. From 1938 onwards, immigration played a minor role in the island's population growth, being replaced instead by natural increase. This was possible as the sex ratio in Singapore became more balanced. The Communist take-over of China in 1949 curtailed migratory movement of any magnitude from occurring, as the British were afraid that subversive elements would infiltrate Singapore society. By then, many of the Chinese in Singapore had married and started families. By 1957, the number of locally born constituted about 70% of the Chinese in Singapore, an increase from 20% in 1911.

When the early Chinese immigrants from various parts of China arrived in Singapore, those who spoke the same dialect tended to congregate together and later became organized into dialect associations. This tended to strengthen dialect identity (Yen, 1986: 177–178). Moreover, each dialect group had its own sub-culture, characterized by its own temple, burial ground, and school. Temples and religious practices were divided along dialect lines because the monks in the various temples were mostly from China and spoke different dialects. Thus religious services conducted in one dialect naturally precluded those who could not understand the dialect. The separation of religious activities among the dialect groups was even extended to the next world after death, with different burial grounds for the different dialect groups. Linguistically, the early Chinese immigrant population in Singapore was very fragmented by the various dialect groups. The use of dialects continued in the Chinese schools, most of which were run by the different clan associations.

Even within the various dialect groups, there was little unity as the communities were divided into sub-groups based on districts. Also, there were power struggles among the members for leadership positions in the various dialect associations. Thus, while the dialect associations were useful in extending aid towards the new migrants, it tended to divide the Chinese community and cause intra-communal social conflict. Although dialect associations still exist in Singapore, their influence has been greatly reduced by changing educational and socio-economic conditions.

After the 1920s, there was a shift towards the use of Mandarin due to increasing Chinese nationalism and the increasing supply of teachers from China. By 1930s, most of the Chinese schools adopted the use of Mandarin. Slowly but surely Mandarin became the *lingua franca* and served to unify the various dialect groups (Hill and Lian, 1995: 71). The deliberate policy to switch from dialects to Mandarin has resulted in a younger generation of Singaporean Chinese who are more conversant in Mandarin. Besides Mandarin, English has become increasingly popular among the Chinese. This is largely due to the fact that English is taught as the first language in schools and is the main medium of instruction.

During the early phase of Chinese migration, it was difficult to speak of the existence of a family since migration was mainly on a voluntary and individual basis rather than "block" migration. The relative deprivation of a traditional social network among the Chinese community in the nineteenth century led to the mushrooming of an alternative social network. With the absence of kin or a narrower circle of familial ties in Singapore, many first generation Chinese migrants had close contacts with their kin in China. Often they were aware of their lineage and village of origin. Their ties with the homeland was manifested in the form of remittances and even the contribution to the Chinese Relief Fund during the period of natural disasters and then the political struggle between Kuomintang and the Communists. Many also held the desire of returning "home" one day. Among the migrants, the tendency to follow the traditional way of life and kinship interaction was greatest among those who spent their youth and education in China (Goh, 1961). However, as migration became more permanent in nature and with more Chinese born locally, families and generations began to establish roots and build their own kinship networks.

In the discussion of the migration of the Chinese to Singapore, the common belief that the Chinese are a homogenous group, and are treated as such in sociological analysis, is problematic. The early migrants to Singapore were already a diversified group, differentiated by dialect, regional, and occupational differences. As the later analysis of the Chinese in contemporary Singapore will show, the heterogeneity of the Chinese in Singapore persists. However, instead of dialect or regional variations, the Chinese are now divided along language, educational and religious lines.

3.2.1 Economic Activities

As a result of colonialism, the Chinese were not allowed access to many economic activities. To the British, Chinese immigrants provided an abundant source of cheap labor and the Chinese merchant "served as middlemen in the functioning of a colonial economy: to help collect raw materials and to distribute British manufactured products" (Yen, 1986: 3). As a result, many of them became traders and acted as middlemen between the Europeans and the Chinese community. This middleman culture flourished and several Chinese traders started small businesses. Occupation-wise, the majority of the jobs taken on by the Chinese were many and varied. To a certain extent, this variety reflected the jobs which these migrants held in China; being peasants, artisans, small retail owners, craftsmen, jewelers, incense manufacturers, food sellers and pawnbrokers. In Singapore, because of the job opportunities available, a greater diversification in occupation took place. A large number immigrant Chinese were indentured labor at ports, mines and plantations.

Historically Chinese economic activities tended to be dialect-based. For example, the Hokkiens were well known for their business acumen while the Hainanese people were associated with the food business as many coffee-shops were owned by them. According to Chan (2003: 133), this was mainly because the Hainanese worked for the British during the colonial era and learnt the technique of making

coffee. The Xinghua community was a minority group of Chinese in Singapore when compared with the other dialect groups. As the Xinghua migrants arrived in Singapore relatively late, most of the more profitable trades and favourable jobs had been taken up by the other larger dialect groups. However, the Xinghua managed to find their niche in the transport industry, from the earlier rickshaw and trishaw, to the later tram, mini-lorry and taxi (Yung and Chan, 2003: 162).

3.2.2 Education

Although little is reported on Chinese education prior to 1829, Erb (2003: 18) suggests that there were probably some writing schools where boys were taught ideographic writing and the teachings of the Chinese sages. They were given enough training to help their fathers in business and those who could afford it were sent away to China for further education. Girls on the other hand received no lessons because most Chinese parents did not think it worthwhile to give their daughters an education since they would leave the family after marriage.

In pre-independent Singapore, education in the Chinese language was left mainly in the hands of some various local communities, such as clan associations. This was largely because the Colonial government was interested primarily in the promotion of European literature and science and they saw no reason to introduce and promote education in Chinese. The Colonial government adopted a policy of non-intervention, "as long as the interests and stability of the colonial government were not affected" (Ong, 1974: 88). Since most of the Chinese schools were left independent of government control and supervision, they soon became institutions for the inculcation of Chinese patriotism and the transmission of Chinese culture. These schools were greatly affected by political events in China as Manchu officials and Chinese nationalists, later the Kuomintang and the Communists fought to influence and control Chinese schools in Singapore (Tan, 1969).

In such community-based private schools, dialects were often used as a medium of instruction in the Chinese schools and this had a tendency to reinforce intra-ethnic identities within the community. In 1920, the Education Ordinance was passed requiring all private schools and teachers to register with the government. The Chinese community saw this ruling as an attempt by the colonial government to take direct control of their schools and resisted registration. Even when grants were offered to the Chinese schools to persuade them to accept the general guidelines of the Ordinance, they were rejected mainly because such schools were already self-supporting (Hill and Lian, 1995: 71).

One effect of the education system in colonial Singapore was that it divided the Chinese society into the English and Chinese educated. By the beginning of the twentieth century there was a polarization among the Chinese community between a minority Anglophile Chinese and the majority, who were Chinese educated. The Chinese Chamber of Commerce in Singapore campaigned for multi-lingualism to be accepted in the legislature so that due recognition would be given to Chinese

language. However the petition was unsuccessful and graduates from Chinese high schools found themselves with fewer opportunities either for employment or further education than their English educated counterparts (Hill and Lian, 1995: 69–71). Fragmentation along ethnic and linguistic lines became increasingly problematic as the colonial government continued with their education policy which suppressed Chinese education. Restrictions were imposed on the Chinese educated people's participation in employment and tertiary education in Singapore. Knowledge of English was made compulsory for recruitment to both the public and Anglo-American companies. The colonial government also refused to recognize the diploma and qualifications of the Chinese educated graduates and admission to the local institutions of higher learning was also limited (Ong, 1974: 109). Despite the restrictions and disadvantages of a Chinese stream education, enrolment in Chinese schools was high as the sentiments attached to Chinese education were extremely strong. However the education policy of the colonial government served to alienate the Chinese educated and also the Anglicised Chinese who were proud of their roots (Erb, 2003: 27).

With independence, the new government began a bilingual education system. This meant the teaching of English as a medium of instruction, in addition to a "mother tongue" as a second language. Though the government promised the equal treatment of all language streams, no efforts were made to ensure equal employment opportunities for people from non-English streams. This reinforced the popularity of English as a medium of instruction. Before the 1950s, the ratio of Chinese stream to English stream students was almost two to one. In 1954, the enrolment was about equal. In 1962, the number of Chinese children entering English medium schools exceeded those admitted into Chinese medium schools. By 1978, English stream students outnumbered their Chinese counterparts by nine to one (Noss quoted in Hill and Lian, 1995: 81). This significant shift towards English education can be explained by the perception that English is a more useful language for career advancement in an export-oriented economy such as Singapore (Hill and Lian, 1995: 81). Even so, education has become, as the analysis on contemporary Singapore will show later, a fundamental divide for the Chinese in Singapore. An English-educated Chinese is fundamentally different from a Chinese-educated Chinese, each group having negative stereotypes of the other.

3.2.3 Community Organization and Structure

When the Chinese migrants arrived in Singapore, they brought with them their own cultural, religious, social and economic institutions. These organizations became a major structural feature of the overseas Chinese during the nineteenth century. "Voluntary associations" is a general term used for associations which existed for the benefit of its members and community in general. Under this was included clan associations, associations based on surname, dialect or locality, guilds, clubs and religious associations. Most of these voluntary associations were patterned after

their counterparts in traditional China but with various modifications. According to Hsieh (1978: 186), this type of internal structure not only provided overseas Chinese in Singapore with a system for maintaining law and order within their community, but also contributed to their strong identity with their homeland. The major function of these associations was to meet the needs of the immigrants in a foreign land. Although they were formed as a means of "self-help" for members (for example to tide a member through funeral expenses and to help new migrants adjust during their transitional period), many of the associations extended their jurisdiction into such areas as punishing law-breakers. To the British, this could only be meted out in a court of law (Purcell, 1967: 76).

The community organizations of the Chinese which flourished in the mid nineteenth century were the "*hui*" or associations which later became known as secret societies. These societies were generally believed to be the offspring of the "*Tian Ti Hui*" or Hang League, of China. In China these were originally religious and self-help associations. They later assumed a political and anti-Manchu character in the seventeenth century at the time of the Manchu conquest. Their object was to expel the Manchus from China and to return the rule to the hands of the Ming Dynasty. The objectives of the Singapore secret societies were not so clear. In Topley's (1960–1961: 299) view, the connection between the Triad society of China and some of the Singapore bodies "must be very indirect". This indirect connection could be in the religious rituals which both perform. The triad societies in Singapore developed an intricate ritual with oaths of secrecy, the most elaborate being the initiation ceremony.

The secret societies were used by the government as a sort of liaison with the Chinese community. For instance they had been called in to assist the Government during many riots to bring about peace and order. When certain elements in these societies engaged in criminal activities, there were public protests against them in 1842 and 1843. However the Government was reluctant to take action against the secret societies because they played an important role as mediators between the Chinese community and the Western colonial powers. This state of affairs ended in 1867 when disturbances led to the appointment of a commission to report on the Chinese secret societies. The outcome of this was the 1869 "Dangerous Societies Ordinance" whereby societies classified as dangerous, as well as their office-bearers and members, had to apply for registration. Local born Chinese were forbidden by law to join any of the secret societies while those who were already members were required to withdraw.

With the decline of the secret societies, other types of voluntary organizations began to make their presence felt within the local community. They also had to apply for registration, whereas in the past they were not required to do. By the beginning of 1900, Chinese clan associations were already in abundance. These organizations became increasingly influential after the suppression of the secret societies. They were places where social interaction took place among people of the same clan or family in this distant land away from home. They also continued with their objective of not only fostering fellowship among fellow men but also gave mutual aid. This was not only available to members but may be extended to the community at large.

3.2.4 Segregation and the Use of Space

The British rulers, for administrative purposes, segregated the various ethnic groups in Singapore. Certain areas were designated for different ethnic groups. The Chinese initially settled along the banks of the Singapore River, which provided easy access to the sea and was suitable for their economic activities. From there, the community spread westwards into the area known as Chinatown and eastwards into Rochore. Within these two settlements, dialect segregation of the Chinese also took place, with certain areas of Chinatown like Nankin and Hokien Streets being settled only by Hokkiens, Teochew Street by the Teochews, Kreta Ayer and Cantonment Road by the Cantonese and Hakka Street by the Hakkas.

Till today, traces of this delineation exist. For example, the Chinatown area is predominantly Chinese, while Serangoon is occupied mainly by the Indians, and Geylang, by the Malay. In order to improve public housing, the Singapore government established the Housing Development Board (HDB) to develop public housing with the aim of elevating ghetto communities to modern and sanitary housing estates. The HDB cleared squatters and slum areas quickly and in their place, constructed modern apartment buildings. The majority of the population now lives in modern HDB estates. Under the ethnic integration policy in 1989, a quota system was introduced to ensure a balanced racial mix within HDB estates. This was done with the explicit aim of promoting racial harmony among the different ethnic groups. It was also a strategy to prevent the establishment of ethnic enclaves within HDB estates as this could lead to ethnic division.

3.2.5 Religious Beliefs and Practices

Chinese immigrants to Singapore were very conscious about their traditional worship practices. Since most of the Chinese were Taoists and Buddhists, the immigrants continued their Chinese religious practices. These included worshipping deities in temple, offering of food and incense to the various gods of the household and the spirit of the ancestors. Chinese religion took root with the arrival of Chinese migrants, mainly from South China. Each dialect group began to establish its own presence and develop its own temples as the Chinese community grew in numbers.

Ancestor worship is an important aspect of the traditional Chinese religion. In the Chinese tradition of ancestor worship, ancestors must be appeased with food and incense. Daily sacrifices at the family altar remind the descendants of the omnipresence of their ancestors. At all important familial events, such as birth, embarking on a long journey, starting a new business, or choosing a marriage partner, the ancestors are consulted and their blessings requested. But the influence of ancestors is not limited to major life events. In fact, they are consulted even in the mundane affairs of life, from buying lottery tickets to determining the right time for spring–cleaning the home. The Chinese conceive of a close interdependence between the dead and the living. Ancestors depend on their descendants for the satisfaction of their daily

needs, while the living, in turn, look to the dead for assistance in solving daily problems. The consciousness of the omnipresence of the ancestors who will punish or reward according to one's conduct heightens the moral sense of the community.

It can be suggested that among the early migrants, religion provides a basis of ethnic identification. For example, in the 1921 Census, almost 98% of all Chinese claim to practice Chinese religions. In present day Singapore, what was originally a marker of identity has become point of differentiation within the community. As the later analysis of contemporary Singapore will show, the Chinese are the most heterogeneous in terms of religious affiliations, with 53.6% Buddhists, 16.5% Christians, 10.8% Taoists, and 18.6% claiming to have no religion.

3.2.6 Relationships to Host Country, Homeland and Other Diasporic Communities

In the nineteenth century, the Chinese immigrants to Singapore were mainly sojourners who looked to China as their homeland. Most of the immigrants aimed to seek their fortunes in Singapore and return to China. The sojourner mentality was maintained by the introduction of China-oriented newspapers and education system and the establishment of a Chinese consulate in Singapore. Newspapers such as such as *Lat Pau*, *Union Times* and *Chong Shing Yit Pao* kept the immigrants informed of events in China and served to draw the attention of the overseas Chinese to their motherland (Loh, 1988/1989: 11). At that time, Chinese education which was steeped in Confucian classics, was geared towards conditions in China and served to preserve a strong Chinese identity (Loh, 1988/1989: 13). For the immigrants, the establishment of a Chinese consulate in Singapore in 1877 provided a political link to China. It also enabled the Chinese government to tap the knowledge, expertise and financial support of the overseas Chinese immigrants.

With the Communist takeover of China, returning home to China became more remote. With the increasing number of local born children, the desire to return to China was less strong. Life in Singapore, though not necessarily luxurious, was comfortable and the reason to return to be with friends and relative was less viable. However, communication was not stopped and many Chinese in Singapore still sent letters and regular remittances to their kin in China. The changing social and political situation in Singapore also affected the outlook of the immigrants. There was a growing nationalism and desire for self government. In 1965, self-government was achieved in Singapore. With a buoyant economy and full employment, the prosperity of Singapore seemed assured and the Chinese immigrants were more willing to settle down.

However for some of older Chinese in Singapore, the ties to China are still strong. Some of those who belong to the first generation immigrants still refer to themselves as "*tang ren*" or "people of the Tang dynasty". For them, ethnic identity is rooted to territory and grounded in the historicity of China (Tong and Chan, 2001b: 9). They still see China as their homeland and the characteristically diasporic desire to return

to China is strong. Many wish to return to China to be buried in their ancestral place (Tong and Chan, 2001b: 28). However, this sense of China as homeland is not shared by many younger Chinese Singaporeans, whether Chinese or English educated.

The above discussion on the history of the Chinese migrants in Singapore shows a few significant findings. Firstly, that the Chinese in Singapore was never a homogenous group. Rather, it is cross-divided by dialect, regional, and generational differences. Also, British colonial policies, and well as the social policies of the Singapore state under the PAP tended to treat ethnicity and ethnic relations along racial lines. Both of these features have influenced the nature of ethnic identity as well as ethnic relations in contemporary Singapore society. The Chinese continue to think of ethnic identity along racial lines, while the fragmented nature of the Chinese community is still cross-divided, but not along dialect or regional lines, but in terms of language, generational and religious differences.

3.3 Ethnicity in Flux

In the course of an interview during the fieldwork, an informant proclaimed that "English-educated Chinese in Singapore are less Chinese." Perplexed, as if Chineseness in Singapore is an objective thing that can be quantified or measured, I asked him what he considered to be the attributes of being Chinese. He was slightly stunned; except for the fact that he knew he was "Chinese", he confessed he could not articulate what it was that made him Chinese. In fact, one characteristic of the informants during the interviews, particularly the younger ones, was the combination of confusion, self-examination, and rationalization when confronted with the exercise of defining their Chineseness. To quote from one informant:

> Because no one thinks of whether one is a Chinese or not, you just take it for granted and no one usually has to think about whether one is Chinese or not . . . but now you are asking questions that will make people think about things that they would normally not have to think about. This is really stressful. I have never thought about these questions. I really have to think. It is really in the blood to be Chinese, isn't it?

There were many inconsistencies and contradictions in the respondents' discourse. One English-educated Chinese informant claimed that the Chinese language is the central marker of ethnic identity, but she herself does not speak Chinese at all. Yet, she saw no problem in calling herself a Chinese.

Whether concerned with gender, ethnicity, religion, occupation, generation, or the problematic of one's own existence, identity questions, when asked, are inherently anxiety-provoking for many, if not for all. As questions, they are rarely asked, by others or by self. Self-interrogation is a rare thing. One typically does not ask oneself "Who am I?", "What am I?", except when thrusted into acute self-consciousness during moments of transition brought upon by such life events as threat of imminent death, acute illness, religious conversion, forced migration, marriage and divorce, natural disasters, in hospitals, transit lounges of international airports, hotels, concentration or refugee camps, and so on. Identity is put behind

or underneath consciousness because of its taken-for-grantedness. It is ordinarily non-problematic, so one "moves on with life".

Yet, for some, perhaps a small minority, ethnic identity is a securely-fastened personal bundle safely deposited in a mental place, comfortably. It is firmly anchored in one's psychological priorities; one thus speaks about one's place of origin, heritage, homeland, and belongingness with certainty and conviction. Among the informants, the older, China-born Chinese in Singapore, the first-generation immigrants, had little difficulty in defining their Chineseness. For them, ethnic identity is anchored in territoriality and grounded in the historicity of China. Their sense of ethnicity is tied to "place", "locality" or "community". Questions like "Who is a Chinese?", "What is a Chinese?" were silly non-questions to them.

Ethnic identity questions become stressful when it is assumed by authorities that one knows and should know about one's place of origin – but does not, when asked. One may not "know" because of unique personal or political circumstances not of one's own making. But it does not matter. One is still shamed and annoyed when the sociologists ask. One should not be in an ethnicity drift, but one is – one is thus exhorted to return to "roots", olden times. Ethnic identity questions are stressful when one prefers to deem ethnicity as largely symbolic in much of one's personal life, at a time when the state seems to think otherwise, and insists on its ascriptive primacy. Disjuncture in definitions between state and self puts the latter under stress.

While espousing a policy of multiracialism, the Singapore state constantly intervenes in the lives of its citizens, both in public policies and in areas that constitute the private sphere, including birth rates, choice of marriage partners, and education. Given the presence of many diverse ethnic groups living in close proximity, the state has, since independence, taken a proactive role in ethnic policies. For example, the government adopts an official classification of the population based on racial/ethnic membership: what is popularly known as CMIO, (Chinese, Malays, Indians, and Others). This official classification is inscribed, on a person's birth certificate and identity card. Such an inscribed identity often creates problems for the individual, especially in families with interethnic marriages. For example, a child whose father is Chinese and mother Indian would be classified as Chinese, while a child whose father is Indian and mother, Chinese, would be classified as Indian. The problem is exacerbated when the child enters school. Singapore's educational system emphasizes bilingualism: a child is required to learn English and a mother tongue. A child who is officially designated Chinese will have to offer Mandarin as his mother tongue, even if his home language is Tamil. Similarly, a child who is classified as Indian, and who may be, due to his mother's influence, more conversant in Mandarin, will have to offer Tamil as his mother tongue. While this policy has been relaxed somewhat in recent years, the disjuncture between self-identification and the imposition of racial identity creates ambiguities and often places a great deal of stress on the child and the family.

Ethnicity might have gone the symbolic, voluntary path for many an individual, but it is not the case with society and the state. In the case of Singapore, the institutionalization (Clammer, 1981) and bureaucratization (Siddique, 1990) of ethnicity through Speak Mandarin Campaigns, "racially" based self-help groups, and so on,

has ensured the stability and constancy of racial consciousness in Singapore society. With the equation of ethnicity with race in the foreground alongside public racial consciousness, the state shapes and directs the ethnicity discourse. Singaporeans, especially those Singapore-born and younger ones, are coping with this state discourse in their own ways, certainly not without ambivalent feelings, inconsistencies, or self-contradictions.

3.3.1 Ethnic Membership by Ascription

Most of the informants tended to use ascriptive elements to describe *and* to account for their Chineseness. There was this shared idea that one is "born" a Chinese, into a Chinese family, and is thus "naturally" classified as Chinese. One informant said:

> We are Chinese because we are born Chinese and there is no way of changing that.

Another informant reiterated:

> If you are born that way [a Chinese], you will always be like that. It is all in the blood. It is all in the human nature.

In fact, regardless of age, birth place, religion, language, education, or socio-economic status, the Chinese informants seemed to use birth and bloodline as the most important marker or criteria for ethnic identification and membership. The emphasis was on ethnic membership by ascription, which was operationalized or "indicated" by phenotypical characteristics. That is, a Chinese has black hair, dark eyes, fair skin, etc.:

> When you talk about being a Chinese, you look at the color of the skin. Now we look at the Singaporean Chinese, it is still the same because your blood is Chinese blood. How can we say that your blood is Malay blood? That's not possible . . . you look at the color of the skin. For example, if you look at the offsprings of mixed marriages, their skin color is different from ours. . . . You have a Malay who speaks Mandarin, you'll have to look at his skin color – if it is very dark, then you'll know that he is Malay. Now if you have a Malay who speaks English, which is very common these days, you won't have a problem identifying him as a Malay immediately because he is dark and speaks no Chinese dialect. If a child is brought up speaking English only and knows no Chinese language, and you ask if this child is still Chinese, it would be difficult because from young to old, the child has only been speaking English . . . but if you look at the child's skin color, you'll be able to tell that he is Chinese. You have the exceptions of those who are really dark, then that will be the minority because most of us Chinese are fair-skinned people . . . a bit yellow. . . . Children of mixed marriages are not the same. Their facial features are different. If you look carefully or closely enough – because we are so much older than you, we can tell that these features are different. You can see all through that (even if the child's father is Chinese)! Because their skin color will still be mixed. You see, if a Malay who is dark-skinned marries a Chinese who is fair, the child's skin will never be white as ours. You will see that the color of the child's skin is mixed. Even if the father is Chinese, the child's eyes and lips will also be different from a pure Chinese's. The child will carry the "whatever" of the other people with him in his facial features and the child will just look different because of this.

Seemingly untroubled by the fact that there is a gradation of skin and hair colors among the Chinese, the Chinese respondents insisted on the primordial, phenotypical elements as markers of Chineseness. The color may be slightly varied, but it is still Chinese blood. What is not visible, like blood, is "operationalized" or "indicated" by what *is*, like skin color and black hair.

> Our ancestors had the genes . . . it has been passed down to us and we all have yellow skin. Our eyes are black. . . . That is why we are Chinese. . . . Yet, we can't change our origin – we are really and absolutely Chinese and that cannot be changed. No one can change us into a European or Indian. We can't be changed because our ancestors are from China. They are real Chinese people – they are our ancestors. We can't change that. . . . It is a simple fact. Our ancestors are Chinese with yellow skin and black hair.

A related ethnic marker, surname, was also reported. Many respondents claimed that one can tell a Chinese by his surname[3]:

> You need a Chinese surname to be a Chinese. "Tan", "Lim" . . . these are Chinese surnames. This is because no matter what, you still have a Chinese surname. You can't deny it. If you're born with a Chinese surname, that part will always be. A child would be Chinese because of the Chinese surname. But if it is the child's mother who is the Chinese, the child will take the father's surname and not the mother's surname. This would mean that the child is not Chinese.

How then do we go about making sense of the emphasis among Chinese Singaporeans on primordial characteristics as the basis of ethnic identification and membership? It may be because the Chinese in Singapore live in a multiracial society where the other groups, the Malays and Indians, are clearly of different skin colors compared to the Chinese, the former groups being predominantly darker in color. The emphasis on skin color affords and facilitates group *differentiation*: we are Chinese because our color is fair, unlike the dark-skinned Indians and Malays:

> Chinese are Chinese because of their color. The older generation used to feel that skin color mattered a lot . . . the "blacks" were the Malays and Indians . . . "white-skinned" people were the "whites" and yellow were the Chinese. So my father used to say that we Chinese are from China. . . . First, our skin color is yellow, our language is different . . . those were the most important distinguishing factors . . . then our habits, likes and dislikes are all completely different.

Through contrastive effects, being in close contact with other ethnic groups in everyday life heightens differences and creates boundaries between groups. Also, as other ethnic markers including language, religion, and education are becoming increasingly amorphous, phenotypical distinctiveness gains functional salience. It is used for *boundary maintenance*, controlling an individual's entry into and exit out of the group. It is thus this constructed ethnic boundary that defines the group, not the culture enclosed in it (Barth, 1969: 15).

Many informants made the point that one cannot become a Chinese if not *born* one. Thus, a Malay or Indian who speaks Mandarin or a Chinese dialect, practices a Chinese religion, customs, or rituals, and observes all the cultural behaviors, will *still not* be a Chinese. In fact, such a person is often regarded as an oddity by the Chinese informants:

Is it possible for a Malay to become Chinese? No, I don't think you can. You have to identify with a race. When you are born, they classify you. Okay, a Malay can adopt the Chinese way of thinking but he will not be Chinese. Look, how would you feel if a Caucasian tells you that he is Chinese? We are westernized but, basically, we're Chinese. That's how I perceive who is a Chinese.

Many Indians in Malaysia are able to speak good Chinese and can act like Chinese, but the blood itself is Indian. I will say that no matter how, you can never change nature.

If you are not born Chinese, you can't become a Chinese.

If one parent is not Chinese, the appearance of the child would not look Chinese.

At the same time, the interviewees felt that a person who is born a Chinese will always be a Chinese, still a Chinese, even if he cannot speak the language or practise no Chinese religion, customs or rituals:

For me, I'm a bit westernized. I don't use chopsticks and I seldom speak Chinese. When my colleagues speak Chinese too fast, I can't keep up with them. So they speak to me in English. When I need to speak to them, sometimes I use broken Mandarin and Cantonese. People say that if you are Chinese, you have to have Chinese values, [but] mine have disappeared, I think western. But I think Chinese morals are good. . . . Yes I still consider myself a Chinese. I think that as long as your face is Chinese, even if you do not speak Chinese, you are still a Chinese. Only your ability to speak Chinese has been reduced.

I think that one is Chinese, no matter what. So what if he does not speak Chinese, his heritage is Chinese! If you are Chinese, you are Chinese. If you are yellow skin, you are yellow skin; there is no way to change that.

What is clear from these interview excerpts is that ethnic membership by ascription in terms of racial or phenotypical features is invoked to delineate the insider from the outsider. This perceptual propensity can be gleaned by examining the informants' attitude towards intermarriage. The intermarriage rate in Singapore since independence has been constant and generally low, hovering between 3 and 6% of the total number of annual marriages. The Chinese intermarry least, followed by Malays and Indians (Hassan and Benjamin, 1976; Kuo and Hassan, 1979; Lee, 1988). The informants insisted that children of intermarriage cannot be considered "Chinese". Some concessions are occasionally made if the father is Chinese, given the importance of patrilineage in Chinese society. By and large, children of mixed marriages are often regarded as "za zhong", or mixed genes – invariably used in a derogatory sense:

If the child's father is not Chinese, but the mother is Chinese, then the child cannot be considered a Chinese because the child will become a Eurasian. The child cannot be accepted as Chinese anymore because the blood of the child is no longer pure.

To be pure Chinese, the father and mother must be Chinese. Of course, there are lots of mixed races, the "chup cheng". . . . If one parent is Chinese, he might have some traits that are Chinese, e.g. looking Chinese but he is still mixed. It's important to be pure Chinese.

Born a Chinese, always a Chinese, still a Chinese, though having achieved none of the alleged cultural characteristics. Not born a Chinese, still not a Chinese, in spite of one's cultural adoption or achievement. The singular principle of

birth – by ascription, descent and origin – for ethnic group membership emphasizes the "fact" of immutability and unchangeability of one's Chineseness. Ethnic membership being a given, it is taken as something no one single individual can do anything about.

This singular principle of birth implies categorical exclusion and exclusiveness, and continued insistence on absolute purity of blood and origin, vigilance over and fear of intrusion, penetration by the other "races", by the genetically different. The opposite of purity is impurity, and it is feared – contamination by intermarriage is to be guarded against by the group. Chinese marrying Chinese has become a moral duty, a "must-do" behavior; to be otherwise is shameful, not respectable. Interbreeding "gives birth to" difference, a lesser, inferior difference, an oddity, and a stigma. The mixed child is, nevertheless, *still* a Chinese, though a lesser Chinese, contaminated, somehow reduced, in the eyes of the Chinese, the "pure" ones.

3.3.2 Religious Bifurcation

Many "traditional" markers of ethnic identification (language, education, religious affiliation) have lost their *homogenizing influence* among the Chinese in modern-day Singapore. For example, religion might have been among the ethnic markers of ethnic identity for the Chinese because core cultural values regarded by the Chinese as important – filial piety, duty, and the perpetuation of the family line – are encoded in the religion. The very enactment of rituals, particularly ancestral, birth and death rites reinforces values that maintain Chinese identity. Since rituals celebrate tradition, they link the person to his roots and tie him to homeland. Religion thus provides, through ritual performance and the belief system, constant reminders, for the individual, of the history, tradition and cultural values of Chinese society. Rituals affirm the sense of community and, in the Durkheimian sense, unite the group by bringing together diverse people for a common purpose. Rituals bind and bond, through heightened activities and common sentiments, the individual to community. For example, the Chinese celebrate the Hungry Ghosts Festival. The Chinese believe that souls can be trapped in Hell until they are released or at their rebirth. Adherents of traditional Chinese religion claim that during the seventh month of the lunar calendar, the "gates of hell" are opened and "hungry ghosts" are allowed to roam the earth for a month. This is considered a dangerous period and people take precautions to avoid offending the wandering spirits. Communal rituals are conducted, including the offering of food and money. The idea is that these rituals appease the spirits, and people come together to ward off wandering spirits from the community.

In modern Singaporean society, however, it is difficult to argue that religion continues to perform these functions for a majority of the Chinese. In the 1921 Census of Population of Singapore, 98% of the Chinese population claimed affiliation to Chinese religion. Then, it can be argued, at least statistically, that religion acts as a crucial ethnic marker. Recent statistics, however, show that this is no longer the case.

For example, in the 2000 Census, 39.3% of the Chinese respondents claimed to be Buddhists and 28.4%, Taoists (Tong, 2007). Taken together, those who believed in the Chinese religion formed only 67% of the Chinese population in Singapore.[4] A significant 14.2% claimed to be Christians and 18.3% said that they had no religion. This in fact makes the Chinese the most religiously fragmented community in Singapore. Religious affiliation for the Chinese in Singapore is marked by heterogeneity rather than homogeneity.

Moreover, those who claim affiliation to Christianity come from very different socio-demographic backgrounds than the Taoists or non-religious; that is, a Chinese Christian is a very different person from a Chinese Taoist. Christianity is more attractive to the younger, English-educated who typically come from more well-to-do families. In fact, in terms of language competence, over 27% of the English-educated were Christians, compared to only 6% of the Chinese-educated. Taoists seem to have socio-demographic characteristics opposite from Christians. They tend to be older, have lower educational attainment, and either speak Mandarin or a Chinese dialect. In this sense, it can be suggested that in Singapore, religion acts as a marker that divides rather than unifies the Chinese community.

In a study (Tong, 1988) on the customary practices of the Chinese, it was found that while many Chinese still perform traditional Chinese customs and religious practices, there is a significant decline in ritual performance among the younger, English-educated Chinese Singaporeans. For example, for those below the age of 30, only 72.2% observed the *Qing Ming* celebrations, compared to 86.5% of those from 40 to 49 years old. Similarly, for the English-educated Chinese, a significant 49.1% observed less than four festivals a year, compared to only 26.5% for the Chinese-educated. Even for the younger Chinese who claimed to be Taoists, we saw a decline in the practice of traditional Chinese customs. Chinese customs no longer act as a binding, unifying force, cement holding the community together. Rather, there is a movement away from the performance of Chinese rituals as obligatory to more voluntariness.

When we further examine the variable of religion, an even more dramatic picture emerges. For those who claimed affiliation to a Chinese religion, 85.3% celebrated at least five (out of a maximum of nine) calendrical rituals or Chinese festivals annually. On the other hand, 90.4% of the Christians celebrated less than four festivals a year. It appears that a great majority of Christians perceive Chinese festivals as superstitious and avoid them. Using multivariate analysis, it was found that religion was the only predictor of whether Christians will carry out Chinese customs or not. There are probably two reasons for this. Firstly, a vast majority of Chinese Christians in Singapore are converts from traditional Chinese religions. Religious switching implies dissatisfaction with the Chinese religious system. Secondly, the nature of Christianity in Singapore is one that emphasizes doctrinal and ritual purity. Chinese customs tend to be perceived as superstitious – there is thus a desire to refrain from practicing what is seen as contradictory to Christian theology. Nevertheless, it is rather important to note that most Christians, if not all, do not regard themselves as not being Chinese just because they do not carry out customary practices. Rather, they feel that religion is not a necessary condition for ethnic identification.

The point I am making here is that religion might have acted, because of a shared belief system among the Chinese, as an ethnic marker in the past. But, in modern-day Singapore, we see heterogeneity of beliefs in the observance of traditional Chinese customs and festivals. Of course, we can in one sense argue that the ease in which the Chinese have been able to switch religions, compared to, say, the Malays who still remain as Muslims, means that religion may not have been an important ethnic marker to begin with. Such a view of Chinese religion has always been held by intellectuals who feel the Chinese do not have religions, only ideological systems (Yang, 1970).

The assumption that the Chinese community in Singapore was once homogeneous and is now heterogeneous may well be problematic. One may argue that the Chinese were never really homogeneous to begin with, only that the factors that used to divide the Chinese have now changed. While, in the past, the divisions in the Chinese community were based on dialect, locality, region, politics (pro-Nationalists versus pro-Communists), and occupation, they are now divided by language, education and religion. But it is also probably true that there were more variables holding the Chinese together in the past, be they territorial identity, cultural factors or historical consciousness, compared to now when, it seems, only the principle of birth, blood and descent prevails as a singular marker separating the insiders from the outsiders. Birth, blood or descent is familial – and individual – rather than community-based. One hallmark of modern society is increasing individualism. Even in ethnic identification, we have moved towards greater reliance on the individual rather than the community – that is, individual identity, personal identification rather than cultural homogeneity.

The large increase in the number of Chinese Christians between the 1920s and the 1990s is particularly interesting as, in many ways, Christianity had for a time been viewed by many Chinese, particularly the older ones, as antithetical to Chineseness – as a western tradition that erodes the base of Chinese customary practices. Such a view is supported by data from a study (Tong, 1988) of Chinese customs, which shows that the one single factor accounting for why Christians did not carry out customary practices, including celebrating Chinese festivals and observing the rites of birth, marriage, and death, was their adherence to the precepts of Christianity – along with their view that these Chinese customs are superstitious, anti-Christian, and paganistic. Thus, there is a fundamental bifurcation in the Chinese community: those who are Christians and those who are Chinese religionists, along with a group of Chinese who are Muslims or follow neo-Hindu groups, and those who profess no religion at all. The distinction between Chinese Christians and non-Christians is complicated by the fact that they are cross-cut by other divisive factors. Christians tend to be English-educated, while the Chinese religionists tend to be Chinese-educated. At the same time, Christians tend to have higher socio-economic and educational status compared to the Chinese religionists. The observed sociological correlations between religion, language and education on the one hand and socio-economic status on the other have led one to wonder if the sociology of intra-ethnic relations among the Chinese in Singapore should take account of *class influence* in its future analyzes.

In general theoretical terms, it is probably true that while the relationship between Christianity and Chineseness is one of mutual co-existence and, possibly, fission, a Chinese's affiliation with a Chinese religion would certainly further deepen the meaning and effects of one's Chinese ethnicity. Among the Christians, however, the majority seemed to have found ways to resolve the contradiction between being Christian and Chinese, while some rationalized their inner battles away, or just accepted the possibility of Christianity making one less Chinese. To quote the informants:

> Like in religion ... we may vary in our beliefs. You may be Christian, but you are still Chinese. You may not want to eat what we offer to our gods, but you are still Chinese. Some Christians at the bottom of it all, they will still tell you that they are Hokkiens too ... that is why, even if they have a different religion, they are still Chinese.

> No, you can't take religion or food to be the major ethnic marker. For example, you are Christian, but you wouldn't say that you are not Chinese, would you? You are still Chinese. In fact, many youngsters are now Christians, and you can't consider them not Chinese. Some even eat food that has been offered for worship. I know that some Christians will not eat this sort of food. They are still Chinese.

3.3.3 Language and Education as Contested Terrain

During their colonial rule, the British in Singapore, and elsewhere in Southeast Asia, pursued the practice of ascriptive ethnicity, allocating differential and unequal economic and social roles to the Malays, Chinese, and the Indians (Lian and Ananda, 1993; Trocki, 1992). British colonial administrators viewed themselves and others as members of a distinct, separate community first, and as individuals second (Stockwell, 1982: 56). The ruler and the ruled related to each other as communities, in an interactional mode symbolized by residential concentrations of different ethnic groups in the city (Hodder, 1953). Solidary rather than dialectical relations between human nature, culture, ethnicity, geography, community, socio-economic organization, and the individual were thus firmly established. One may venture that the Singapore government's use of the official CMIO (Chinese, Malays, Indians, and Others) racial classification scheme in modern-day Singapore bears the historical legacy of a colonial ideology (Lian and Ananda, 2002: 3). One major consequence of the state's multiracialism policy is that "races" remain separate and distinct, a heightened racial consciousness whereby Chinese are under pressure to become more Chinese, Indians more Indian, and Malays more Malay (Benjamin, 1976: 124) – than they otherwise would be if left alone.

The formal educational system in Singapore was first set up by the British colonial administrators, whose aim was to create an indigenous elite, which was Malay. The Chinese were left on their own; the community, particularly the clan associations, provided the resources to set up schools. The language of instruction in these schools was, as expected, Chinese (Mandarin). Textbooks and teachers were drawn from China and Taiwan. English (pro-British) education was something

only the elite, including a few Chinese, could afford. When the People's Action Party assumed power in 1959, it set out to transform the educational system. In stages, schools became centralized and integrated while a uniform curriculum was introduced. Initially, Chinese-medium schools existed alongside the English-medium schools. By the 1980s, enrolment in Chinese schools began to decline, resulting in the closure of many.

Chiew (1983) uses the concept depluralization to explain ethnic relations in post-independence Singapore. Depluralization, for him, means the breaking down of ethnic boundaries and exclusiveness. As the boundaries of the ethnic groups over-lap more and more, an overarching national identity emerges. Using the concepts broker and parallel institutions – the former referring to institutions which mediate and bridge two or more ethnic groups, and the latter, to those that are shared but duplicated – Chiew suggests that broker institutions have become increasing significant while parallel ones have declined. Bridging institutions which he has identified include integrated schools, bilingual education and public housing. Chiew claims that Singapore society, due to depluralization, enjoys a high degree of structural integration and the successful creation of a national identity. In Singapore, the government adopted a policy of bilingualism and bilingual education where all students are required to study English as a first language and the mother tongue (Chinese [Mandarin], Tamil, or Malay) as a second language. The then Prime Minister, Lee Kuan Yew, rationalized the bilingualism policy this way:

> Our task is to create an enduring society. It must have some essential common features. One of these is the ability and ease in communicating with one another through the use of one common language in our multilingual, multicultural society. (1978)

Since then, the educational system has undergone several changes, most importantly through the setting up of special schools which teach English and Chinese as first languages. What has been the impact of the changing educational system on the self-identity and ethnicity of Singaporeans? In colonial and post-independence Singapore, language policies are often tied up with education and, inevitably, the politics of the nation-states (Gopinathan, 1980: 175; Lian and Ananda, 2002: 7–8). In the colonial era, the educational system was divisive, creating boundaries between the Chinese and other ethnic groups. The various groups and, more importantly, their children, were segregated from one another. Chinese children were educated in Chinese. Chinese education, at that time, followed the more traditional, classical idea of inculcating morality in a person. Thus, Chinese schools, in colonial times, reinforced the socialization process in the family and strengthened the sense of group identity. At the time, Chinese education was China-centered, with little relevance to Singapore (Franke, 1965). Chinese children were educated to identify themselves with Chinese nationalism, with the politics of the nation-state in China.

The Singapore state since 1959, has promoted an ideology of multiracialism, based on the founding Charter principle of equal treatment of cultural and ethnic identities of the various races as well as the four streams of education – Malay, Chinese, English and Tamil (Benjamin, 1976: 116). Educational policy

after the independence of Singapore in 1965 was to break down the segregation of the various ethnic groups, and to set up "integrated" schools. Education, nevertheless, remained a divisive force within the Chinese community. A differentiation between the "Chinese-educated" Chinese and the English-educated Chinese developed, mutually spawning various "sub-ethnic" stereotypes. Partly due to vigorous promotion by the government of the four official languages, Mandarin, Malay, Tamil and English, in the 1990s (Pakir, 1993: 84–85), one sees signs of polarization between the two groups, which, however, was predated as early as the beginning of the twentieth century by a minority of Anglophile Chinese and the majority of Chinese-educated who began to represent two distinct groups in the Chinese population of Singapore. One English-educated Chinese noted the following:

> They (the Chinese-educated Chinese) were one kind and we were another kind. They were very narrow-minded. They only spoke Chinese. As a Chinese-educated, there's no future. They only went to Nantah (the then Nanyang University, a Chinese language university). They were at a disadvantage. If they wanted to go to England, they could not speak English. As an English-educated, it's all right not to know Chinese because you can still get by. I had neighbors who were all Chinese-educated. Thank goodness for them, they eventually became bilingual and did very well. One of the sisters had to sacrifice her life and education to let her brother go and study abroad. I suppose that is what I admire about the Chinese-educated. But Chinese education is not that important. Its good to know some thing just to get by. In Singapore, you do not need to know Chinese. English is far superior. If you only know Chinese, you are at a disadvantage.

Obversely, the Chinese-educated have a low view of their English-educated counterpart:

> If a person looks Chinese but does not speak Chinese, I do not think he is Chinese, and if a person speaks Chinese and does not look Chinese, he is also not a Chinese.

> I think learning Chinese is a torture. But at the same time, it is a shameful thing if you don't know your own language, especially when you are abroad. The Japanese and the French are all very proud of their language, we should be too.

Chinese-educated Chinese were depicted by the English-educated as "ultra-conservative" and "unfashionable". Similarly, the Chinese-educated saw the English-educated as "liberal", "sexually loose", and half-Chinese, an inferior kind of Chinese with little sense of what Chinese culture is. There were different senses of what constitutes Chinese identity and culture between the two groups. It is not accidental that the Chinese-educated tended to use language as a central marker of ethnicity, vital to the transmission of cultural values: "Once Chinese language goes, Chinese culture will go with it." To quote one informant:

> I think Chinese who do not speak Chinese are not really Chinese Chinese. Some do not even celebrate Chinese New Year, they just sleep at home. It's such a waste. They calculate how much *ang pow* (cash money in red paper packets symbolizing prosperity and good luck) they have to give and decide that it's not worth it.

> He's not very Chinese and he has difficulty communicating with his neighbors. It is not right that he does not speak Chinese at all. I can accept him but I don't think the older people can. I think in future, his kids will have problems. They will not be able to speak Mandarin. In Singapore, since Chinese are the majority, he will have problems communicating with

others. It's also very disgraceful. There are some people abroad who are trying to learn Chinese, and then you have a Chinese who cannot speak Chinese.

If foreigners speak to you in Chinese and you cannot reply, it's very embarrassing. Most younger generation mothers today do not speak to their children in Mandarin because they know that without English, they cannot survive in Singapore. Because of this, now there's a big gap between grandchildren and grandparents. They cannot speak to each other.

Being and feeling deprived because of their Chinese language education, such people have developed an emphatic attitude round the Chinese language possibly through a process of reaction-formation – the powerless in-group, embraces and takes renewed pride in the very thing that has been reduced and stigmatized by the powerful out-group. Also, in counter-defence, the Chinese-educated turn the language-culture linkage into a moral issue. The inability of the English-educated to have a sound command of the Chinese language is often depicted by the Chinese-educated as disgraceful. Terms like "banana", that is, "yellow outside and white inside", or "WOG", an acronym for "western oriental gentlemen", were used to characterize the English-educated.

Other than an insistence on the Chinese language, the Chinese-educated also tended to emphasize knowledge of and adherence to Chinese culture, an idealized notion of Chineseness:

People are turning to other cultures because they cannot identify with their own culture. I feel that since one is Chinese, they should know their own culture, otherwise there would be no need to define race. Since we are the majority, obviously, our culture has done most for the society. If the other races could not tolerate us, they would have voiced it, but they have not, so it shows we are all right. . . . For all you know, they may want to share our thinking too. Do you realize that in 5000 years, China has never conquered anyone and even if they have, they did not cause too much hardship or destroy their country? This is significant because of an important Chinese virtue, harmony.

The English-educated Chinese, as expected, tended to underemphasize the role of language in defining identity. Rather, the markers used were "bloodline", hair and skin color, and practicing what they considered as core traditional values. While the Chinese-educated felt that a Chinese must speak, read and write Chinese, and follow all the customs and rituals, the English-educated tended to be more concerned with what they regarded as core values, the most often cited being "filial piety", and the performance of key rituals, such as the celebration of Chinese New Year or Mid-Autumn Festival.

It should be emphasized here that while the English-educated and Chinese-educated agreed with each other on what constitutes core values, such as descent, which refers to the perpetuation of the family name through the provision of sons, and filial piety, in other areas, especially language, disagreement was acute. The Chinese-educated tended to regard language as core, while the English-educated did not, though at times expressing a sense of cultural loss, ambiguity, and ambivalence. While there were individual as well as group differences regarding what are to be considered as core values, for all informants interviewed, whether Chinese or English-educated, there is no sense of *not* being Chinese:

Yes, I am less Chinese. I am aware that I am Chinese and that makes me want to be more Chinese. To be more Chinese, I should be something else. I can't help my being English-educated. But my wish to be able to speak Chinese is a manifestation that I want to be more Chinese. I am more westernised because my parents speak to me in English, and also the mass media portrays it such that you get more prestige if you are English-educated than Chinese-educated. Physically I am Chinese, culturally and psychologically I am not.

3.3.4 Between Generations

There is a shift in the conception of ethnicity between the older and younger generations. The older generation tended to be more confident of the roots of their ethnicity. For them, the sense of "territorial" identity was very important. In the interviews, they tended to call themselves "tang ren", literally, "Tang people", or "zhong guo ren", "people of China". Ethnicity is tied to a sense of place, and ethnic boundary is a geographical one, with a sense of territorial identity closely related to the fact that they were born in China and had migrated to Singapore in the 1900s as sojourners and seeing China as their homeland. Many of these people still retain a desire to visit the homeland, return to China, and be buried in their ancestral place.

However, given that a majority of these older migrants were illiterate peasants who came to Southeast Asia as indentured laborers, their sense of homeland was not based on a sophisticated knowledge of a long, proud history of culture and tradition. Rather, their ethnicity was tied to the "soil" or ancestral land. While they did associate the notion of Chineseness with the idea of a "China" or Chinese civilization, their sense of what this China is appeared to be at best an amorphous one.

In one interview with a mainland Chinese who worked in Singapore, he displayed this sense of China as homeland. To him, like the first-generation migrants who came to Singapore in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the characteristically diasporic desire to return to China was strong, holding up history, tradition and territoriality as glue binding the Chinese together:

The most important sense of what it means to be Chinese is our history. For the Chinese, the history of China goes all the way back to over 5,000 years ago. With such a long history, this is therefore the Chinese identity. It is not language that is the Chinese identity. The foundation of Chinese identity is China's history. This is what makes you a Chinese. It is not just history, it is the culture that makes up a civilization that makes you a Chinese.

Since a long time ago, our ancestors originated from China. We call ourselves "Singapore Chinese", but if you trace our roots to a long, long time ago, our ancestors originated from China. The color of our skin is fair. They spoke in Chinese and they received their education in Chinese. And for thousands of years, everything has remained the same. And for thousands of generations, things have remained the same. Our ancestors had the genes . . . so it has been passed down to us and we all have fair skin. Our eyes are black. It is definitely like that. That is why we are Chinese. There has been much foreign influence on Singapore . . . yet, we can't change our origins – we are really and absolutely Chinese and that cannot be changed . . . we can't be changed because our ancestors are from China. They are real Chinese people – they are our ancestors. That is as early as anyone can think of . . . our ancestors have been Chinese and generations after generations of Chinese have been born till our present generation of Chinese – that is how and why we are still Chinese. We can't

change that. We can't change our history. We can't change the fact that our ancestors are Chinese. Therefore, this question "Why are we Chinese?" would only be a question for us to ponder over if we have ancestors who are Eurasians. . . . But I tell you, we Chinese have no problems saying that we are Chinese because from thousands and thousands of years ago, our ancestors have been fair-skinned Chinese and this has been passed down to all generations till us, the present generation. Everyone has a history that will explain things. . . . Europeans have their own history to tell.

This sense of China as home, as homeland, that is, ethnicity based on territorial and political dimensions, was not shared by the younger Chinese Singaporeans, whether Chinese- or English-educated; "Chinese citizenship", "Chinese politics", or "events happening in China" were not of interest to them nor did they figure in their definition of Chinese identity. Instead, there prevailed a diffuse sense of cultural confusion and loss, resulting in a search, particularly among the English-educated, for markers that would define their ethnic identity. The Chinese-educated have chosen the Chinese language.

Yet, Chinese language in Singapore has taken a bashing. The Chinese-educated have witnessed the rise of the English-speaking middle-class and the demise of Chinese language schools; they feel that they have been deprived of economic and educational opportunities. Thus, their emphasis on the Chinese language must be viewed, simultaneously, as a political, economic, and linguistic issue. It was for this reason that many Chinese-educated claimed that the English-educated Chinese are "less Chinese."

Interestingly, many English-educated Chinese shared this mode of discourse, but for very different reasons. Most of these English-educated Chinese who do not speak the Chinese language fluently did not feel that they are any less Chinese than those who can. However, they did feel a sense of loss:

> I do not feel less Chinese since I speak three (Chinese) dialects. I am into seal carving, I play Chinese musical instruments. Thus, I have all the credentials. The other side of me is fairly anglicized because I have been in Britain for three years. Western ideas have become an intrinsic part of me and, I think, the nation as a whole. We cannot deny British influence in Singapore for 180 years. All this talk about the decadent West is not true. But I sometimes do feel something is missing, something lost. I am stranded between East and West.

Interestingly, it is when interacting with non-Chinese, particularly those who can speak Mandarin, or when they are overseas and meet Taiwanese or mainland Chinese, when this sense of loss and inadequacy arises. When this happens, there is an onset of rationalization – insisting that language is not central to identity, or expressing a wish to learn the language as soon as they have the time. For others, however, there is a sense of superiority, feeling pity for the Chinese-educated because of their lack of economic and educational opportunities. Fluency in the Chinese language is a marker used by the non-Chinese in Singapore to define Chineseness. In addition to blood (which cannot be seen) and phenotype (which is variable), the Chinese language is a clear marker to the outsiders.

In the 1960s and the 1970s, the government emphasized the learning of English. It was seen as a neutral language and, more importantly, the language of science and development. However, in the 1980s and the 1990s, there was a shift to the

learning of Chinese, as seen in the launching of the "Speak Mandarin Campaign" and the setting up of SAP (Special Assistance Plan) schools, in which both English and Chinese are taught as first languages. The official rationale was that the Chinese in Singapore are becoming too westernized and the Chinese language would act as cultural ballast for the Chinese.

Other than merely a linguistic issue, there has been a debate in Singapore on the role of language in cultural transmission. Advocates of Mandarin argue that it is impossible, or at least incomplete, to transmit Chinese cultural values without the Chinese language – suggesting that most English-educated Chinese are less Chinese. On the other hand, most non-Chinese-educated are suggesting that while a knowledge of the language is useful; it is not a necessary condition for Chineseness. Whether it is or not is debatable, but the discourse suggests that a large part of what it means to be Chinese in Singapore is contested terrain.

3.3.5 Community Fragmentation and Disembedding

What used to be a Chinese "community" has largely disappeared. Traditionally and partly due to British policies, the Chinese were segregated from the other ethnic communities. They tended to live in closely-knitted and clearly-marked out territorial areas. However, rapid urban renewal and development and ethnically integrated housing policies have by and large broken down these physical boundaries and mixed the various communities.

In modern-day Singapore, territoriality, language, and religion no longer serve as markers of ethnicity for *all* Chinese. Rather, these factors have become part of a contested (and sometimes self-contradictory) discourse in defining identity. The core features of ethnic identity have over time become closely tied to ascriptive features of phenotype, bloodline and lineage, resulting in a strong sense of sociological boundary, of who can and cannot be a Chinese. A person is "born Chinese", cannot become "un-Chinese" though he or she can be regarded as a lesser Chinese; people from other races who adopt "Chinese cultural values" cannot and will never become or be accepted as Chinese. It is probably this sense of exclusion and exclusiveness that provides the strong bonds holding together a Chinese "community" in Singapore – in spite of the loss of community, the loss of place (Rushdie, 1987: 63).

The fragmentation of Chinese ethnicity manifests itself on many fronts. There are severe differences in whether language is a defining characteristic of Chineseness. One thus observes great diversity, multiplicity and heterogeneity in conceptions of being Chinese. Among the Chinese-educated, Chinese language is central; among the English-educated, it is filial piety. Among the older Chinese, it is a sense of China as homeland, while among younger Chinese, one observes a "disembedding" of space in that China and the concept of homeland have become unimportant in their sense of Chineseness. For them, having been born in Singapore, a sense of ancestral place is missing. Many have never been to China and have little sense of what it is like. Of those who have visited China, many have come back with

rather negative feelings about her backwardness, disorder and lack of hygiene. This disembedding process is important to note as it allows one, at one level, to define the uniqueness of the Chinese in Singapore, as Singaporean Chinese, as opposed to the "China-Chinese", "Taiwanese", "Hong Kong Chinese", and so on. At the same time, the ascription to blood and lineage allows the Chinese in Singapore to identify and affiliate with the "Chinese" world-wide, the Chinese diaspora.

The notion of disembedding is extremely important.[5] The popular prevalent definition of Chinese is mistakenly related to the idea of China, its long history and tradition. Yet, even among the older Chinese in Singapore, who can claim an affiliation to this tradition, this is an idealized conception. There is an over-emphasis on the notion of the great cultural "tradition" that probably arose from the fact that many scholars who have written on the Chinese are westerners with an idealized notion of what Chinese is, or from the educated Chinese people's own mystification. The majority of the Chinese, both in and outside China, are peasants and traders. While they have a sense of the "tradition", it is at best an amorphous one.

There are in fact disembeddings at several levels and at different points of time and place. On one level, there was a disembedding of the self from mainland China, Chinese history, culture, tradition and heritage, resulting in a sense of loss of place, and on another, disembedding from the local community in Singapore. This is important in articulating a discourse on the unity and diversity, sameness and differentness, of Singaporean Chineseness. It allows, in a sense, an individual to say that "I'm a Chinese, they are also Chinese, but they are *so different from me*". The self, over time, has experienced a closer identification with family and family history rather than with community or community organizations. Identity has become more individualized, personalized, or, if you like, subjectivized. A movement of ethnic identity tied to the individual self is becoming more prevalent.

Finally, there is a separation of self-identity from nationality. It is no longer necessary to be a citizen of China to be Chinese, and there is no problem for them to be "Singaporean-Chinese", to be *both* Singaporean *and* Chinese, to be Singaporean precisely by being ethnically Chinese. One may surmise that once outside Singapore, the Chinese, like those from Hong Kong, Taiwan, America, Europe, will decide whether or not to attach, and how much importance to attach, to their Chinese label, to their nationality. They will thus enjoy immense liberty in articulating their sameness versus differentness in the arena of the Chinese diaspora.

Notes

1. The total land area of Singapore is only 685 km^2. With a population of over four million, it has one of the highest population densities in the world.
2. An earlier version of the paper, co-authored with Chan Kwok Bun, was published in Diaspora, Volume 10, Number 3, 2001. I would like to thank the editors of Diaspora for permission to use the paper. The chapter in this book, however, has been extensively revised and expanded, including a new section on the history of the Chinese in Singapore as well as additional fieldwork carried out after the publication of the paper. The new data collected has been incorporated into the analysis.

3. See Isaacs (1975) and Levi-Strauss (1966) for an incisive treatment of names and naming.
4. The major religions of the Chinese are Buddhism, Taoism, Confucianism as well as other popu-
    lar beliefs such as worshipping ancestors and praying to spirits. However, most of the religious
    beliefs and practices of the Chinese do not fall neatly into these known categories. For many
    Chinese, the "formal" religious labels simply do not matter and their practices represent a mix-
    ture of several religious traditions. Many Chinese cannot and do not distinguish these religious
    categories, often mixing Buddhism and Taoism. As Topley (1956: 76) noted, "the popular
    religion of the Chinese people is characterized by its syncretic and catholic nature. It is an
    amorphous mass of beliefs and practices from various sources including the greater systems of
    religion and philosophy."
5. The term disembedding was used by Giddens (1991: 16–20) to refer to the fact that modern
    institutions are in various key respects discontinuous with pre-modern culture and ways of life.
    He suggests that modernity is characterized by the separation of time and space and the dis-
    embedding of social institutions, that is, the lifting out of social relations from local contexts
    and their re-articulation across indefinite tracts of time and space. Although I draw from his
    insights, I use the word disembedding in the context of lifting out and separation.

Chapter 4
Sama Makan tak Sama Makan: The Chinese in Malaysia

4.1 Introduction

With the exception of Singapore, where the Chinese constitutes the majority, Malaysia is the only country in Southeast Asia where the immigrant Chinese is a significant community, over 26% of the population. In comparison, the Chinese in Thailand constitute only 10% of the population, and in Indonesia, only 3%. This particular demographic distribution has had a significant impact on ethnic relations in Malaysia, not the least of which is the feeling among indigenous Malays that the Chinese will seize political power. The Malay distrust of Chinese economic power was, and still is, the main source of conflict between the two groups (Tan, 1982: 47). Similarly, given such a large voting bloc, politics in Malaysia has always been essentially communal, and the government has since independence been a coalition of communal parties, with the Malay-based UMNO as the dominant partner.

This chapter, drawing on fieldwork data collected in contemporary Malaysian society, has two main objectives. First, it seeks to describe the ethnic identity of the Chinese in a multi-ethnic, pluralistic, and modern nation-state. Who and what is a Chinese in Malaysia? What are the markers of Chineseness? How is this ethnic identity presented? How is ethnic identity invoked, negotiated, and mediated? These questions are particularly important, as an understanding of Chinese ethnic identity in Malaysia must take into account the influence of the state and the historical and sociopolitical context of Malaysian society and its unique ethnic composition.[1] The chapter suggests that the majority of studies on the Chinese in Malaysia have focused on macro level analysis, especially on state policies towards the Chinese. A better understanding of ethnicity and ethnic relations will be gained by examining the issue from both a macro and a micro perspective, involving the everyday life of the Chinese in Malaysia.

4.2 Chinese Migration to Malaya

The early contact between China and Malaya dates back to the Chinese settlements in Malaya after the establishment of the Malacca Sultanate around 1400.

Strategically located along the Straits of Malacca, it was a thriving entrepot for goods traded between China, India and the islands of Southeast Asia. At the time of Cheng Ho's visit, there were already some people of Chinese descent living in Malaya, primarily Chinese traders who settled in Malacca to conduct their business (Yen, 2000: 2). However, the main thrust of migration into Malaya came during the nineteenth century with British expansion in Southeast Asia. The adverse conditions in China such as overpopulation, natural calamities and landlord exploitation and the development of the tin mining industry, plantation agriculture and the growing entrepot trade in Malaya provided attractive job opportunities for the Chinese and drew in tens of thousands of migrants.

4.2.1 Economic Involvement of the Chinese

The tin mining industry became an important source of employment for the Chinese in Malaya in the 1840s.[2] The production of tin by Chinese miners from the 1840s onwards led to great improvements in the quality of Straits tin which grew in demand in the world market. By the early 1870s, the Chinese dominated the mining industry. By 1883, Malaya had become the world's largest tin producing country whereas in a decade earlier it only ranked fourth after Australia, Britain and Indonesia (Wong, 1964: 132). Tin mining was in the early years of the nineteenth century a labor intensive industry and nearly half the Chinese population of the Federated Malay States (FMS) was directly dependent on mining for a living. The Chinese mostly lived in and around the town of Kuala Lumpur and the towns of Kinta and Larut tin mining fields such as Kampar, Ipoh and Taiping.

Chinese labor on rubber estates did not affect this occupational structure until the first decade of the twentieth century when plantation agriculture, especially the rubber industry gained in importance in the decade preceding the First World War. The Chinese were important in establishing the rubber plantations and were closely associated with all its aspects. They provided the labor required to clear the jungles, construct roads and work on the plantations. They were the estate owners, small holders, rubber tappers, and were also involved in the packing, grading, milling, transport, storage and sale of the rubber (Phang, 2000: 99). Besides rubber, the Chinese were also involved in commercial agriculture with Chinese venture capital financing some of the earliest commercial cash crops such as pepper, gambier and sugar in the colony.

Many of the Chinese were also involved in trade. The middleman role of the Chinese traders was important because the distribution of the Western manufactured goods could not have been done as effectively without the Chinese compradors. The Chinese in turn benefited by establishing business connections with the Western merchants as well as a network of collection and distribution links with the local inhabitants. Many of the early generation of Chinese capitalist in Malaya were dependent on colonial patronage to amass their wealth. The relationship between the Chinese capital and the colonial state was mutually beneficial. The Chinese obtained

monopoly rights to collect taxes on opium, alcohol, gambling, and other goods and services. They paid the colonial authorities for the right to operate the revenue or excise farms. From 1850 until 1910 when the revenue farm system was eventually abolished, rents obtained from the farming out the collection of taxes to the Chinese merchants constituted an important source of revenue for the colonial administration (Heng and Sieh, 2000: 126).

Chinese economic activities while diverse and widespread, did not dominate the colonial economy. In general, while the Chinese role in the economy overshadowed that of the Malays and the Indians, Chinese capital was eclipsed by Western (mainly British) capital. British policy in Malaya tended to encourage a dual economy. There was a modern and profitable export-oriented economy which was largely in the hands of the British. The Chinese who were largely involved in mineral extraction, cash crop cultivation and the distributive greatly assisted in the exploitation of the colonial economy. There was also a traditional sector which was mainly occupied by the indigenous Malays who were engaged in rice cultivation, fishing, cottage industries and small rubber holdings. Confining the indigenous Malays to their traditional activities was part of the British policy of maintaining the basic structure of Malay society as far as possible as they believed that this would ensure political stability. However, as Gambe (2000: 77) points out, the dual economy policies by the British sowed the seeds of ethnic differentiation and led to the economic rivalry between the races very early in the colonial era. It continues to affect ethnic relations in Malaysia till this day.

4.2.2 Colonial Policy Affecting the Chinese

With the increasing number of Chinese migrants in the late nineteenth century, many of the larger urban centers became predominantly Chinese settlements. They spoke their own language and followed their own distinctive way of life and traditional customs. Their separation was tacitly or otherwise encouraged by the British colonial government which usually demarcated a sector of each town to be reserved as the Chinese quarter. Similar areas were reserved for the Indians, Arabs and Europeans. The British appointed a *capitan* (headman) who was in charge of the community but the Chinese were mostly left on their own. Most of the Chinese organized themselves into their own social, economic and political groupings. By the twentieth century, the Chinese formed a complete economic community and filled almost every rung of the economic and social life in Malaya. They ranged from a large group of laborers, shop-keepers, merchants, traders and entrepreneurs to a smaller group of capitalists who headed complex business enterprises such as banks, insurance companies, shipping companies, tin mines and rubber estates. As more Chinese immigrants arrived in Malaya, they began to penetrate the rural areas.

Already in the Straits Settlements, the Chinese formed a clear majority. In the Federated Malay States, the Chinese outnumbered the Malays in Perak, Selangor and Negri Sembilan. It was only in Pahang that the Malays outnumbered the other

races. As a whole the Chinese predominated as the main racial category in the FMS, forming 44% of the population, with the Malays comprising only 33% in 1941. The Malays formed the clear majority only in the Unfederated Malay States, comprising 66% of the population in 1941, while the Chinese predominated only in Johor (Lau, 1991: 15).

The Malay Reservation Enactment to give Malays special protection in the possession of land was first introduced in the Federated Malay States in 1913.[3] At this time, the colonial government found itself in a contradictory position of "protecting" the Malay states whose basic unit was the "kampong" of which land was an integral part, and the disintegration of the Malay *kampongs* as a result of capital investment in land. The utilization of Malay land worked against the colonial policy of encouraging a settled peasantry which was considered the best way of ruling the Malays through indirect rule. Although the main problem associated with the displacement of the Malay peasantry from their lands was the rapid expansion of the tin and rubber industries, from the outset the policy of Malay land reservation was couched in terms of protecting the land of the Malays from the Chinese and Indians (Abraham, 2004: 356–357). Under this legislation, Malay reservations were created whereby the land could only be alienated to Malays and could not be transferred out of Malay hands. However, the Malays could pledge the land as security for a loan or an advance. In this way, many Chinese and Indian moneylenders and speculators effectively obtained control of the land although the Malay remained the owner in name only.

By the 1930s, as Chinese investors began moving into rubber land, their economic expansion was seen as a threat not only by the Malays, but also by the colonial administration. The 1913 Enactment was replaced by the new 1933 Malay Reservations Enactment. According to Abraham (2004: 364) the new legislation continued to emphasize the earlier British policy of maintaining a settled Malay peasantry, however it took on a distinct racialist dimension. Land was now needed to be reserved for Malays because their "racial inferiority" made it impossible for them to compete with the alien Chinese and Indians on equal terms. The immediate effect was therefore to deal with the transfer of Malay lands to moneylenders who were mostly Chinese and Indians.

The Reservations policy had the effect of causing racial polarization as it singled out the non-Malay alien population of Chinese and Indians as being responsible for the economic backwardness of the Malays. Within the Chinese community, the impact of the Reservations Enactment served to highlight the pro-Malay policies of the colonial government and made them view the privileged position accorded to the Malays as being politically determined because of their racial identity. The Enactment itself was conceived in terms of racial objectives, that is, to protect those of the "native" Malay race against the non-Malays. Such a categorization was particularly offensive to certain segments of the Chinese population (such as the Peranakan Chinese) whose ancestors in some cases had settled in the country before the British colonial rule whereas more recent immigrants of Indonesian origins were considered "Malays" and hence entitled to the statutory privileges given to the Malays (Abraham, 2004: 374).

4.2.3 Political Outlook of the Early Chinese Migrants

While the early Chinese settlers participated actively in the economy in Malaya, few were interested in politics. However, the rise of nationalism among the overseas Chinese changed the political attitude of the migrants. Many of the Chinese began to exhibit a deep concern for the political future of China, as well as a strong desire to preserve their cultural identity. This was reflected in the rise of Chinese education in Malaya. Traditional Chinese schools in Malaya existed as early as the nineteenth century. However, it was in the early twentieth century that the enthusiasm for Chinese education increased tremendously, spurred on by the social and political upheaval in China and the sweeping fervor of Chinese nationalism. There was a proliferation of private Chinese schools, sponsored by surname, district or dialect associations, business guilds or wealthy benefactors (Lian, 1995: 393). By 1938, there were 996 Chinese primary and 36 secondary schools in Peninsula Malaysia which were developed entirely with the financial resources of the Chinese community (Tan, 1988: 61).

The political activities of the reformist leaders such as K'ang Yu Wei as well as revolutionaries such as Sun Yat Sen in Malaya further fuelled the political sentiments of the Chinese. The Reformists set up modern schools in the Chinese community, established two Chinese newspapers and set up a front organization, the *Hao Hsueh Hui* (Chinese Philomatic Society) to promote Chinese nationalism. The movement brought a new political consciousness to the Chinese community in Malaya. In competition with the Reformists were the Chinese Revolutionaries, headed by Dr Sun Yat-Sen. The Revolutionaries established their own newspapers, the T'ung Meng Hui (Society of Alliance) and propaganda organizations such as reading clubs and drama troupes to spread the ideas of republicanism and to raise funds for planned uprisings in China. Several Kuomintang branches were set up throughout Malaya in 1913 and these KMT Malaya (KTMM) branches received support from a considerable proportion of the Chinese community.

In the 1930, the Malayan Communist Party (CPM) was formed in Malaya. The CPM concentrated its efforts on capturing the support of three main groups: the traditional network of the Chinese Chamber of Commerce (CCC) and the Chinese associations (huay kuan), the Chinese schools and the nascent trade unions. These institutions encompassed most of the Chinese community. Generally the KMTM wielded greater influence over the CCC and the *huay kuans* while the CPM dominated the trade unions and the two parties shared control of the Chinese schools (Heng, 1988: 21).

The KMTM and the CPM represented in Malaya the two dominant political movements of twentieth century China. However, there was also a small group of Straits Chinese who had separate political views. The Straits Chinese British Association (SCBA) was initially formed in Singapore and Malacca in 1900 to safeguard the interests of the Straits born British subjects and to promote their social and educational welfare. Although it was an organization with a limited political clientele compared to the mass based KMTM and CPM, the SCBA played a prominent role in the colonial politics in Malaya because of their special relationship with the

British colonial authorities. The SCBA was generally Anglophilic in its political orientation and the SCBA leaders often avoided political affiliation with the KMTM and the CPM. However, they maintained close professional ties with the CCC and the *huay kuans* out of economic necessity. Despite the British pro-Malay policies and the heightened sense of nationalism among the Chinese during the colonial era, widespread inter-racial animosities had not broken out. However, the Second World War and the subsequent Japanese occupation from 1942 to 1945 radically changed ethnic relations between the different races in Malaya.

4.2.4 The Japanese Occupation and the Growing Racial Divide

The Japanese racialist inclination manifested itself in the massacre of thousand of Chinese immediately after the conquest of Malaya and Singapore. The Chinese were discriminated against in government service, in schools and in business. In contrast to this, the Japanese seemed to favor the Malays as they continued the pre-war British pro-Malay policy. The Japanese reliance on Malay support was expected, given their distrust of the Chinese population as potential enemies. However the discrimination aroused resentment among most Chinese towards the Malays. While there is little evidence to show that the Japanese deliberately promoted racial animosity between the Malays and the Chinese as a matter of policy, the overall social tensions which their policies created, and the local interpretations of these policies by Malay and Chinese communities led to bitter inter-racial conflicts (Cheah, 2003: 40–41).

One of the major points of conflict was the perception that the Malays and the Chinese were on opposing sides during the Japanese occupation. This was largely due to the Japanese use of local manpower for internal security control and local defense units. The Japanese established volunteer units such as the *Heiho* (Auxiliary servicemen), *Giyu Gun* (Volunteer Army) and *Giyu Tai* (Volunteer Corps) which were not meant to be sent outside Malaya for combat but were specifically used to relieve Japanese forces which could then be used against the Allies. Members of these units were frequently used by the Japanese to raid guerilla bases and to cut off their food lines. While the volunteer units were open to all races when it first began in 1943, the Malays eventually formed the majority (Cheah, 2003: 34).

The Malay dominated security forces were often dispatched to control the Chinese-led insurgency by the Malayan Communist Party (CPM) which had taken up arms against the Japanese. As the only political organization prepared for an active anti-Japanese insurgency, the CPM attracted widespread support among the Chinese who bore the brunt of Japanese brutality and established a strong politico-military resistance movement, the Malayan People's Anti-Japanese Army (MPAJA). Thus the conflict during the Japanese occupation took on a strong racial slant, pitting Chinese insurgents against the predominantly Malay security forces.

Neither the CPM nor the MPAJA meant to foster racial antagonism or a policy of discrimination between the Chinese, the Malays and the Indians. In fact their aim was to unite the three major races in Malaya to overthrow the Japanese and to

establish a Malayan republic. However, membership in the MPAJA was overwhelmingly Chinese (about 95%). Although there were some Malay and Indian members, the Chinese character was very strong. The leaders were mostly Chinese and spoke and wrote in Chinese. Japanese propaganda also frequently identified the Chinese resistance as "communists" and "troublemakers". The CPM failed to counter such propaganda effectively. There is also no evidence to show that the CPM took account of Malay sensitivities and fear of communism or made any attempt to understand Malay customs and the Islamic religion (Cheah, 2003: 68).

The tension between the two ethnic groups surfaced during the period between the Japanese surrender when serious Sino-Malay conflicts ensued. The MPAJA attacked suspected Japanese collaborators who were mostly Malays. As the MPAJA consisted almost entirely of Chinese and were under the control of the CPM, the attacks took on a serious racial dimension. In retaliation, the Malay also carried out reprisals on Chinese and the MPAJA guerillas.

4.2.5 The Federation of Malaya and its Implications for the Chinese

After the surrender of the Japanese, the British Military Administration[4] (BMA) resumed control and attempted to restore order in Malaya. The colonial government was conscious of the deep-seated hostility between the Chinese and the Malays. In preparation for Independence, the British attempted to establish a cohesive Malayan Union which could build on a common Malayan identity for all the different ethnic groups.[5] Under the new Malayan Union, the Straits Settlements of Penang and Malacca and the nine Malaya states were to be brought under one centralized government. Sovereignty would be transferred from the nine Malay rulers to the Malayan Union under the British crown. Singapore, whose population was mainly Chinese, was to be excluded from the Malayan Union to ensure that the proposed Malayan Union would have a Malay majority. The Malayan Union proposal also sought to abolish the special position the Malays enjoyed with regard to citizenship rights. Non-Malays claiming Malaya as their home (based on birth or domicile) were to enjoy equal citizenship rights with the Malays (Leong, 2003: 89).

The offer of Malayan Union citizenship would benefit about 1.6 million local-born Chinese, or about 62.5% of the total Chinese population in Malaya who would automatically become citizens. Of the remaining 37.5% of Chinese who were born in China or elsewhere, many could qualify residentially for Malayan Union citizenship. For many of the Chinese however, there were mixed feelings and doubts about the proposed Malayan Union. Some objected to the separation of the predominantly-Chinese Singapore from the Malayan Union, while others were unsure about what Malayan citizenship would mean. According to Cheah (2003: 289), many of the proposals were so ambiguous that it was difficult for the non-Malays to be really enthusiastic about the plan as a whole. Moreover, many of them were still unclear about where their loyalties lay, while the British government's Malayan Union policy required them to shift their political orientation fully to Malaya. Whatever

their reasons, the Chinese only showed lukewarm interest in the initial citizenship proposals (Lau, 1991).

The Malays on the other hand were strongly opposed to the Malayan Union which they perceived as a threat to their privileged status in Malaya. There was a new unity among the Malays who realized that they had to be united to fight off the British threat of a Malayan Union. A resurgent Malay nationalism was born and manifested in the newly formed United Malays National Organization (UMNO, established in March 1946). The anti-Malayan Union movement by UMNO success-fully presented the British move to the Malay masses as one favoring the Chinese to the detriment of Malay interests as a whole (Cheah, 2003: 296). The fervent opposition of the Malays to the Malayan Union forced the British to re-think the constitutional reforms in Malaya. Opposition by the Malay aristocracy and the Malay UMNO leaders in the civil service threatened to undermine the function-ing of government (Heng, 1988: 47). Even more menacing was the prospect of the Malays being forced into more extreme modes of political dissent if the UMNO leadership failed in its struggle to dismantle the Malayan Union (Lau, 1991: 279).

After secret negotiations with the Malay rulers and UMNO, the British agreed to restore the Malay rulers' sovereignty and curtail citizenship rights to non-Malays. This ensured that the pre-war privileged status of the Malays would be preserved (Cheah, 2003: 296). The Malayan Union proposal was dropped and replaced by the Federation of Malaya in 1948, after negotiations between the Malays and the British. Under the Federation of Malaya Agreement, Malaya was recognized as primar-ily a Malay country and the special position of the Malays would be safeguarded. Qualification for citizenship in the Federation was tightened.[6]

The Federation of Malaya Agreement was opposed by the Chinese and non-Malays who unsuccessfully tried to block its implementation on the basis that it lacked equal rights for the Malays and the non Malays. The conservative Chinese elements under the leadership of Tan Cheng Lock continued to fight for better citi-zenship provisions for the Chinese which it subsequently won several concessions.[7] The radical elements among the Chinese in the CPM however, decided to resort to armed insurrection to seize power (Heng, 1988: 50).

4.2.6 Sino-Malay Relations During the Communist Insurgency

Five months after the Federation of Malaya was formed, the country was in serious turmoil because of the communist insurgency. The Malay unease with the local Chinese sharply increased when the CPM launched a rebellion against the British (Lee, 1997: 75).[8] The insurgency took on a further ethnic character because the vast majority of the members and supporters of the CPM were Chinese whereas the bulk of the security forces were British and Commonwealth troops in support of the Malayan police (mostly Malay). The communists in Malaya targeted the tin and rubber industries which were the mainstay of the economy at that time. The CPM was blamed for looting, the destruction of agricultural estates and assassination of British rubber planters and tin miners.

At the urging of the British administration, the conservative Chinese leaders formed the Malayan Chinese Association (MCA) in 1949. This was encouraged by the colonial administration which believed that such an organization could mobilize Chinese support against the CPM, and so help to defeat the rebellion. The MCA was instrumental in assisting the British with the plan to resettle Chinese squatters living in the fringe of the jungle to "New Villages" (NVs). The Briggs Plan was a strategy to cut off the communist insurgents from the Chinese squatter population which they believed was providing food, supplies, intelligence and recruits to the CPM. The British government forced 1.2 million rural dwellers to move into 600 new settlements during the Emergency period (1948–1960). Of these about 650,000 people (32% Malays, 45% Chinese and 18% Indians and 5% Javanese and others) were regrouped in rubber estates, tin mines, and around existing towns. Another 572,917 people (85% Chinese, 9% Malays, 4% Indians and 1% others) were resettled into 480 NVs, often a great distance from their original homes. Almost half of the NVs were established in Perak and Johore. In these two states, and in Pahang and Selangor, some 63% of the NVs were to be found, accounting for 84.6% of the total NV population (Loh, 2000: 257–258).

The MCA acted as the middlemen for the colonial administration in the implementation of the resettlement program. While the leaders of the MCA were supporters of the government, they often criticized the government for its heavy handedness and insensitivity in the implementation of the New Village program as it caused resentment and frustration among the Chinese (Heng, 1988: 106). Many Chinese felt that the resettlement caused them more discomfort and hardship than the Malays and were bitter about having to live in what was construed as restrictive camps. Residents had to put up with dusk to dawn curfews which were enforced, food rationing, body searches and periodic arrests (Loh, 2000: 258).

Loh (2000: 269) contends that the New Villages were essentially Chinese enclaves in multi-ethnic Malaysia. Except for the few police officers and their families (usually Malays) who lived in a fenced up portion near the entrance to the settlements, more than 80% of the residents were Chinese. Clearly delineated from the Malay *kampongs* and with few Indians living on the estates, the Chinese did not mix with the other ethnic groups if they did not venture out of the villages. Thus the NVs tended to reinforce the ethnic consciousness of Chinese and perhaps hampered the development of any real inter-ethnic co-operation. The counter-insurgency measures eventually paid off as the Communist guerillas were forced to retreat to the Thai-Malayan border. The period of the Emergency officially ended in January 1960. The new villages continued to exist, but were no longer subjected to the security measures.

4.2.7 Political Re-Orientation by the Chinese

To the overseas Chinese in Malaya, China had been their sentimental homeland and the visits by Chinese political activists seeking moral and financial in the early twentieth century kept them focused on the situation in China. For a while the

Communist victory in 1949 in China boosted the confidence and image of the CPM among the left wing elements within the Chinese community in Malaya and produced widespread feelings of pride at the emergence of a powerful and unified China. By the early 1950s, however, the reported excesses of the Communist government against landlords and other members of the property holding class in Southern China hardened local anti-Communist sentiment in Malaya and resulted in a significant reduction in the numbers of Malayan Chinese returning to the mainland. Many of the Malayan Chinese began to regard Malaya as their sole country of residence (Heng, 1988: 100–101).

4.2.8 Independence and Racial Riots

By the 1950s, the issue of independence was brought into focus. The colonial administration instituted measures to devolve power from the British crown and made the promise of granting self rule in an attempt to combat the CPM's demand for immediate independence. The Malays and Chinese political groups sought to achieve some form of pan-ethnic co-operation in order to gain independence. The MCA leaders decided that it was through working with the Malays that they could build a significant political presence. The UMNO leadership accepted the MCA as they recognized the need for some demonstration of multi-racial co-operation to expedite the progress towards independence.[9]

Both UMNO and MCA agreed to a compromise – a special position for the Malays in return for citizenship for qualified Chinese and other communities, Islam as the official religion and the freedom to practice other religions, Malay as the national language and the right to study and use Chinese and other languages, and for the Malay rulers to become the constitutional monarchs for all citizens. It was deemed necessary for the races to provide a united front to demonstrate to the British that pan-ethnic co-operation was viable and that national unity and integration was their ultimate goal. Subsequently on 31 August 1957 the UMNO, MCA, MIC alliance government which was elected to office in 1955 obtained independence for Malaya from the British government (Cheah, 2003: 301).

However, building a truly pan-ethnic society was a challenge for the new government. The issues which were pushed aside during the decolonization process surfaced to hamper inter-ethnic relations in the years after Independence. During the 1960s, there was increasing Malay frustration at the lack of progress made on Malay special rights. The Chinese were also demanding equal rights, and a greater recognition for the Chinese language and education. In 1969, the fragile political alliance was shattered by the 1969 racial riots which lasted about a week. The worst-hit areas were in the capital, Kuala Lumpur which recorded 200 deaths (Leong, 2003: 93). A state of emergency was declared and Parliament was suspended for 21 months during which time the National Operations Council was appointed to take charge of the country.

4.2.9 *New Economic Policy and the Move Towards a Malay State*

The 1969 racial riots set a new course for politics in Malaysia. After parliamentary rule was re-instated, the government focused on removing the root causes behind the riots. The political balance of power was shifted in favor of the Malays, with constitutional amendments prohibiting any act, speech or publication on issues which could provoke racial hostility, including special Malay rights, the position of Islam as the religion of the state and the use of Malay as the sole national language (Lee and Heng, 2000: 208). Perhaps the most controversial move by the government was to initiate the New Economic Policy (NEP). The ostensible objective of the NEP was to eradicate poverty and to correct the economic imbalances among the different ethnic groups. Strategies were put in place to increase the Malay share of corporate equity. The sensitive issue of Chinese education was also not spared as new education policies were introduced to convert schools and universities to Malay-medium institutions.

The Minister of Education announced that English primary schools were to use the Malay language as the medium of instruction from 1971. Malay was recognized as the national language as well as the sole official language of the country (Tan, 1988: 63). Entry quotas and the establishment of training colleges ensured that Malays had greater access to higher education (Lee and Heng, 2000: 208–209). The pro-Malay policies created substantial frustration among the non-Malay population who felt deprived of higher education and employment outlets. The quota system meant that good results in the national examinations could not guarantee admission into a tertiary institution or jobs in the public sector for the Chinese.

The changes wrought by the NEP came in the midst of an Islamic resurgence during the 1970s and early 1980s. Besides policies to promote economic restructuring among the Malay community, there were also calls from some Muslim leaders for the implementation of *syariah* law and the transformation of Malaysia into an Islamic state. Although Malaysia was by constitution a secular state, several Islamic practices were introduced in public policy when Dr Mahathir Mohamad became Prime Minister in 1981. These included Islamic banking and insurance practices and the establishment of an International Islamic University in 1983.

The NEP as well as the resurgence of Islamic faith caused great concern among the Chinese. They faced job restrictions, promotion prospects and limited enrolment into the local universities. Businesses were also affected as licenses and contracts were mostly reserved for Malays and state-backed Malay enterprises. Before the NEP, the Chinese were the main employees in five main sectors – mining and quarrying (66%), manufacturing (66%), construction (72%), wholesale and retail trade, hotels and restaurants (67%) and finance, insurance, real estate and business services (53%). With the implementation of the NEP however, the proportion of Chinese in almost all sectors fell while the *bumiputra* share increased. By 1990, the *bumiputra* were dominant in all sectors except the construction, commercial and financial sectors where the Chinese held a slim advantage. The public utilities, government and other service sectors remain firmly in the hands of the *bumiputra* who have retained a share of 66% since 1985 (Phang, 2000: 103).

The economic and cultural threat to the Chinese in Malaysia forced them to emphasize greater solidarity within the community. Tan (1988: 64) noted that the policies favoring the *bumiputra* led to a heightened feeling of ethnic loyalty and awareness of cultural identity. The Chinese community placed greater emphasis on self reliance as it was perceived as the only means for non-Malays to safeguard their interests. In the area of education, there was an increase in the enrolment of children in Chinese primary schools and greater interest in the independent Chinese schools. Mostly funded by the Chinese community, these were committed to using Chinese as a medium of instruction and to preserve and sustain the Chinese culture. The enrolment in the ICS increased from 15,900 in 1970 to 36,633 in 1983 (Tan, 1988: 66). The Tunku Abdul Rahman (TAR) College, established in 1969 under the leadership of the MCA also helped to improve the tertiary options for the Chinese.

In order to overcome the NEP restrictions placed on non-Malay businesses, many Chinese businesses turned to manufacturing and high technology industries which had fewer encumbrances. Today manufacturing is the country's largest export earner and an estimated 80% of the small and medium size manufacturing industries are Chinese-owned (Lee and Heng, 2000: 218). Another strategy among the Chinese businessmen was to cultivate links with politically well-connected Malay partners or recruit them into the board of directors. Chinese entrepreneurs who actively courted Malay patrons and partners in their businesses were extremely successful. Despite the legislation by the Mahathir government in 1993 to curb royal rights, the royalty remain involved in business. On the ground level, such alliances have meant that the Chinese are often identified as having secured ill-gotten gains through corruption and collusion (Tan, 2000: 388).

The political system in Malaysia is still explicitly based on ethnic groups. The ruling party, Barisan Nasional, is a coalition of ethnic parties, namely UMNO which is Malay-based, MCA which is Chinese-based and the MIC which is an Indian party. Even the opposition parties are organized along ethnic lines as the PAS is a Malay party while the DAP is essentially a Chinese party. The Malay and Chinese political elites seem to have established a mutually beneficial relationship, with the recognition by both groups that the preservation of Malay political primacy and the maintenance of non-Malay interests are vital to maintaining the comfortable status quo in Malaysian politics. This political arrangement is perceived as the most appropriate for maintaining political stability in a country which has a fragile ethnic balance and the racial tensions of the post war years have not been forgotten.

The Chinese-dominated political parties in Peninsula Malaysia all espouse the political, economic and social integration of the Chinese in Malaysia. However, they remain staunch in the belief that the Chinese should maintain their cultural distinctiveness and continue to promote Chinese education and the use of Chinese dialects. Although most of the younger, post-independence population has gone through a Malaysian-oriented national education system which uses Malay as the medium of instruction, many of them can still speak Mandarin. Many Chinese can speak some Malay but they habitually communicate with each other in Chinese and to a lesser extent in English.

In the economic sphere, the recession years of the mid 1980s saw a gradual liberalization of economy. Since 1986 the government has been loosening its economic restrictions in order to stimulate the economy. Overall the political and economic climate in Malaysia has been more accommodative towards the Chinese. In 1991, the NEP was replaced by the New Development Policy (NDP). It still maintains the special rights of the Malays but does not adopt numerical targets and emphasizes income-raising policies. Lee and Heng (2000: 219) believe that while the NDP's objective is to create a dynamic *bumiputra* commercial class, the Chinese businesses have benefited from the inflow of foreign investment between 1987 and 1997. Hara (1991: 370) notes that while the alliances between Chinese and Malay entrepreneurs on the basis of mutual equality are still few, they are on the increase. Often though, the Malay politicians and top level bureaucrats figure heavily in the Malay side of the deals.

4.3 Ethnic Identity of the Chinese

From the historical analysis of race relations in Malaysia, one of the features of British colonial rule was the "divide and rule" policy, wherein they segregated the local population based on racial categorization and "ethnic compartmentalization" (Stockwell, 1982: 55), so that each racial group performed a particular role or occupation in society. Significantly, this colonial legacy has had a strong impact on present-day ethnic relations in Malaysia, as it has in other Southeast Asian nation-states, because the "seeds of ethnic differentiation drawn along economic lines were . . . sown . . . by the British themselves" (Gambe, 2000: 77). Thus, upon independence in 1957, Malaysia was no more than the "construction of a departing colonial power" (Lian, 1997: 2).

The Federation of Malaya agreement in 1948 granted automatic citizenship to Malays, but not to non-Malays, despite Malaya's *jus soli* citizenship policy (Tan, 2000). Citizenship for the Chinese was conditional and not a right, which implicitly marginalized the Chinese in Malaya and favored the Malays, contributing to the "emergence of a Chinese *ethnie*". Citizenship was "divisive and failed to cultivate a unifying nationality" (Lian, 1995: 96, emphasis in original).

The post-independent NEP (New Economic Policy) that was introduced in 1971 was supposed to achieve national unity through the proper distribution of wealth (Gomez, 2000). However, it was arguably the final nail that cemented Malay *bumi* hegemony in all aspects of Malaysian life because it granted special concessions and privileges to Malays over all the other races (Tan, 2000). A new Malay middle class emerged and directly challenged the political and economic status of the Chinese, so much so that their position as citizens has become seriously eroded (Lee, 1998; see also Suryadinata, 2000). With increasing political and cultural hegemony among the Malays in Malaysia, what has been the response of the Chinese with regard to their ethnic identity? Have they had to make significant concessions or negotiations to ensure a peaceful co-existence in a Malay-dominated society?

As the preceding section of the paper has shown, race and ethnic relations between the Malays and the Chinese have been contentious issues since the colonial period. Much of the research however, has been done on a macro level, with the tendency to discuss ethnic identity and race relations in terms of national/ communal politics. However such macro level discussions do not necessarily capture the full picture of the ethnic identity and ethnic relations in Malaysia. The next section of the paper will explore the ways in which ethnicity and ethnic relations are managed by the Chinese in Malaysia at an individual level.

4.3.1 Ethnicity by Ascription

In the fieldwork interviews, it is very interesting to note that most of the Chinese informants in this study describe their Chineseness in ascriptive terms. Phenotypical and genotypical (blood, bloodline) characteristics are often invoked in self-identification. To quote from some informants:

> I know I am Chinese by my skin color. Yellow-skin, black hair, brown eyes. Tradition is man-made; it can change or be influenced. But not appearance. That does not change. Some Chinese are adopted by Indians, they speak Indian and may not consider themselves Chinese, but I think they are Chinese, because they look and are born of Chinese parents.

> I think the biological part comes first. I was born into a Chinese family, that is, a person whose parents are Chinese will be Chinese.

> You are Chinese because of your nature. You are born Chinese, your parents are Chinese, your roots are Chinese, and your blood is Chinese.

Informants refer to blood and bloodline, instead of cultural attributes, as the most important marker or criteria for ethnic identification. The emphasis on primordiality, rather than cultural attributes, as the central marker of identity is understandable. Living in close proximity to Indians and Malays, phenotypical differences provide the first and most visible distinction from other ethnic groups. At another level, the use of primordial sentiments creates boundaries between groups, restricting the entry of outsiders, and, to some extent, denying exit to insiders. Finally, the use of racial characteristics for differentiation is a consequence of racial politics of Malaysian society, from the time of British colonial rule, to the policies enacted during the period of independence, and to present day Malaysian society. As one informant noted,

> Many Indians in Malaysia are able to speak good Chinese and can act like Chinese. But, the blood itself is Indian. I will say, that no matter how, you can never change nature.

Informants emphasize that one cannot become Chinese, one is born Chinese. In addition, a person who is Chinese will always be a Chinese, even he or she does not speak the language or practices another religion. Thus, at the level of individual discourse, identification is racial and is invoked to delineate the "us" from the "them". This clearly delineated boundary is reinforced by the data on intermarriage. The intermarriage rate in Malaysia especially between the Chinese and Malays is

very low. Informants consider intermarriage to be undesirable and unacceptable. As one informant said,

> Chinese do not like to intermarry because they have to convert to Islam. Once you become a Muslim, your name will be changed, and your children later are also considered Muslims. Therefore, you become less and less Chinese in future.

> My parents will never agree to inter-ethnic marriage because of the burdens that every race carries; they are afraid this may corrupt the Chinese blood.

In fact, Chinese informants often describe inter-ethnic marriages in derogatory terms:

> Yes, the children will be *chup cheng* or mixed race. His blood will be *sia pun chi lai*, mixed-up. How can he be Chinese?

This emphasis on birth and blood implies categorical exclusion and exclusiveness, and seen as contaminating the purity of Chinese blood. Almost all informants mentioned phenotypical characteristics and blood as the basis for ethnic identification. Other secondary attributes were also mentioned, but informants were quite adamant that the issue of blood was non-negotiable. As one informant puts it, "To me, skin color and blood is number one, then there are traditions." Some of the more common indices mentioned are family names or Chinese name, Chinese values, such as filial piety, Chinese festivals, such as Chinese New Year and *Qing Ming*, and traditions. To quote some informants; when asked what makes them Chinese:

> The way I was brought up, in a traditional Chinese family which observes a lot of Chinese tradition "*Qing Ming*, *bak chang*" festivals. All Souls-Day. There are all Chinese traditions.

> I think the biological part comes first, being born of Chinese parents. Second is the practicing of Chinese culture. The food aspect, I think, is one thing that binds all Chinese. Food, I consider the most important. Certain Chinese traits, such as, family togetherness, practice of Chinese festivals, are also important. Religion will not define Chineseness. I would disqualify clothes too. Chinese do not wear cheongsam anymore.

It is clear that while almost all informants agree on blood and parentage as defining characteristics of Chineseness, cultural attributes are more variable. Some informants would insist that having a Chinese name is important; others do not think so. Some emphasize religion and customs, others argue that a Christian is still a Chinese. Still others point to the importance of the Chinese language while others claim that being English-educated and not knowing Mandarin does not make them any less Chinese. The point is that these indices are not shared by all or even most Chinese in Malaysia and are regarded as negotiable. Again, this view is reinforced by their attitude towards adopted children, and children of intermarriage. One informant noted:

> For instance, if a Chinese adopts an Indian and he learns things Chinese. He may speak Mandarin, knows Chinese culture, has Chinese practices, but he still not Chinese (at this point, informant showed me his arm and pointed out its color). It is difficult to say who he is, to put it crudely; we call him *ban fun*, half-breed.

It can be argued that what may be considered "traditional" markers of ethnic identification (language, education, and religious affiliations) have lost their

homogenizing influence among the Chinese in modern-day Malaysia. There is heterogeneity of religious beliefs and language competences. These are now open to negotiation, interpretation, and mediation, and are ambiguous rather than defining characteristics. In the past, territorial origin, historical consciousness and cultural identity held the Chinese community together. At present, it appears that only the principles of birth, blood, and descent matter. Birth, blood, and descent are more individual and family oriented, rather than community-based. Thus, in ethnic identification in Malaysia, it can be argued that there is greater reliance on the family, rather than the community. There is also a great deal of cynicism that community and political organizations, such as the Malaysian Chinese Association, junior partner in the Barisan Nasional coalition government, truly represent the interests of the Chinese as a whole.

I suggest that cultural attributes are not critical to the individual in his or her ethnic identification and that different individuals, given different socialization experiences, draw on different attributes, whether language, customs, or religion, to define their identity. Other than blood and descent, there is little agreement on what constitutes Chinese culture or identity. Interestingly, while there is not much consensus in defining Chinese identity, there is broad consensus on what constitutes the "outgroup". A Chinese in Malaysia is Chinese because he is not Malay, or Indian. They have different blood, and they look different. At the same time, something that surfaces in almost all the interviews, a Chinese is not Malay because Malays are Muslim and they cannot eat pork.

4.3.2 Religion and Food as Ethnic Markers

In Malaysia, religion and food become important markers for ethnic differentiation. In order to understand this, it is necessary to provide some background details. All ethnic Malays in Malaysia are Muslims. Religion was, and continues to be, a central issue in the relations between ethnic groups, as well as how different groups react to the state. Islam is the official religion although the constitution recognizes freedom of worship for other religions. In Malaysia, the ethnic identity of the Malays is equated with religious affiliation to Islam. In fact, Article 160 of the Federal Constitution states that "Malay" is defined as a person who professes the religion Islam, habitually speaks the Malay language, and conforms to Malay customs. Siddique (1981: 77) however, argues that the constitutional definition of "Malayness" sets a "territorial boundary to the definition of Malay – hence an Indonesian who is Muslim, speaks Malay, and observes Malay customs would not be a Malay under the constitutional definition unless he fulfils the residence requirement...".

In Islam, there are food prohibitions, or taboos. What are regarded as *halal* is deemed acceptable for consumption while some food is regarded as *haram*. While there are many types of food that are regarded as *haram*, the symbol of pork takes on special significance, in that, the Chinese eat pork often, while the Malays abhor

it. Informants, both Chinese and Malay, often refer to the notion of "sama makan tak sama makan", translated literally as "eat together and cannot eat together." Because of food restrictions, Chinese and Malays very often do not eat at the same table. For the more fundamentalist Muslims, it is not simply the food, but even the sharing of utensils. In the interviews with the Chinese, the practice of not eating together often surfaces in discussions of ethnic relations.

> We eat in different restaurants. Malays don't usually eat with Chinese because they eat halal food. They even have different stalls in the same canteen.

> Yes, we take pork, they don't. When Malays come to your house, they will not touch your cups, plates, it is to that extent. We have to be careful with food. We cannot carelessly invite Malays for a meal. You also have to say things more carefully, for example, do not talk about pigs in front of Malays.

Barth (1969) suggests that ethnic boundaries, rather than the intrinsic culture within an ethnic group, are a key feature of ethnic identification. If ethnicity is only about the cultural attributes within an ethnic group, than it is unlikely that food, or the consumption of pork, can be invoked as a distinctive ethnic marker. However, in Malaysia, the consumption of pork is central to boundary maintenance. Tan (2000: 453) for example, notes that "eating pork is perceived by both Chinese and Malays as ethnically significant". Food consumption is a "cultural symbol" that draws the social boundaries between the Malays and the Chinese. In fact, food is such a key symbol of ethnic differentiation that many Malays define the Chinese as "makan babi," that is "people who eat pork."

Often, this distinction takes on political overtones. For example, when PAS, a fundamentalist Islamic political party won the elections in the state of Kelantan, one of the proposals was to ban the sale of pork in the whole state. This caused an uproar among the Chinese in the state as it was viewed as an attempt to imposed Islamic values on non-Malays in the state. It should, however, be noted that other than the consumption of pork and *halal* food, a few informants suggest that food is a symbol of hybridity that has resulted in the close cultural contact between the Malays and the Chinese.

> Food is the thing that unites all Malaysians. I feel at home eating Malay or Chinese food. The Malays also eat Chinese food, but they make sure it is halal. Malays eat chilli and ikan bilis. But now, we Chinese are eating more chillis too. It is all *champor* (mixed). We Chinese eat mushrooms, the Malays don't know how to eat mushrooms. Now, my Malay friend has learnt to eat Chinese food and guess what she says, *sedap* (delicious).

However, even among these informants, they acknowledge that Muslims draw the line on the consumption of pork. Like food taboos, religion is a significant marker of ethnic boundaries. A Malay is a Malay because he is Muslim, a Chinese is a Chinese because he is not. There are, of course, some Chinese who have converted to Islam, These people, however, are viewed with suspicion by both Malays and Chinese. They are said to have *masuk Malayu*, or "enter Malayness." Some Chinese used the term *jip huan*, a Hokkien term that is extremely derogatory. People who become Muslims are regarded as denying one's culture, but as expected, when asked whether they are still Chinese, the answer is affirmative, as they have Chinese blood and were

born of Chinese parents. Among the Malays, they often question the motive for
conversion, that is, they are not really converts, but are doing so primarily because
of economic or other reasons.

It is important to emphasize that religion becomes a key symbol of differentiation partly because of its political overtones, rather than something that is intrinsic in
the religion. Politics in Malaysia, especially among the Malays, has religious overtones. For example, Islamic fundamentalist political parties, such as PAS, have used
the religion card to obtain votes. They propose to make the *Syariah* court the highest court of law in Malaysia, and Islamic laws as the primary source of Malaysian
jurisprudence. More radical groups call for the implementation of Islamic laws for
the whole country, including its application to non-Muslims. PAS was able to win
power in the state of Kelantan and Terengganu in a recent election by championing
Islam. This stance is very attractive to the Malays in these states, who have strong
roots in rural and village life.

The ruling Malay political party, UMNO, has to meet this threat and yet at the
same time, balance the demands of the Malay-Muslims and the rights of the 56%
of the population of Chinese, Indians and other non-Malays. As Nagata (1995: 170)
argues, "although Malaysia is not an Islamic state, Islam is the official religion, and
an underpinning of the cultural and political dominance of the Malays". Siddique
(1981: 80) suggests that "religion has been used to legitimate [sic] Malay political
hegemony". In this sense, religious issues enter the daily life of the Chinese, at both
the individual and communal levels. As one informant said,

> We are very conscious of politics. I talked about it since I was very young. Politics is ethnic
> based. My parents are in the civil service, they complain about the lack of promotion. We
> hear it at home. Even if you are top of your class, you can't go anywhere. There is a kind of
> anger that they (the Malays) have the easy way out.

One area where there is increasing sensitivity is the rise of Islamic fundamentalism in Malaysia. As most *bumiputras* in Malaysia are predominantly Muslim while
the ethnic Chinese are non-Muslim, there is a perception that the divide between
the Malays and the non-Malays has religious overtones. Besides being a marker of
difference, Islam can be used as a means of mobilizing the majority *bumiputra* community. Although it is unlikely that Malaysia will become an Islamic state, it will
probably become more Islamic in orientation with the rise of Islamic consciousness
and the *dakwah* (Islamic revivalist) movements. In fact, one of the reasons given for
the poor showing of the ruling party in the recent 2008 National Elections, where
they lost their two thirds majority, as well as control of five of the thirteen states,
was the perceived increasing influence of Islamic principles by UMNO in setting
public policies.

Again, when looking at the role of religion in ethnic relations in Malaysia, it
is critical to distinguish between macro and micro level analysis. What is evident
from the interviews is an attempt by many informants to separate the political and
communal from personal life. At one level, in relation to politics, Malay special
rights, Islam and pork, the Malays are conceptualized as a category. They are not
viewed as people, flesh and blood, but rather, as a homogenized other, an entity that

discriminates against the Chinese, and one to be wary of. However, in daily life, and in the interaction with other ethnic groups, various strategies are employed to deal with the business of living in a multiracial society. As some informants said,

> I can mix well with Malays. I can think like them and understand them. But when it come to core things, like religion, it is more difficult.

> With the Malays, I switch language to make the person feel welcome, to have a sense of kinship. Chinese hawkers use Malay to gain customers and in other business, it is the same. The Malay shopkeeper would use 'Ah Soh' or 'Ah Moi'. Even among professionals, we switch languages. Moreover, there are Malay expressions like *lepak*, loafing. It is a Malay word, but everyone knows what it means.

> I do enjoy mixing with Malays. I have to warm up to them. It took some time before they took me seriously. Because Malays are very communal, if you go out with them, eat with them, you can become close friends.

> My husband's brother's wife is Malay. My husband's brother, now he is a Muslim. At first, my mother-in-law didn't like it, but later; she found that the Malay was a kind-hearted girl. What matters most is the internal beauty; she is kind and helpful, so eventually, my mother-in-law permitted.

Most studies on ethnic relations in Malaysia tend to focus on the macro level, influenced by broader political issues involving the state and policies toward ethnic groups. From such a vantage point, one sees two homogenized and fundamentally essentialised groups in conflict with each other. For example, Tan (2000: 373) has sought to invoke the central role of the state in his analysis of the (mis)management of ethnic identities in Indonesia and Malaysia. He argues that "ethnicity is used as a means to mobilize the *bumi* majority", thus cementing the domination of Malay majority rights over minority ones along ethnic lines under the guise of "state policy".

Such an analysis of ethnic relations and identity in Malaysia ignores individuals' subjective understanding of their identity; and how they negotiate that identity in everyday discourse. If we examine the situation at the micro level, we see different interactional patterns that are based on personal inter-ethnic experiences. There are clearly those who express anger at the discrimination, whether it is the quota system for university places, inability to get promoted at the work place, or the 10–20% additional discounts that are given to Malays when they purchase homes. Others view the policies as necessary to raise the living standards of Malays and ensure ethnic harmony in Malaysia. Still others enjoy interacting with the Malays and have many Malay friends. Some are reticent about discussing sensitive ethnic problems in public. Yet others intermarry. One informant sums it up, "Yes, there is discrimination at the national level, but in daily situations, I haven't come across any."

In the study of ethnic relations in Malaysia, it is therefore important to examine the problem from two separate perspectives, the individual or micro level, where people go about strategizing the business of everyday life, and at the macro, national or political level, where ethnic relations are dealt with on a communal basis. Any realistic model in studies of ethnic identity has to take into account

the "plausibility of dynamic interactions as well as mutual and reciprocal influence" between the minority and majority group, wherein the global, the national, the local, the macro, messo and micro all have to be considered as important variables in the maintenance or differentiation of ethnic identification. This mode of analysis is also advanced by Shamsul (1998: 20–21) in his "two social reality" approach to studying identity in Malaysia, although it is explained in a slightly different manner. He makes the distinction between the "authority-defined" (that is, macro) and "everyday-defined" (that is, micro) identities of people, arguing that the two social reality approach, which captures both the macro and micro levels, enables the analyst to listen to the "voices of the social actors…about their experience in contrast to the authority-defined one", so that a more balanced account is achieved.

At the macro level, the Chinese in Malaysia, because of historical circumstances, especially British colonial policies, the realities of ethnic based Malaysian politics, and the Bumiputra policies, see themselves as a monolithic ethnic group in the ethnic relations with the Malays. However, at the micro level, the Chinese in Malaysia are actually culturally diverse, and fall into a continuum from the most localized to the least culturally localized. For example, there is a distinct group known as the Babas. Due to restrictions on the migration of women in China, many of the early Chinese migrants married the indigene women. Over time, they have developed a distinct culture that is a hybridization of Malay and Chinese cultures.[10]

The Babas retained many of the cultural attributes of Chinese culture, but uses Malay, at least a hybrid Malay, with many loan words from Chinese, as their mother tongue, replacing their original Hokkien dialect. Even among the Babas, there are regional variations. There are two main categories, the first comprises the Baba in Malacca, who also identifies themselves as Peranakan. The other category comprises Malay and Thai-acculturated Chinese in northeast Kelantan (especially in the rural areas) and the Malay acculturated Chinese in parts of rural Trengganu. They do not identify themselves as "Baba" or "Peranakan" but culturally they may be classified as "Peranakan Chinese"[11] (Tan, 1999: 48).

At the other end of the spectrum, there are Chinese cultural nationalists, who insist on maintaining Chinese language and culture. In addition, the Chinese in Malaysia are cross-cut by dialect and regional differences, as well as differentiation between the Chinese educated and English educated Chinese.[12] Similar to the situation in Singapore, in the interviews with English educated Chinese, many of them do not regard language as critical to ethnic identity. For the Chinese educated, the Chinese language and Chinese education are critical, in their eyes, for maintaining Chinese identity and resisting cultural erosion. In the interviews with these informants, many of them consider themselves as "pure" Chinese, compared to the Babas and the English educated Chinese. For them, a "real" Chinese must be able to speak Chinese. Thus, in trying to understand Chinese identity in Malaysia, it is critical to view Chinese identity as a multi-faceted and operating at multi levels. This will become clearer in the following discussion on language, education, and economic policies in Malaysia.

4.3.3 Language and Education

During the colonial period, education was segregated along ethnic lines. English education was restricted to the upper class and urbanites. Malay education was only available up to the elementary level and provided mainly for rural Malays. The Chinese were left to fend for themselves, and Chinese schools, set up by voluntary associations and clan groups, were oriented towards China, with its curriculum influenced by political developments in China. Similarly, Tamil schools were oriented towards India.

As British colonial rule ended, the first elected government of the Federation in 1955 proposed a National Education Policy. The basic aim was to foster national unity through a common educational system for all races and the promotion of equal educational opportunities, regardless of race or socio-economic status. However, the new educational policy proposed in the Razak Report resulted in objections from some Chinese community groups, especially regarding the position of the Chinese language and education. There was a perception in many quarters that Chinese vernacular education was not being safeguarded.

This was especially so among the "Chinese cultural nationalists", that is, the Chinese educated elites, since this group of people generally tended to see education as one of the main channels for the promotion of a "pure" Chinese identity (Tan, 1997: 112). After World War Two, there was generally a "re-orientation away from China" by both the English-educated and Chinese-educated, and most of them believed that as citizens of Malaya, they should be allowed to maintain their cultural identity through the preservation of the Chinese language (Lee, 1997: 84). As Tan (1997) argued, one thing that Chinese Malaysians are very united about as a community is the opposition to state policies that discriminate against them as a group, such as quotas placed on Chinese entry to universities and public sector employment. As such, the Chinese are extremely united about matters that concern their common, collective interests in the state. Among the Chinese, the Dong Jiao Zong which comprises the United Chinese School Committees' Association (UCSCA) and the United Chinese School Teachers' Association (UCSTA) believes that the mother tongue education plays a key role in the transmission of the Chinese identity from one generation to the next. The DJZ emphasizes Mandarin as the symbol of Chinese identity that needs to be protected, and between 1951 and 1966, attempted to make Mandarin an official language in Malaysia because it would then be used within the national education system. (Collins, 2006: 299).

These attempts failed, and in 1967, the National Language Bill was introduced to make Malay the sole official language. This was stipulated in the 1957 Federal Constitution, that "the national language shall be the Malay language" but provided that "for a period of ten years after Merdeka Day and thereafter until Parliament otherwise provides, the English language may be used in both Houses of Parliament, in the Legislative Assembly of every state, and for all other official purposes." (Article 152). Again, this led to objections from certain quarters of the Chinese population. The Chinese Guilds and Associations sent a memorandum to the Prime Minister demanding that Chinese be recognized as an official language.

In the end, the 1967 National Language Bill accommodated some of the Chinese demands by affirming the right of the Federal and State governments to use the language of any other community for the translation of official documents or communications despite the stipulation of Malay as the National Language. Conversely, this led to unhappiness among some Malay groups and several demonstrations were held. In 1970, English primary schools were converted to Malay medium schools. By 1980, Malay became the sole medium of instruction in all secondary schools, although vernacular schools were still permitted at the primary level. Malay was also introduced as the medium of instruction at the university level.

Language and educational issues were and continue to be sources of tension and conflict between the different ethnic groups. As Tan (1982: 45) noted, "In Malaysia, many Chinese are still anxious about the eventual status of Chinese education. The increasing use of quotas to allocate scholarship and places of study in the university further creates uneasiness among the Chinese." Many Chinese also feel that a Malaysian education does not commensurate with economic opportunities because of the granting of preferential treatment for the *bumiputra* population.

While this view is borne out by some of the informants, the data actually show more varied responses. In fact, various strategies are used by the Chinese to deal with national educational policies. For example, while a majority of the Chinese now sends their children to Malay-medium national schools, a significant 15% of Chinese parents have children in Chinese-medium schools, speaking and reading Chinese as a first language. Informants gave various reasons for this. Some said that a Chinese education is vital for the child to learn about Chinese culture. Others noted that because of the *bumiputra* policy, there are few opportunities for the Chinese in the Malaysian educational system. Some of these parents send the children overseas, to Australia, United Kingdom, or Singapore, for further education. Others prefer to send their children to English-medium private colleges. Overall, the vast majority of the Chinese, often due to economic considerations, send their children to Malay-language medium school. However, many parents continue to provide some form of Chinese education. Some parents send their children for night classes in Chinese; others engage tuition teachers to teach the children at home.

The same pattern is observed in language use. For those Chinese who had attended Malay schools, they tend to use Malay in public, or when dealing with Malays, both at work and in daily interaction, but in the home, and in their interaction with other Chinese, the language used is almost always Chinese, in either Mandarin or dialect.

> Among my friends, I use Mandarin and Hokkien. At home we use Hokkien. I use Malay when I talk to Malays, or in school when I speak to my teachers.

> My education is in Malay, but I normally converse in English. My parents are multilingual; they speak Malay, English and Chinese. When we mix with Malays, we always use Malay, but at home, it is either English or Chinese.

Thus, the Chinese adopt different strategies when it comes to language and education. Some send their children to Malay schools, yet continue with the learning of Chinese at home. Others send their children to Chinese schools. In Malaysia,

bilingualism amongst the Chinese is growing, and different languages are used in different social situations. In the home environment, both Mandarin and dialects are frequently used, especially in communication with parents or older relatives. Outside the home, when dealing with other Chinese, Mandarin is the common lingua franca. However, when they deal with Malay officials, in the schools, or in daily interaction with other ethnic groups, including Malays and Indians; there is a need to use Malay. In this sense, the Chinese language becomes a marker of ethnic identity in Malaysia. In the homes, the private sphere, and in interaction with other Chinese, given the large Chinese population in Malaysia, there is no necessity to use Malay. However, in the public sphere, the Chinese have accepted the need to be proficient in the Malay language (see Tan 2001: 963).

There is a strong desire among many Chinese parents that the young should be exposed to some Chinese education. However, because of the problem of affordability many send their children to Malay medium schools. As one informant said, "After my generation, you have to know Malay to survive in Malaysia, that is why I send my children to Malay schools." Thus, the issue of language and education in Malaysia is constantly changing. In the struggle to come to terms with the changing political and global environment, language and education continue to be a contentious issues. For example, in the interviews with some Malays, they do not regard the Chinese language as a threat to Malay society and culture. For them, the real challenge is the English language. In my interview with Malay respondents, many felt that the Chinese should be allowed to retain their language, as it is their lingua franca. However, they felt that the increasing emphasis on the English language will lead to greater numbers of young Malays speaking only English, thus losing their cultural identity as Malays.

4.3.4 *The Economy and* Bumiputraism

Ingrained in national politics is *bumiputraism*, or the special rights of the indigenous population, which was introduced after the racial riots of 1969 (Osman-Rani, 1990). In the past, and to some extent today, the Malaysian economy is bifurcated along ethnic lines. The Chinese were dominant in the commercial sectors, while the Malays, concentrated in rural villages, occupied the agricultural sector. While the Chinese were involved in the private sector, the Malays were concentrated in the civil service, police and military. This structural differentiation has often led to communal conflicts. The picture today, however, is not so clear. For example, an interesting development of the 2000 national elections was the perception that the then Prime Minister Mahathir, and the National Front's ability to hold on to power was due to overwhelming Chinese support, with the traditional Malay votes dropping drastically due to the incarceration of the former deputy prime minister, Anwar Ibrahim, who enjoyed significant Malay support. Similarly, the commonly held notion that the Chinese lived in the urban areas, particularly in large cities such as Kuala Lumpur, Johore Bahru, and Penang and that the Malays lived in

rural villages may be true in the past, but is not true in present-day Malaysia. With rapid economic and urban development, many Malays have migrated to the cities. Arguably, even in the cities, there are still ethnic enclaves, with areas such as Klang and Petaling Jaya being predominantly Chinese and townships such as Shah Alam with more Malays. The rural-urban divide between the Malays and the Chinese has declined with the exception of the east coast states.

The New Economic Policy (NEP) formulated after the 1969 race riots was to "eradicate poverty among all Malaysian and to restructure Malaysian society so that the identification of race with economic functions and geographical location is reduced and eventually eliminated"(Malaysia Plan, 1979: 7).[13] Although Tan (1982: 44) is correct in arguing that instead of eradicating ethnic specialization, the use of race to restructure the distribution of resources has led to a reinforcement of racial differences; economic restructuring has led to the rise of a new class of Malay business elite in Malaysian society, competing with Chinese businesses.[14]

In my interviews with some of these businessmen, one senses a new confidence among the Malay elites. Some, in fact, question the need to continue the NEP, saying that they can do just as well in business without special rights. The rise of this new elite has led to economic differentiation within the Malay community. For example, the 1974 peasant unrests in Baling were not directed against the Chinese, but against the Malay elites. Many poorer Malays resented the fact that a small group of Malays were becoming rich at the expense of other Malays. Thus, Cham (1975: 457) notes that in identifying the locus of political power in Malaysia, one has to be aware of class differences within Malay society: "It is true that the Malays fill the leadership roles in the country. However, these are certainly not the ordinary Ali's' and Ahmads', but the Tuns, Tunkus, Datos and Tan Sris."

The Chinese response to the special rights has also been varied. Some informants feel that they are discriminated by the state. At the same time, many Chinese, especially businessmen, enter into complementary relationships with the Malays. Chinese businessmen, in order to protect their interests, have formed alliances with leading Malay businessmen and the political elite, who obtain high remunerations by serving as directors in Chinese businesses. Chinese and Malay elites can be seen as subgroupings of different ethnic categories who assume complementary roles in the local environment. However, for the less well-off Chinese, other strategies are adopted. For example, many become small businessmen and hawkers, given the limited opportunities in the public sectors.

Most studies on ethnic identity and ethnic relations in Malaysia have focused on national politics and inter-group relations at the communal level. The analysis centers on majority/minority relations. From such a perspective, the picture that emerges is one of discrimination and tension between ethnic groups. This analysis is not incorrect, but because it is confined to public and political discourse, it fails to provide a full picture of ethnic identity and ethnic relations in Malaysia. For example, many studies mention that the Chinese in Malaysia feel discriminated in terms of education and thus send their children overseas for further education.

However, in reality, those who send their children overseas to study constitutes a small percentage of the total Chinese population.

The majority of the Chinese continue to live in Malaysia, and have to deal with the business of living in a Malay dominated society. As the chapter has demonstrated, the Chinese espouse different strategies in overcoming the problem of discrimination in education. This is the fundamental thrust of the chapter, to examine the various strategies used and their individual perception of life in a multi-racial society where the Malays are the dominant group, both in population size and power.

The literature on ethnic identity and group identification has tended to pose a binary opposition between voluntary (choice) on the one hand and involuntary (birth) on the other, between ascriptive identity and instrumental identity. The data on Malaysia suggest that they are not mutually exclusive. Rather, it may be more useful to view it as a continuum. Ethnicity has both primordial and situational dimensions. For the Chinese in Malaysia, phenotypical and genotypical characteristics are the basis for ethnic differentiation. Skin and hair color, blood, and descent, are seen as the defining feature of Chineseness, that is, identity is ascriptive.

Living in a multiethnic environment, these ascriptive markers act as the basis of identifying the "insider," as well as a boundary marker excluding the "outsider." However, once this primary, core, and to a degree, emotive, marker of ethnicity is satisfied, the data suggest that a multiple, and negotiable, conception of ethnic identity is invoked. Here, the expressions of identity(ies) are more instrumental, individualistic, autonomous, and peripheral. Cultural attributes, including language, customs, festivals, and dress, become negotiable, contested and situational. There is a greater degree of freedom, heterogeneity, and fluidity. They are important, but not critical to defining ethnic identity. Here, people display different identities in different situations, but without denying the first premise of Chinese identity. The presentation of ethnicity is multiple and plural, more individualistic and voluntary. It is argued that for the Chinese in Malaysia their ethnicity is not based on a common set of cultural or sentimental attachments. There is a rootedness based on the ascriptive marker of descent, but there are also expressions of identity that are linked to personal experiences, different socializations, situational and environmental factors, and subjective interpretations, which allow an individual to choose between alternative courses of action in defining their identity.

Another key idea that emerges from the empirical data has to do with the strategies adopted by both the Chinese and the Malays in dealing and managing cultural contact. In Malaysia, we observe how the Chinese negotiate everyday life, adopting various strategies, such as bilingualism, differentiating between the private and public spheres or alliances with Malay elites in business. Embedded within a web of interlocking forces and influences, ethnic actors constantly adjust their postures, strategies and identities. In the process of strategizing, ethnicity is invoked and negotiated. What happens is that the immigrants bring along with them their parent culture that shapes initial behavior, but in the process of living and surviving

in the new host environment, the structural conditions of the local context will significantly shape their long term adaptation patterns, or what Yancey et al. (1976) call "emergent ethnicity" – immigrant culture and identity are rarely transplanted wholesale, but is reproduced and produced, creating strategic advantages and adoption. Thus, during culture contact, it is important to study the processual, emergent and transformative features of ethnic identity (see Chan and Tong, 2001). Again, this is not a one-way process, of the immigrants reinventing a new identity. We must also analyze the changes that occur in the host society due to the influx of immigrant cultures. There is a kind of cybernetic relationship between the immigrant and host society.[15]

In the case of the Chinese in Malaysia, race and ethnicity dominate public and political discourse in Malaysia. At this level, the Malays view the Chinese as a "homogenous" group, and as a racial category. This perception of homogeneity can be seen in the ethnic stereotypes that emerges, such as "all Chinese are rich," "all Chinese are businessmen and are rich," or "the Chinese are always eating." In reality, the data collected suggest that the Chinese in Malaysia are a heterogeneous and fragmented community, and are divided by dialect, regional, religious, and political differences. The Chinese also view the Malays as a racial category, with equally stereotypical ideas. Economic relations are often also seen in ethnic terms.

In order to gain a better understanding of ethnic relations in Malaysia, it is necessary, as the chapter suggests, to distinguish between the macro from micro-level analysis. Clearly, these perceptions at the macro-level, in relations to Chinese reactions to government policies, racial quotas, and special rights for the Malays affect the Chinese. These political, economic, and communal issues filter down to the level of everyday life, as they must. The interviews with the informants clearly demonstrate how ethnic differences between the Chinese and Malays feature in the daily interaction between the groups. However, the everyday interactions between the Chinese and Malays do not simply reflect the political and economic relations of conflict and competition between the two groups. As some of the informants noted,

> As a whole, there is discrimination in the sense of government policies, for example, in the sense of educational policies. But in daily situations, I have not come across any discrimination.

> Only when the Malays are seen as a group do we think about ethnic discrimination, but as an individual, I have no problems. My best friend in school was a Malay.

At the micro-level, the exigencies of daily life necessitate various strategies in dealing with members of other ethnic groups, and within members of the same group. This ensures some coherence in the course of everyday existence, whether it is in social interactions with the Malays, looking after the educational needs of children, or eating daily meals with Malays. These strategies, I argue, are mediated by personal circumstances and environmental conditions. There is a tendency in studies of ethnic relations in Malaysia to conflate macro and micro analysis. By distinguishing between the two levels of analysis, a more nuanced understanding of relations between the Chinese and Malays in Malaysian society is possible.

Notes

1. Today more than 90% of the Chinese in Malaysia are locally born. However, the community is concerned by the declining birth rate among the ethnic Chinese compared to the Malays. In 1970, the Chinese constituted some 35% of the population. This fell to 26% by 2000 (Tey, 2002: 46). As the proportion of the Chinese population declines, there are fears that the political influence they can exert in the Malay-dominated country will be weakened.

2. Although the Malayan tin industry was important since the mid 1800s, Wong (1964: 152) notes that there was little documentation by the British administrators on the industry. Wong attributes this to the fact that the industry was largely the domain of the Chinese and aroused little interest among the British officials so long as it produced revenue to finance the British administration. However, by the early twentieth century, the tin industry became increasingly "Europeanized" and was transformed from a predominantly Chinese to a predominantly Western industry when the dredge was introduced in 1912 (Abraham, 2004: 245).

3. Similar legislation was put in place in the Unfederated Malay states between 1930 and 1941.

4. After the Japanese surrender, the re-establishment of British civilian rule in Malaya was preceded by a period of military rule known as the British Military Administration (BMA). This military rule lasted from September 1945 until March 1946.

5. Lau (1991: 277) points out however, that evidence suggests that the Colonial Office instead of being motivated principally by the ideal of self government was actually planning for more assertive British rule in Malaya. Prior to this, only Penang, Malacca and Singapore (the Straits Settlements) were British colonies. The other states were indirectly ruled by British Residents.

6. Only Malays who were born in a Malay state or were subjects of the Rulers would become citizens automatically. Chinese and others had to be British citizens born in the former Straits Settlements of Penang, Malacca or in the Federation, and one of whose parents was born in the Federation and satisfies at least fifteen years residence in the Federation. Applicants for Federal citizenship were also required to have an adequate knowledge of Malay or English (Cheah, 2002: 19).

7. Concessions were made to ease the citizenship requirements for the Chinese largely due to the demands by the Malayan Chinese Association (MCA) under the leadership of Tan Cheng Lock. The MCA sought to widen the Chinese citizenship base because it believed that as long as the Chinese did not obtain Malayan citizenship, they could not be an effective force in Malayan politics (Heng, 1988: 149). The MCA stressed the need for the Chinese to obtain a greater stake in Malaya and the need to generate a common spirit of Malayan identity through the granting of citizenship for all the races. The colonial government was willing to accede to the demands made by the MCA for more liberal citizenship. This was largely due to the perception that the issue of citizenship was a major stumbling block preventing the authorities from gaining active support from the Chinese, especially with regard to the communist threat. The British played on Malay fears that the CPM could gain a following if citizenship was not granted more liberally to the Chinese. After negotiations, the Federation of Malaya agreement was amended in 1952 to ease the citizenship conditions. This made it possible for a significant increase in the number of Chinese and other non-Malay citizens in Malaya. The percentage of Chinese who were citizens increased from about 24% in 1950 to 50% by June 1953 (Heng, 1988: 155). Most Chinese in Malaysia are now citizens.

8. The communists were originally anti-Japanese fighters. When the war ended, they agreed to give up their arms in exchange for British promise of independence. However, the British handed over power to politicians such as Tunku Rahman (Malaysia) and Lee Kuan Yew (Singapore) instead of the communists. Thus in 1948, the civil war which the British called the Emergency broke out.

9. Heng (1988: 147) notes that the political viability of an UMNO-MCA association stemmed from the basic affinities of class interests and social backgrounds of the early UMNO and MCA leaders. Both had similar Westernized social backgrounds and an elitist ethos. Top ranking UMNO members came mainly from the landed Malay aristocracy and the higher

bureaucracy while the MCA leaders were wealthy businessmen. Both groups of leaders shared a conservative political and economic philosophy.

10. See Ma and Cartier (2003) for an analysis of contemporary Baba culture in Malaysia. They suggest that in contemporary society, the Baba Chinese culture has gained new recognition, especially with the emergence of emphasis on local heritage, heritage organizations and heritage tourism both for domestic and international visitors.

11. There is in fact a third variant of Chinese hybrid culture in Malaysia. Other than the Malacca Baba, and the Kelantan Peranakan, there is a group of Penang Hokkien, where the Chinese have acquired many local features, including food and a particular Chinese dialect that contains quite a number of Malay loan words. The Penang Chinese, as well as the Chinese from Kedah and Perlis, are culturally distinct from Chinese Malaysians elsewhere (see Tan, 2004: 96–97).

12. Localization and regional variations are an important element of understanding the Chinese in Malaysia. For example, among the Chinese Hakkas in Pulai, Kelantan, the Chinese maintain a very traditional culture. While the Chinese are concentrated in the urban areas in Kuala Lumpur, in Johore, the Chinese are not only concentrated in towns, but also in the rural areas. In Penang, the Chinese developed a subcultural area that is very different from those in the southern part of the Malay Peninsula. Tan (1999: 55) argues that the regional acculturation of the Chinese and Malay depends very much on the extent of social interaction among the various ethnic groups. The situation in East Malaysia is even more complicated. The majority of the people there are not Malays and most as not Muslim. In Sabah and Sarawak, a person from Peninsula Malaysia cannot tell whether a person is a Chinese, a Kadazan, an Iban or a Bidayuh. This is especially so in smaller inland towns where individuals of different ethnic groups mix socially and Chinese interact closely with the "natives". The absence of any significant religious barrier among non-Muslims in East Malaysia promotes inter-marriage. . ... In Sabah, the intermarriage between Chinese men and Kadazan women is especially common. Their offspring are called "Sino" a term which is derived from the English label "Sino-Kadazan". The identity of a Sino and his or her off spring depends very much on whom they marry as well as the social environment they have been exposed to (Tan, 1999: 55).

13. Voon suggests that the adoption of the NEP is a watershed in ethnic relations in Malaysia. The NEP symbolized the creation of ethnic "enclosures" in addition to spatial ones. In setting targets and rights of access to economic opportunities and education, the NEP attempted to minimize "unequal" competition between the Bumiputra and their rivals (namely the Chinese). However, it resulted in enforced self-imposed social exclusion and polarization (Voon, 2006: 140).

14. Ethnic tension in Malaysia has been significantly reduced because of the sustained economic growth since the mid 1970s. According to Tan (2000: 398) continued economic growth is important in keeping all communities satisfied and this has masked the inter-ethnic as well as intra-ethnic inequalities. However, the government cannot always guarantee economic growth and inter-ethnic relations may be put to the test if the country's economy does badly. In Indonesia, for example, the Asian financial crisis in 1997 put a severe strain on the economy and caused widespread social unrest and inter-ethnic violence which was directed mainly at the minority Chinese business community.

15. Yen (2000), for example, suggests that there may be a process of the "Malayanization" of Chinese culture. The Chinese in Malaysia founded cultural organizations and promoted traditional cultural activities such as lion dance, dragon dance, Chinese calligraphy and Chinese painting classes, Chinese poetry recitation, folk dances, Chinese cuisine, Chinese tea drinking and Chinese music. In the process of reviving traditional Chinese cultures, the integration of traditional forms with local needs in Malaysia was attempted. The result was the birth of a new cultural form with distinctive local flavor. It is a melting pot for absorbing different cultures and producing a hybrid culture of its own. (Yen, 2000: 238).

Chapter 5
Between a Rock and a Hard Place: The Chinese in Indonesia

5.1 Introduction

This chapter addresses three inter-related issues. The first concerns the discrimination that the Chinese in Indonesia face today. Why is it that the Chinese are continuously being targeted by their fellow Indonesians and made scapegoats whenever there are problems, whether economic, political, or social, in the country. On the same note, why is it that younger indigenous Indonesians still discriminate against the Chinese, given that they had no experience of the colonial rule of the Dutch, where the Chinese supposedly colluded with the colonial government, and were also not brought up during the early years of the Suharto regime? Why are the Chinese seen by other non-Chinese and the state as a separate and "special" ethnic group, given the fact that there are over three hundred other ethnic groups that may not claim to be Indonesian per se, but are actually ethnically Javanese, Sundanese, Papuan, Acehnese, or Dayaks?

The second issue concerns Chinese Indonesian markers of identity. Specifically, what is it that makes a Chinese in Indonesia, Chinese. This must be seen in the historical context where the state, especially in the 1960s, during the Suharto regime, tried to systematically erase all markers of Chinese identity through what one of my informant calls, a process of cultural genocide. Since Chinese schools, Chinese organizations, Chinese newspapers, Chinese media, and Chinese cultural festivals were either banned or restricted for thirty years, what is the nature of Chineseness today? What markers do the Chinese use to define their identity?

The third central issue that needs to be explored is whether there is still a notion of a Chinese community in Indonesia today. This has to do with the Chinese community's relationship with the state over the years, and is in many ways linked to the two preceding issues concerning discrimination and ethnic identity. What separates the Chinese from the rest of the Indonesian population? Why and how do the Chinese maintain a sense of community in the absence of institutions such as schools, clan associations and newspapers? This chapter will explore the changing nature of Chinese ethnic identity in Indonesia, from the early arrival through the Dutch colonial period till modern day Indonesia.

5.2 Historical Setting

It is not clear when the Chinese first started living in Indonesia however, reports by Fa Hsien, a Chinese traveler in the fifth century, wrote about the presence of Chinese in Indonesia (Toer, 2007: 197). Several main phases of Chinese population growth can be identified over the last fifteen hundred years or so. During the first phase, between about the tenth and sixteenth century A.D., traders were visiting various Southeast Asian ports, remaining temporarily or assimilating individually but rarely establishing permanent Chinese communities. In the second period between mid 1500s and 1800, Chinese trading quarters in the major cities such as Manila, Ayutthaya/Bangkok and Batavia became large and permanent. The third phase between 1800 and 1860 saw the numbers of Chinese in the region increase gradually. By 1860, there were an estimated 222,000 Chinese, two thirds of whom lived in Java (Coppel, 1983: 1). The fourth period from the 1860s till the onset of the 1930s Depression saw a large influx of Chinese from China (Mackie, 1996: xxii–xxiv).

Before the large scale migration of the Chinese in the seventy years following 1860, the Chinese arrivals tended to be male. The early Chinese migrants, who were mostly traders, often married the local women and this resulted in a strong mixed race of local born Chinese called Peranakans. The Peranakan community developed into a distinctive creolized culture with syncretised languages, cuisine and clothing and was accepted as a local culture, rather than a foreign culture of migrants (Wee et al., 2006: 366). According to Salmon (1996: 183) many of the early Peranakans had undergone a process of acculturation in various parts of the Archipelago so that the Peranakan societies were composed of two segments: a "visible" one that retained traits of the Chinese culture and an "invisible" one which was in the process of merging into the local societies. This acculturation process evoked the resentment of some peranakan circles, resulting in an earlier movement of resinicization that occurred by the mid nineteenth century in certain cities of Java and in Makassar with the founding of ancestral temples for ancestor worship and of voluntary associations aimed at reviving Chinese culture (Salmon, 1996: 193–194).

The large numbers of Chinese immigrants into Indonesia during the Dutch colonial period, due to the increased demand for labor, changed the nature of the Chinese community and divisions between the foreign born *totok* and the local born Peranakan became visible. The *totok* Chinese remained distinctly Chinese in their outlook and saw China as their home and had less social interaction with the locals or the Peranakans. Occupational roles also tended to differ on the men's origins. Peranakans were likely to be self employed, principally as merchants while Singkehs, lacking capital or credit were obliged to work as wage earners (Williams, 1960: 12).

Often the Peranakan and the totok communities despised and looked down on each other. The Peranakan who were generally from a higher socio-economic background looked down on the newcomers. The totoks on the other hand had a sense of cultural superiority over the Peranakans who they believed had little knowledge about China, their ancestral home towns and the Chinese language (Twang, 1998: 21). In fact, according to Greif (1988: 3) the social, economic and cultural

differences made the *totoks* and Peranakans as unlike to each other as they were from the native pribumi community. The cracks which formed between the different ethnic groups also grew deeper as the racialized policies of the Dutch became entrenched in Indonesian society and created clear divisions between the indigenous, the ethnic Chinese and the European.

5.2.1 Dutch Colonial Era

Dutch exploitation of tin mines and the establishment of plantations in the nineteenth century created a demand for coolie labor, and attracted many Chinese from the South of China which had been plagued by problems such as political unrest, overcrowding and famine. About 40% of the arrivals settled in Java while the remaining 60% inhabited the outer islands – mainly in the east coast of Sumatra, Bangka and Belitung (Twang, 1998: 19). After 1930, the wave of immigrants receded, and the growth of the Chinese population was due mainly to natural increase. By the 1930s, about two thirds of the population was locally born. By the late 1950s, the figure had risen to nearly 80%.

Most of the Chinese settlements tended to congregate in the towns. When the Dutch arrived and colonized the archipelago, they found it convenient to maintain the residential segregation of the Chinese. Such segregation caused social and structural divisions between the Chinese and the native population and also eased the administrative burden of the Dutch as the Chinese could be easily managed under the leadership of the Dutch-appointed Chinese officers. These officers were appointed by the colonial government and were the instruments of Dutch administration but were not properly part of it- they were merely servants of it (Coppel, 1976: 23). The Dutch created strict class boundaries, based on their racialized policy. The Chinese were placed between themselves at the top, and the natives at the bottom of the social ladder. The Dutch considered the Chinese as good business partners, gave them opportunities to control medium size domestic trading companies and allowed the Chinese room to operate their commercial ventures as long as they did not jeopardize their monopoly over the indigenous products (Fernando, 1992: 1). Many of the Chinese officers held government licenses as retailers of opium and were revenue farmers in other fields, such as running gambling houses or ferries. Many were also involved in money lending and the supply of rural credit (Coppel, 1976: 24).

Early in the Dutch colonial era, the distinctions between the Europeans, Chinese and the local population was openly manifested on clearly defined lines. They were either European, native, or Chinese. One's legal racial status determined where one could live, the taxes one paid and the laws which one was subjected to. In everyday life, it also determined what a person could wear. A native could not wear European clothes; neither could a Chinese male cut off his queue. These racial distinctions were constructed openly in Dutch colonial society. However, as will be seen in the following section, the rising tide of nationalism which swept through the

Netherlands Indies in the early twentieth century led to a growing sense of ethnic awareness. There was an awakening of the Chinese as "Chinese" and of "natives" as natives and racial distinctions were becoming deeply ingrained in the minds of the natives and the Chinese, which was an even more effective means of segregation than the open, physical division (Shiraishi, 1997: 205).

5.2.2 Manipulation of Racial Politics – The Dutch "Ethical Policy"

The rise of modern politics swept across the Netherland Indies and propelled the country into a deeper awareness of its social cleavages. The Dutch who had administered the country with a deliberate divide and rule policy also became increasingly aware that the nationalistic fervor among the Chinese and the natives could take on a strong anti-colonial form. In order to prevent this, they adopted several policies to deepen the racial division between the ethnic groups and maintain their authority and economic dominance over the Netherlands Indies.

In 1901, a new Ethical Policy was announced by the Dutch. This ethical policy highlighted the moral duty of the Netherlands to the people of the Dutch East Indies and introduced further government involvement in economic and social affairs. Already in the late nineteenth century, the Dutch colonial authority had begun centralizing its control over the Netherlands Indies. Opium farms, many of which were previously under license to the Chinese, were replaced by a government opium monopoly on Madura in 1894 and in East Java in 1896. The wealthiest Chinese invested heavily in opium farms, pawnshops and other licensed enterprises, but by early 1900s as a result of the termination of revenue farming, many well established Chinese businesses were forced to close, and many hundreds of Chinese who were employees of the farmers were made jobless (Williams, 1960: 26–27).

While the Ethical Policy included improvements to education, health care, and irrigation, most of these changes were aimed at meeting the needs of Dutch capital in Indonesia, rather than genuinely advancing the Indonesian society. As a result, new political changes began and this served to worsen the position of the Chinese. The Chinese were considered to be the main obstacle to the economic advancement of the native population and thus new regulations had to be put in place to limit the Chinese from encroaching on the native population (Toer, 2007: 139). This policy had the effect of joining the Dutch and the indigenous Indonesians in an anti-Chinese prejudice. There was a tendency to make the Chinese scapegoats for poverty or for the absence of a significant entrepreneurial class amongst the indigenous population when, in actual fact, much of the native economy was stunted by the large Dutch corporations. (Coppel, 2004: 22).

The Dutch ethical project, which sought to manage the socio-economic situation from the top and the growing nationalism amongst the native population from below, were the driving forces in the creation of a new order. By the early twentieth century, the position of the Chinese had changed drastically. They were no longer

needed as financiers or tax collectors. They were vulnerable to the violent wrath of the native population because they were deemed to be economically more prosperous. But despite their wealth, they had no political power as the Indonesian society became firmly set along racial lines, with the Chinese as a minority race (Shiraishi, 1990: 190).

5.2.3 Rising Chinese Nationalism

Dissatisfied by their treatment by the Dutch and heavily influenced by the political events in China, the Chinese nationalism movement gained momentum in the beginning of the twentieth century. Chinese associations, newspapers, and schools became active in promoting Chinese nationalism. In addition, the large number of China-born migrants and the prevalent nationalistic fervor in China infused a growing sense of national pride among the Chinese in Indonesia. There was a renewed interest in Confucianism, the Chinese language, history, customs and current events in China (Coppel, 1976: 25). In a show of unity, the *totok* and some Peranakan communities formed several cultural, business, social and political organizations. Central to the Chinese nationalism movement in the Netherlands Indies was the development of the THHK (Tjong Hoa Hwe Koan, Chinese Association) in 1900. The founding of the THHK reflected concerns of some of the well off Peranakan elites in Batavia. Cultural re-awakening played an important role in driving the Peranakan elites to search for their almost lost Chinese tradition. This formed the philosophical foundation of the THHK, which emphasized Chinese ethics and the teaching of Confucianism in particular. The initiatives to launch the Confucian revival came mainly from the western educated Peranakans (Lohanda, 2002: 50–51).

The THHK was initially not a school organization but a general association which was set up for the benefit of the Chinese in which education was one of the means to achieve the association's goals. The THHK established the first school, Sekolah Tjina THHK (THHK Chinese School) in 1900. By 1911 there were 93 Chinese schools in Java and the outer islands following the THHK model. In the outer islands, THHK schools opened in Sumatra, Kalimantan (Pontianak) and in Sulawesi (Makasar) (Lohanda, 2002: 56). The schools also managed to recruit many teachers from China, despite the high cost and distance. These China born teachers presumably would have been able to infuse greater Chinese cultural elements to their charges.

The growing Chinese consciousness of the Chinese business community led to the establishment of Chinese Chambers of Commerce (*Sianghwee*) in 1908 which could function as representatives of Chinese business interests. These chambers of commerce organized boycotts of European firms to protect Chinese interests and also performed political and quasi consular functions to link the overseas Chinese to their homeland (Coppel, 1976: 26). To some degree, broad appeals based on culture and nationalism did succeed in bringing some of the diversified segments of the Chinese population closer to each other. Yet basic differences between the totok

and the Peranakan were still very much present when further divisions were created by new Dutch policies in response to the awakening Chinese nationalism (Twang, 1998: 21).

5.2.4 Managing the Chinese Community

The Dutch colonial government became alarmed when the Chinese began establishing ties with China as they wanted to retain them as Dutch subjects. In order to keep the Chinese community from becoming united and oriented towards China, the Dutch government responded in stages. In competition with the THHK-run schools, a new type of primary school called the Hollands Chineesesche Scholen (HCS) was established in 1908 to cater exclusively for the Chinese children. A Dutch education was perceived as superior to the local Chinese language institutions and the establishment of the HCS was an attempt by the Dutch to lure the Peranakan Chinese way from the Chinese nationalist movement to become loyal Dutch subjects (Coppel, 2004: 22). It also served the dual purpose of maintaining a division within the Chinese communities.

Besides the establishment of the HCS, the Dutch also passed a nationality law in 1910 by which all Indies-born Chinese whose parents resided in the Indies were declared to be Dutch subjects. In 1911 a consular agreement was entered into with the Chinese imperial government under which it was agreed that the nationality of the Chinese should be interpreted in accordance with the law of the country of domicile. The combined effect of the law and the consular agreement was in substance to exclude the Peranakans and the Indies-born totok Chinese from the jurisdiction of the Chinese consuls who began arriving in the Indies in 1912.

Several of the Chinese grievances were also addressed. They were no longer required to appear before native courts in criminal matters and the Dutch civil law was extended to them generally while the pass and quarter system was eventually abandoned (Coppel, 1976: 26–27). By 1910, the Chinese were granted right of free passage along the main highways without a permit. Shiraishi argues that the relaxation of the pass system was not simply a concession to the Chinese but had a pragmatic business reason. There were a growing number of bankruptcies among Chinese firms as the tough travel restrictions hindered their businesses. This in turn caused losses for large Dutch trading companies doing business with them (Shiraishi, 1997: 201).

The fervor of Chinese nationalism which gripped the Chinese in the Netherlands Indies was not enough to unite the various groups of Chinese. The nationalist pattern of activity was probably more widespread among the totoks and in areas where the Chinese were Chinese-speaking than among the peranakans. The chief characteristics of the nationalist pattern were the rejection of involvement in local Indies politics and a high degree of political orientation towards China. Even among those whose politics were China-oriented, there were also divisions which followed the lines of cleavage of the politics of China itself – between the Kuomintang and

the Communist Party (Coppel, 1976: 28). The rift between the Peranakans and the totok Chinese was also apparent in the education system. Increasingly the Chinese medium schools, including the schools run by speech group organizations as well as those by the THHK, catered for the children of the totok Chinese and the Dutch medium schools catered for the children of the wealthier Peranakan Chinese. The Chinese medium schools were of limited appeal to the wealthier Peranakans partly because they were largely confined to the elementary level and partly because Dutch education provided an avenue to employment in the Indies in prestigious professions such as medicine, engineering, law and dentistry (Coppel, 2002: 321). With the introduction of Dutch-Chinese schools where Dutch was the teaching medium, the Peranakan population was further split into Indonesian and Dutch-speaking groups.

Some Chinese also shunned Chinese traditions and preferred to adopt a western lifestyle because of the privileges it entailed. In 1917, European legal status was offered to Chinese. These "European" Chinese represented one extreme of alienation from the rest of Chinese community because their different status had social and economic privileges. Politically, this group of Chinese who were mainly the elite among the Peranakan, was antagonistic to the *totok* and even to other Peranakan political groups (Twang, 1998: 23–25).

5.2.5 Indonesian Nationalism

Despite the efforts to contain the nationalistic fervor, Chinese nationalism grew and sparked off the latent sense of nationalism among the native Indonesian population. Better education had already produced a small urban middle class of professionals who were exposed to the ideas of politics and nationhood. The formation of Budi Utomo (Noble Endevour) movement is often considered the beginning of Indonesian national awakening. Founded in 1908 by Dr. Sutomo and students of the Batavia Medical School, its main aim was promoting the advancement of native people (Pramoedya, 2007: 228).

This was followed by various movements of the national bourgeoisie, such as the Islamic Merchants Union in Jakarta (1909) and the Sarekat Dagang Islam (Islamic Trading Union) in 1911. The movement developed as a means of the pribumi bourgeoisie to improve its social and economic position with Islam at its basis. It grew in strength and carried out boycotts against the Chinese merchants and also pribumi merchants who did not join the movement. In 1912, Haji Umar Said Tjokroaminoto founded the more politicized Sarekat Islam[1] (Islamic Union). This was followed by unrest in Surabaya, mostly targeting the Chinese (Toer, 2007: 228–229).[2] The SI sparked off a sharp rise in political and cultural activity that was collectively known as the age of pergerakan or movement. It expanded rapidly throughout Indonesia and was responsible for anti-Chinese boycotts and inter-ethnic riots. The conflict between the two ethnic groups was symptomatic of the growing economic competition between the Chinese and the Indonesians due to the expansion of the Chinese into the sugar, *kretek* (rolled clove cigarettes) and batik industries which was

previously the domain of the Javanese and Arab businessmen (Coppel, 1983: 22) and the nascent nationalism of the two ethnic groups which were defined by race.

By the 1920s, the modern Indonesian nationalist movement was born and the Indonesian nation or *bangsa Indonesia* was conceived out of the desire to wrest independence from the Dutch and establish the Indonesian nation state. Suryadinata argues that since the Chinese nationalism developed before the Indonesian nationalism, the Chinese in colonial Indonesia were not part of the indigenous Indonesian nationalist movement. The Chinese were perceived as originating from a different "nation" (bangsa) and hence were excluded. Moreover the racial politics created by the Dutch contributed to the exclusion of the Chinese in the Indonesian nation-state. Society in colonial Indonesia was divided along racial lines and not surprisingly, the population was race conscious, and the concept of an Indonesian *bangsa* was race-based (Suryadinata, 2004: 7).

However, it is probably an over statement to say that all Chinese were excluded from the political process during the Indonesian nationalist movement. Dutch laws regulating political activity determined that only Netherlands subjects were permitted to participate in local political organizations (Coppel, 1976: 30). This effectively marginalized the foreign born totok Chinese, many of whom were more aligned to nationalist political activity.[3] Among many of the totok Chinese and the Peranakan Chinese there was a growing realization that their political interests were different (Coppel, 1976: 30); even among the Peranakan Chinese political views differed. Some of the Indies-born Peranakan Chinese were active in the political scene. However, unlike the Chinese nationalists, they began to subscribe to an integrationist view of political involvement. They were proud of their Chineseness and wanted to work for their distinct communal interests, but through participation in local Indies politics. The Indies-oriented view was first espoused by the political group Chung Hwa Hui (CHH) which was formed in 1928 mostly by Dutch educated Peranakan intellectuals and businessmen. However, the CHH was seen as too proDutch and was not popular with the Chinese nationalists or the pribumi population which believed that the CHH was not supportive of Indonesian independence.

In 1932, a rival party, the Partai Tionghoa Indonesia (Indonesian Chinese Party, PTI) was established. The PTI opposed the pro-Dutch CHH which was made up exclusively of the very rich Chinese. It sought dominion status for Indonesia and citizenship for all people irrespective of race but it advocated retaining the cultural identity of the Chinese community. However the party had little support. The PTI's support for Indonesian independence merged with an anti-colonial sentiment which brought them in harmony with the Chinese nationalists for a while but this was shortlived as the PTI's concern for the special interests of the Peranakans alienated the two groups (Coppel, 1976: 35). It also did not get the support from the Indonesian nationalist political parties because of the strong racial division between the Chinese and the pribumi nationalist leaders (Greif, 1988: 5).

The press in Indonesia also contributed to the awakening nationalist movements of the Chinese as well as the native population. The Malay and Chinese language press kept pace with the nationalistic fervor of the early twentieth century. The change was reflected in the names of the newspaper, for example the *Kemadjuan*

Hindia (Progress of the Indies) which changed its name to *Kemadjuan* Indonesia (Progress of Indonesia) (Lubis, 1952: 91). The leading nationalist newspaper, Sin Po, was issued on 1 October 1910 as a weekly. By April 1912, it became a daily newspaper and launched a campaign in 1919 to draw the Chinese back to the "motherland" by rejecting Netherlands subject status (Lohanda, 2002: 81). Sin Po was the first paper to openly publish the text of "Indonesia Raya". This was a song composed by Wage Supratman at a youth convention in 1928 and encapsulated the ideals of the nationalist movement in Indonesia. It was chosen as the national anthem when Indonesia proclaimed its independence on 17 August 1945 (Foulcher, 2000: 388).

Through the THHK and its Chinese language schools, there was a growing use of "Tionghua" in the peranakan press. By the late 1920s, the use of "Tionghua" and "Tiongkok" spread to the Indonesian press and in return the Peranakan press began using the term "Indonesier" instead of bumiputera (indigenous people) for Indonesians and the word "Indonesia" for the Netherland Indies instead of the Dutch term, "Hindia Belanda". The Japanese invasion in 1942 however put an end to most of the debate about independence. The Japanese occupation and the anti-Chinese attitudes of the Japanese retarded the re-sinicization of the Chinese in Indonesia. The Japanese did not distinguish between the Totoks or the Peranakans but perceived them as a group of foreign Chinese (Greif, 1988: 5).

5.2.6 *Japanese Occupation*

When the Japanese forces arrived in Indonesia, there was widespread chaos. Many of the Dutch warehouses and businesses were ransacked by native Indonesians as well as the Japanese army. The Chinese were not spared and many were victims of looting. The Chinese community suffered at the hands of both the Japanese and the indigenous population. The Japanese were hostile to the Chinese because of the long running war between the Japan and China and were targets for violence. Suspected political dissidents were also killed by the Japanese. In late October 1943, there were large scale arrests and execution of people in order to suppress a suspected rebellion. The "Pontianak Affair" as it was termed, resulted in the killing of 1,500 pribumi, Europeans and ethnic Chinese. The largest number of 854 executed was Chinese (Purdey, 2006: 7). By and large, most Chinese were spared their lives but were frequently subject to extortion and forced to "contribute" to the Japanese war effort. In 1942, a decree required the Sumatran Chinese to contribute a sum of between $30 million and $40 million (Twang, 1998: 76).

5.2.7 *Post War Independence Period*

After the war, Indonesia underwent a tumultuous period of political instability. Soon after Independence was proclaimed in 1945, there was a power vacuum during which time the Chinese were subjected to looting and robbing (Twang, 1998: 155). The vulnerable position made many Chinese flee, while others awaited

the arrival of the Allied forces with the hope of protection against the looting and anti-Chinese violence. In the immediate post war period, the struggle for Indonesian independence from the Dutch was a critical period for the formation of Indonesian nationalist attitudes towards the Chinese. Many Indonesians assert that the Chinese gave no support to the Indonesian independence cause. This was not strictly accurate. Although the Chinese community remained divided in their political orientation, several Chinese made their views heard during the preparation for Indonesian independence.[4]

In the period of struggle against the Dutch colonialists, there were also Chinese who supported the Indonesian revolution and helped in various ways by smuggling supplies in Dutch occupied areas. However, this did not lead to a real bridging of the gap between the ethnic groups. Irregular volunteer troops attached to the Indonesian forces occasionally carried out violence against the Chinese. One of the more serious anti-Chinese incidents occurred between 30th May and 4th June 1946 in Tanggerang. During this period, more than six hundred Chinese were killed (Purdey, 2006: 7). This incident led to a disillusionment among the Chinese at the inability of the Republic to guarantee their safety. In response, the Chinese formed the Pao An Tui (Peace Protection Corps) first in Medan in 1946 and later in Java in 1947. Although the Pao An Tui existed to protect the Chinese and their property and was supposed to be neutral in the Dutch-Indonesia conflict, in reality it received arms from the Dutch (Somers, 1968: 120). Naturally this increased the antagonism towards the Chinese who were seen as taking the side of the Dutch colonialist.

5.2.8 The Legal Status of the Chinese

The issue of citizenship for the Chinese was tackled in the early years of the independence. The racial groupings which were created by the Dutch were broadly replaced by two categories: citizens and aliens. When the 1945 Constitution was drafted and the first citizenship law was enacted, Indonesian citizens were defined as "native Indonesians" (*orang orang Indonesia asli*) and those of other races (*orang orang bangsa lain*) who were confirmed as citizens by law. Citizenship was conferred automatically on indigenous (asli) Indonesians but only available to the other ethnic groups if they fulfilled certain conditions. The term *asli* meant indigenous, native and original, but it also had the connotation of "authentic" or "genuine". Thus Coppel (1983: 3) argues that the wording and the substance of the constitution and citizenship law had already implied that "real" Indonesians were indigenous and that other members who received Indonesian citizenship did so as a favor of the Indonesian nation.

The Communist takeover in China affected the position of the Chinese in Indonesia. Many of them saw a Communist China as less attractive than an independent Indonesia. Those who were born in Indonesia and whose parents were domiciled under the Dutch administration were regarded as citizens of the new Indonesian state (Purdey, 2006: 8). However, as Lindsey notes (2005: 48) the ethnic Chinese, whether citizen or alien, continued to be singled out as a separate group.

Although most Chinese received Indonesian citizenship, they were still marked out and referred to as WNI (Warganegara Indonesia- Indonesian of foreign descent), even though some of them are descended from families who have been in Indonesia for centuries. The WNI tag served as a euphemism for ethnic Chinese, as opposed to indigenous Indonesians.

While extending the benefits of citizenship to the Chinese seemed to be a generous and accommodating gesture on the part of the government, in reality Twang (1998: 132) asserts that such a citizenship law was a prelude to discrimination. As Indonesian citizens, Chinese businesses were subject to Indonesian law, but they did not receive the same treatment as the indigenous Indonesian businesses. One of the first discriminatory measures installed was the *Benteng* system which was introduced in early 1950, after the short-lived establishment of the Republic of the United States of Indonesia (RIS). The government announced that it would protect Indonesian "national importers" so that they could compete with foreign importers. The national importers were defined as indigenous Indonesians importers, or import firms whose capital was 70% indigenous. Thus, the Chinese importers would not enjoy any privileges directly. However, the Chinese businesses managed to get around the discriminatory policy by establishing "ali baba" companies. This consisted of indigenous Indonesians setting up offices as a front to obtain licenses and permits, while their silent Chinese partners managed the business (Suryadinata, 1992: 132).

Despite the overt discriminatory actions, many Chinese traders did manage to build their business by co-operating with the government. After the Japanese occupation, the Republican government found themselves with the onerous task of rebuilding the economy which was destroyed during the revolution and Dutch occupation. Through the nationalization of the economy, they had control over the economic resources, but did not have the business experience. The indigenous businessmen were unable to provide sufficient capital or expertise. Thus began the complementary relationship between the power-holders and the Chinese businessmen. The mostly totok Chinese businessmen who had by this time supplanted the Peranakan Chinese, were seen as financial resources that could be called upon to finance Indonesian organizations, including those of the military. They were also utilized as intermediaries for the import-export trade. Several Chinese traders utilized their government connections to smoothen their business deals. Trading licenses for the Chinese were difficult to obtain without some measure of official Indonesian connection. As Twang points out during the post-war period, some Chinese businesses that had established connections with the Indonesian power holders and were willing to take risks made immense profits, especially in the smuggling of opium and weapons (Twang, 1998: 284).

5.2.9 Political Involvement by the Chinese

Throughout the Japanese occupation and during the struggle for independence, many Chinese remained politically neutral because of the economic and political

turmoil in the country (Purdey, 2006: 7). However, the discrimination towards the Chinese led them to realize the need for greater political involvement. In the face of the growing instability, the political group of BAPERKI (Badan Permusyawaratan Kewarganegaraan Indonesia, Consultative Body for Indonesian Citizenship) was formed in 1954. It was open to all Indonesians regardless of race, although the members were mostly Peranakan Chinese. The aim of the organization was to strive for equality among all Indonesian citizens, regardless of their ethnic origin. BAPERKI also demanded the cultural rights of the Chinese minority group (Suryadinata, 2001: 504). BAPERKI was the largest active Chinese-Indonesian organization during the 1960s (Lane, 2007: 17). It became aligned with then President Sukarno and became increasingly dependent on his support. One of the first battles which the BAPERKI fought was to oppose the draft citizenship law which would have severely restricted citizenship for the ethnic Chinese. As a result of their vocal opposition, the draft citizenship law underwent substantial modification before it was adopted by Parliament in 1958 (Coppel, 1983: 36).

From its inception, BAPERKI was fundamentally integrationist (as opposed to assimilationist) and showed its commitment by establishing BAPERKI schools which were open to all races although they were attended by predominantly WNI and WNA Chinese. It also opened a University in Jakarta with a branch in Surabaya. These educational institutes used the Indonesian language as the medium of instruction but included teaching on Chinese culture and politics (Greif, 1988: 9). While some of the *totok* joined BAPERKI, most of them were still China-oriented and had their own clan organizations, commercial and cultural associations.

5.2.10 Sukarno's Guided Democracy (1958–1965)

By the 1950s, the system of parliamentary democracy which was in place after the transfer of sovereignty in 1949 came under attack. After several mini-coups by local military commanders in several regions of Sumatra and East Indonesia, the government of Ali Sastroamidjojo resigned in early 1957 and President Sukarno abandoned the parliamentary system and declared martial law. As a result the army acquired extensive administrative and political powers. Apart from its expanded political role, the army gained an important foothold in the economy. When in December 1957, the vast network of Dutch business enterprises in Indonesia was taken over by local trade union actions in defiance of cabinet instructions, then Army Chief of Staff General Nasution ordered them to be placed under military supervision.

For his part, President Sukarno was not happy with the figurehead presidential role assigned to him by the provisional constitution of 1950 (Coppel, 1983: 31–32). Instead Sukarno espoused his ideas of "Guided Democracy" under which he became the ultimate arbiter in all matters concerning political ideology (Coppel, 1983: 33). For the Chinese, overt expressions of anti-Sinicism and violence was fairly well suppressed during the Sukarno period. This was perhaps due to his

close relationship with Peking as well as his personal ambition to remain in power. According to Suryadinata, Sukarno espoused unity among the races mainly because he believed that a country afflicted by ethnic discord would weaken his power. Sukarno's concept of a multi-racial state however was not accepted by the majority of the indigenous Indonesians (Suryadinata, 2004: 8). However, the Chinese were not totally spared from discrimination. A head tax was imposed on aliens in 1957 and in 1959 a ban on retail trade by aliens outside the capitals. The retail ban which was comprehensively implemented in West Java severely disrupted relations between Indonesia and China and caused an exodus of more than 100,000 Indonesian Chinese to China. It also seriously disrupted the Indonesian economy since national businessmen and co-operatives were in many cases not well prepared to take the place of the alien retailers. The WNI Chinese, although not directly affected by the measures were unsettled by them. They had to give proof of their Indonesian citizenship if they were to avoid the economic restrictions and many WNI Chinese feared that the restrictions may extend to them (Coppel, 1983: 37–38).

By 1963, the ethnic Chinese had settled into a less tenuous status in Indonesia. Under the nationality treaty between the Indonesian and the Chinese government, provisions were made for the ethnic Chinese with Indonesian citizenship to be released from Chinese citizenship. Implemented in 1962, around 390,000 ethnic Chinese chose Indonesian citizenship and rejected their Chinese status (Purdey, 2006: 9). The rights of the alien Chinese to continue their residence in Indonesia was not challenged. In fact they were welcomed as relations between Indonesia and Peking were good. Thus Coppel (1983: 39) claims that citizenship in effect was not a major issue in Indonesian politics during the later part of the Guided Democracy period.

For the Chinese the late years of the Guided Democracy era were a period of accommodation. The Chinese schools had high enrolments, the Chinese language newspaper was revived and the Peranakan Chinese became increasingly involved in the political scene with the BAPERKI becoming one of the largest Chinese socio-political organizations in Indonesia. While the BAPERKI leadership was mostly left-wing, Greif (1988: 9–10) claims that its rank and file members as well as its financial backers were not. These members used the BAPERKI as a means of defense against anti-Chinese reactions and as a channel to Sukarno's inner court. However, in the eyes of the native population, communism became associated with all Chinese. This was exacerbated by the close support given by President Sukarno who became increasingly close to the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI). While Sukarno was in power and the relations with mainland China were close, this identification was actually beneficial for the Chinese community (Coppel, 1983: 50). However, the conditions proved short lived as Sukarno was overthrown in a military coup and the anti-Communist campaign in Indonesia meant that the Chinese became prime targets of violence. Many ethnic Chinese were killed, attacks were made on Chinese consulates and Chinese schools were seized and closed. BAPERKI was also implicated in the Communist coup and banned (Suryadinata, 2001: 501).

5.2.11 Chinese Under Suharto "New Order"

Under the Suharto regime (1966–1998), the Chinese population came under a great
deal of pressure. Suharto's anti-Communism purges in 1965–1966 resulted in the
massacre of about a million people (Lane, 2007: 14). However, most of the peo-
ple who were killed were mostly Javanese and Balinese rather than Chinese. If
anything the ethnic Chinese were under-represented in the massacres which were
directed against members of the PKI and its affiliated organizations in which the
Chinese were also under-represented.[5] Lane argues that the main reason for the
Suharto's purge was to wipe out any opposition to his regime. During the 1950s and
1960s, political and social movements were very active. The leading mass activist
organizations, the Indonesian Communist Party as well as its associated mass orga-
nizations were thus seen as a threat to Suharto's power and hence were crushed by
the mass violence. Other mass organizations such as the Indonesian National Party
and its affiliates were not banned but they saw thousands of their members killed
and imprisoned (Lane, 2007: 14).

Suharto also put in place policies which led to deal with the so-called "Chinese
problem" (masalah Cina). The Chinese were continually portrayed as "the enemy"
and ethnic problems (instead of economic ones) were touted as the root of the prob-
lem in Indonesia. Ethnic differences between the Chinese and the pribumi were
depicted as the cause of the widening economic inequality and not the class contra-
dictions produced by the rapid industrialization in society. The media was used to
manipulate and perpetuate the stereotype that all Chinese belonged to the affluent
upper class that was enjoying their wealth at the expense of the majority pribumi
population. Thus by manipulating deep seated inter-ethnic suspicion and emphasiz-
ing ethnicity, Chua (2004: 469) argues that the Suharto regime prevented queries
which may have challenged their "capitalist oligarchy" and knee-deep involvement
with the Chinese tycoons.

The Chinese were marginalized and were pressured into assimilation by the *pem-
bauran total* (complete assimilation) policy because Chinese cultural differences
were deemed to be a threat to the national unity of Indonesia and was a stumbling
block to achieving ethnic peace (Chua, 2004: 470). Thus, beginning in 1966, the
government attempted to eliminate all forms of Chinese-ness and attacked the three
pillars of Chinese culture – namely the Chinese language press, the Chinese medium
school and the ethnic Chinese organizations. Suharto closed all Chinese newspapers
except one. This was a half-Chinese, half Indonesian daily newspaper which was
run by the government and controlled by the military (Suryadinata, 1994: 2).

The use of Chinese media, language and writing were banned. All Chinese asso-
ciations were dissolved and the Chinese language schools were closed. Indonesians
of Chinese descent were "encouraged" to replace their Chinese names with
Indonesian-sounding ones to "accelerate the assimilation process" (Chua, 2004:
471). The public practice of Chinese religions and customs, including the celebra-
tion of the Chinese New Year were forbidden. The discriminatory policies were
ostensibly to extinguish Chinese culture and assimilate the Chinese with the major-
ity population. The concept of assimilation, based on the indigenous "sons of the

soil" or pribumi was used as the Indonesian model. All Indonesian ethnic groups were declared to be indigenous as their homeland was within the boundary of Indonesia. Since they lay claim to the land, they should have more rights than the immigrants, such as the ethnic Chinese who originated from China and hence were foreigners. Thus, if they wanted to become Indonesians, the only acceptable way was to assimilate into the indigenous population. In other words, the Chinese were expected to give up their Chinese cultural characteristics and assume indigenous cultural characteristics (Suryadinata, 2004: 3).

The legal status of the Chinese presented a dilemma for the New Order regime. The Suharto government had a long standing policy to treat the ethnic Chinese as a group apart from the indigenous Indonesians.[6] Thus it would be contrary to its official policy to naturalize the alien Chinese (Lindsey, 2005). The alien Chinese were mostly those who were not born in Indonesia or were Indonesia-born but had rejected Indonesian citizenship following independence in 1945. However the Cold War anxieties made Suharto fearful of a possible fifth column among the non-citizen Chinese. Thus the regime compromised by setting up a process by which aliens could obtain a citizenship certificate (the SBKRI) from the head of the regional administrative sub districts. These certificates would become the basis of a naturalization process. However the SBKRI system also created opportunities for corruption, especially at the local level of officials. In some places, the unofficial cost of obtaining the SBKRI was 7.5 million rupiah (around US$885). The exorbitant bribes meant that some Chinese could not afford to obtain the SBKRI and remained in a state of legal limbo (Lindsey, 2005: 49). For those who did obtain the SBKRI, it became an essential evidence of citizenship. Combined with a special code for ethnic Chinese on their identity cards, Lindsey (2005: 51) likened it to the restrictive pass system utilized by the Dutch to single out the Chinese during the colonial era.

Thus Chua (2004: 472–473) argues that in reality the government did not seek to resolve the "Chinese problem" but wanted to politicize the ethnic difference between the ethnic groups to ensure the antagonism between the pribumi and the Chinese persisted, thus covering up the class nature of social conflicts in the country (Chua, 2004: 472). Working against the official policy of assimilation were various measures which ensured that the Chinese would also be kept distinct from the general population. Beside the special codes on their identity cards, there were also many restrictions on the Chinese, such as limiting vacancies in state universities for Chinese and restricting certain occupations from Chinese. This resulted in many of the Chinese gravitating towards the business field. Such restrictions tended to push the Chinese population and their apparent differences into the limelight. Various government policies were implemented to undermine and eradicate what was deemed to be "Chineseness", yet the Chinese were not integrated into the Indonesian population because they were still branded as "Chinese" by their religious preferences, in official identification forms, and perceived as such by bureaucracy, employment and university admissions.

Their Chineseness was not only kept visible, it was also re-defined. Chinese-ness lost its cultural connotation but was infused with a negative meaning. This negativity

was further emphasized by the 1967 ruling to label the Chinese derogatively as "Cina" instead of the neutral "Tionghua". The use of "Tionghua" was banned from public use and "Cina" was used to remove the feeling of inferiority on the part of our people, while on the other hand removing the feeling of superiority on the part of the group concerned (Aguilar, 2001: 505). The government policies thus legitimized the pariah status of the Chinese and anti-Chinese sentiment and attacks became "justified" since there were no legal and few moral consequences of such attacks since the Chinese were the outcasts who had no rights or means of defending themselves (Chua, 2004: 473). Tan (2004: 56) also contends that the combination of labeling and the implementation of discriminatory laws and regulations has led to the formulation of an attitude that condones and justifies disparaging or despising anything that is Chinese or Chinese related.

Under the circumstances, it became necessary for the Chinese minority to seek protection from the political bureaucrats. This paved the way for the symbiotic relationship between the government officials and the Chinese businessmen. This was an echo of the Sukarno government's relationship with the Chinese during the late Guided Democracy period. The *cukong* (Chinese businessmen who were in alliance with the powerful Indonesian bureaucrats) used their connections with the military elite to obtain preferential treatment for contracts, licenses and credit in return for a share of the profits (Coppel, 1983: 153). The opportunities open to the rich Chinese entrepreneurs were subject to much criticism especially by the indigenous businesses. However, Chua (2004: 475) points out that the Chinese conglomerates were only junior partners among the more powerful politico-bureaucrats because they were still stigmatized as Chinese.

The low status of the Chinese was the biggest barrier towards them translating their economic prowess into political power. Hence it was the aim of the government to ensure the Chinese tycoons remained as social pariahs as this made them the perfect silent partner to rule and exploit the wealth of the country. Although working in co-operation with the Chinese tycoons seemed contradictory to the official protectionistic policy of improving the wealth distribution to the pribumi, in actual fact it benefited the ruling elite to ensure the economic backwardness of the indigenous population. The growth of an economically strong pribumi middle class could become a threat to the powerful politico-bureaucratic elite as they would have the moral right and the numerical superiority to speak out against the military regime (Chua, 2004: 475).

Purdey (2006: 32) claims that it would be simplistic to attribute the anti-Chinese violence to economic or class competition. While these are influential factors, they are not central to the why the violence takes place. In her view, violence towards the Chinese took place because of multiple reasons: namely disputes over sacred space (fears of Christianization), scapegoating during economic hardship, political power struggles, racialized state violence and justice-seeking. During Suharto's reign, the state was complicit in creating a context which seemed to condone anti-Chinese sentiment. The New Order regime constantly questioned the position of the Chinese, their citizenship and their "belonging" to the Indonesian nation. This presented the context for the government as well as the masses to view the discrimination,

prejudice and acts of violence against the Chinese as justifiable. In fact, Chua (2004: 475) claims that some of the riots may have been instigated by the military themselves. Perhaps, the antagonism between the Chinese and the pribumi was evidence of the successful policies engendered by the regime.

5.3 Contemporary Indonesia

On May 13, 1998, Indonesia exploded in mass disorder when large scale riots broke out, firstly in the capital city, Jakarta, which then quickly spread across many provincial towns in Java. While there have been intermittent riots against the Chinese in Indonesian history, the riots in Jakarta were unprecedented because of the scale of the destruction of property which was arguably left unchecked by the police and the military, and by the fact that it received "live" world wide media attention and coverage. The rioters, who were mostly indigenous Indonesians, pribumi, did not confine themselves to simply looting and burning. The Chinese became increasingly terrified when word spread that many Chinese women were being gang-raped and subsequently killed. Looting and mass destruction caused widespread fear amongst the Chinese community, and thousands of Chinese rushed to the airports and fled the country.[7]

It is popularly known that the 1998 riots were sparked off by the poor economic position that Indonesia had found itself in when the "bubble" burst in Thailand. The "Asian contagion" and currency crisis affected Indonesia, which led to a rapid decline in the value of the rupiah, and a sustained economic crisis. However, the sociological question is why, in the face of the crisis, the Chinese were targeted and became the scapegoat for the economic woes of the country?

5.3.1 Ethnicity as Discourse: Situating the Chinese in Indonesia

Before proceeding to analyzing the three central issues stated earlier, it would be useful to provide a brief overview of some of the studies that have been conducted on the ethnic Chinese in Indonesia. Most studies tend to promote the view that the Chinese in Indonesia have remained a separate ethnic group with their own cultural peculiarities and practices. Willmott, for example, noted that "there is virtually no ambiguity about who is to be considered Chinese." Likewise, Skinner mentioned that thousands of ethnic Chinese in Java had consciously maintained their own ethnic identity and could even trace their ancestral descent for as many as twelve generations. Go (1968: 47) wrote that the "Chinese who have remained and settled in Indonesia . . . have continued to exist as a separate group with a cultural pattern [that is] distinct from that of the Indonesians, but also from that originally brought from China." The (1966) suggested that the anti-Chinese riots in Indonesia can be traced to the polarization of economic tension between the Chinese and Indonesians. The emphasis on economic motivations is further discussed by Willmott (1961),

who noted that the Chinese became known as parasites because of their domination of the commercial sectors, which could be traced back to the early years of the twentieth century when the Chinese acted as middlemen for the Dutch and were moneylenders, charging high interest rates to the local Javanese population (see Bonacich, 1973; Hirshman 1988; and Zenner, 1991 for examples of the middleman minority thesis that characterized colonial and post colonial period in Southeast Asia. See also Rush, 1991 for a discussion of the Chinese role as moneylenders in colonial Java.).

Most recently, Chandra (2002) applied economic theories to analyze the causes of anti-Chinese sentiments, and concluded that it started during the early years of the twentieth century when relative wages between the Chinese and the pribumi revealed "a rapid increase in wage inequality" (p. 110) in the Netherland East Indies. Chandra concluded that the relative wages were thus an important criteria for explaining political unrest in plural societies. These economic theories base their argument on the observation that the problems between the Chinese and the pribumi stem from either jealousy on the part of the latter towards the former, or simply the dynamics of Dutch colonial social structure which saw the Chinese, as Foreign Orientals, occupy a higher position as middlemen compared to their native counterparts in the highly stratified society. Significantly also, it should be remembered, is that most of these studies (other than Chandra, 2002; Rush, 1991; The, 1993) were either conducted prior to or just after the 1965 military coup in which General Suharto had assumed the presidency and launched his New Order regime. Suharto's highly centralized, authoritarian regime that sought to suppress all forms of Chineseness has been replaced, at least officially, by a democratic and more open leadership under President Megawati Sukarnoputri, who declared Chinese New Year a national holiday in February 2003, as well as subsequent Presidents. Other scholars have drawn attention to the political dimension that inevitably includes the role of the state, and certain global forces that aim at determining ethnic Chinese Indonesian identity (see Somers, 1964; Williams, 1966).

Most of these scholars, however, have stressed individual reasons and have, in my view, over-emphasized a single factor, whether economic, political, linguistic or religious, to account for the differences between the ethnic Chinese and the pribumi, which subsequently act as barriers towards integration or assimilation of the Chinese. These studies thus tend to be unilineal and causal in their explanations of the position of the Chinese in Indonesia. As such, Mackie criticized many earlier studies for failing to take into account the multi-layered, or overlapping character of so many of Indonesia's most crucial socio-economic problems (1982: 120), precisely because they were "over-simplified, excessively deterministic or mechanistic in establishing causal connections." He further suggest that one of the problems with previous studies is that they tended to use either structural or class variables only, or ethnic and cultural variables only, to explain position of the Chinese. This chapter argues that an understanding of the Chinese in Indonesia requires a multi-faceted explanation, taking into account various factors, including economic, political and cultural variables.

5.3.2 *Chinese Identity*

In the interviews with the Chinese informants in Indonesia today, what is immediately clear is that most informants, regardless of socio-economic status or length of stay in Indonesia, tended to regard themselves as Chinese.[8] As one informant noted,

> You can never erase Chineseness. It has such a long and proud history. OK, you close the Chinese schools and ban other things Chinese, but I can always send my children overseas, to Singapore to learn Chinese. So Suharto tried, but could not succeed at all. He can only try to restrict, but if we really want to, we can always find many ways around it.

Despite the various attempts to eradicate Chineseness through forced assimilation, there is a persistence of Chinese ethnic identity in Indonesia. For many of the informants, this ethnic identity, like the Chinese in Singapore and Malaysia, has primordial manifestations, that is, many of them consider themselves Chinese because they were born Chinese and because of descent. As some informants noted,

> Because I look like a typical Chinese, and I speak the language as well. Yes, skin color is one thing that determines Chineseness. But I think my eyes are an obvious give-away. Because I have single eyelids (laughs). That's very typical Chinese right?

> To be honest, I have never thought about it. But I think it's the eyes, because when I was in primary school, people used to say that I was Chinese because of my eyes.

> Skin color. I think that the obvious Chinese features are the eyes and skin color. And their behavior also gives them away.

> Birth and language. Being born into a Chinese family, my parents and grandparents keep stressing and sometimes reminding me that no matter what, I am a Chinese and should respect and observe traditional Chinese rules.

> How to change? No matter where I go or who I meet or what I eat, I will always be a Chinese. You cannot change Chineseness. If you are born a Chinese, then you must be a Chinese, right? But I will also say that the children who are born of those mixed marriages are not pure Chinese, but mixed. Then those Chinese will be different from a Chinese like me.

> But I think the appearance, like when I look at someone I know he or she is Chinese. Of course, language is also important, because when someone speaks Chinese, you know that they are Chinese. A Malay or Indian will not speak Chinese. Even if they do, you can see from their appearance because they are darker skin that they are not Chinese. So I think these two are the most basic things for a Chinese.

What these verbatim suggest is that, for most Chinese in Indonesia, physiological characteristics and descent act as the first level of ethnic identification. As one of the informant also noted, identification by descent gives identity a permanent and unchangeable quality, "Once a Chinese, always a Chinese." The use of genealogical descent thus acts as a boundary between the Chinese and others. Once the first level of marker is satisfied, Chinese informants in Indonesia use a variety of other markers for ethnic identification. These include language, which is cited by many informants, as well as celebration of Chinese cultural festivals, such as Chinese New Year, and Moon-cake festivals.

However, unlike the case in Singapore and Malaysia, where there was almost unanimous agreement in using racial categories and descent to define their Chineseness, the responses among the Chinese in Indonesia were more varied. A large number do cite bloodline and descent as the basis for ethnic identification. However, there were also a number of Chinese in Indonesia that claim to be Indonesian first, and Chinese second. What is clear in the subtext of their answer though, is the fact that after years of discrimination and "cultural genocide," it is disadvantageous and even dangerous to be identified as a Chinese in Indonesia. While most Chinese in Indonesia subscribe to being Chinese, the reality of living in a society which singled them out for discrimination has meant that they strategically present certain aspects of their identity in the public sphere. However, despite this, the persistence of Chinese ethnic identity, and the advantages of being associated with ethnic Chinese individuals, especially from an economic perspective, has remained intact after all these years. As these comments from the interviews clearly illustrate:

> Many people will say that "I am Indonesian"; they will probably say that "I am Indonesian-Chinese" or "Chinese-Indonesian" or "Sino-Indonesian" Many Chinese here do that kind of thing – they look at the situation and decide whether they say they are Chinese or not.

> Now, of this one and a half million, you have a Mr. L. Is Mr. L. an Indonesian national, or a national of the PRC? You are Mr. S. Is Mr. S. a Chinese national or an Indonesian national? How must I talk to him? I must be careful. For the people at large, they see the skin color, so he must be a Chinese in their eyes. People cannot be certain.

> This is for their survival. Chinese behave like that because it will save their lives, their businesses and their families. It is survival. Because they are a minority.

> If you don't call me a Chinese, it is OK. Because sometimes I really hate to be a Chinese in Indonesia, because when people know that I am Chinese, I face all kinds of discrimination.

The central point here is that the Chinese still cling to their ethnic identity as Chinese, and continues to be viewed by non-Chinese in Indonesia as a separate and distinct group. However, the ways in which the Chinese express their identity has changed. For example, they seem to have developed a private-public distinction in the expression of ethnic identity. Within the confines of the home, or among other Chinese, there is a greater emphasis on demonstrating Chineseness. Some informants mention that they do speak Chinese at home, especially with parents, even though they tended to use Bahasa Indonesia in public discourse. Similarly many Chinese celebrate a number of Chinese festivals, particularly Chinese New Year, at home, but, do not overtly display their Chineseness in public discourse. As one informant mentioned:

> Some will just celebrate it privately amongst themselves, others will just think of it as another day where they might just eat a meal together without all the formalities and festive mood, while others may celebrate for three days. We will go back to see our parents. We give or exchange *ang pows* (red packets), we eat lots of food, we gamble, and basically have a good time off from work. In terms of how big the event is, maybe not as big as in Singapore or Malaysia. We normally only keep it within the family. So I will celebrate with my parents and grandparents and some close relatives. Don't forget that they are traditional Chinese, especially my mother, so Chinese New Year is important for them.

In a sense, what has traditionally been a public festival, in the context of Indonesia, has become a private festival celebrated in the confines of the family, and among close friends or co-ethnics. Public demonstrations of Chineseness, until recently, have been banned by the state. In public, ethnic identity is strategically managed. As one informant noted, "the Chinese will tend to be Chinese when it is convenient for them, and Indonesian when it is more convenient to do so. It depends on the situation. They will pretend to be so and so if it is advantageous for them." For some, they hide their Chineseness in public, while maintaining it at home, as one case illustrates,

> When I was in school, I regularly went out with my Indonesian (that is pribumi) friends. Once when we went to a shopping center, we went to a stall that was owned by a Chinese shopkeeper. This shopkeeper spoke to me in Chinese, even though he could see that I was with a group of pribumi. I spoke to him in Bahasa Indonesia. His attitude to me changed because he said that I was Chinese, so why didn't I reply to him in Chinese or why couldn't I speak some sort of Chinese language or dialect? I just pretended that I didn't know what he said, and told him that I was not Chinese. Then he replied in Bahasa that I was a Chinese, but I was just reluctant and ashamed to speak Chinese. I communicate in Bahasa with almost everyone, except my parents and relatives.

Some point out that they are Chinese ethnically, but in terms of nationality, they are Indonesians. A few claim that they are not Chinese, even though they have Chinese names. There are a considerable number of informants who admit to being Chinese, but will rather call themselves Chinese-Indonesians, rather than Chinese per se. Chinese Indonesian, compared to "Indonesian Chinese" is now the preferred label because, as one informant noted, "in Indonesian, the adjective comes before the noun, it means that they see themselves as Indonesian first, and Chinese second." However, others prefer to identify themselves as Chinese, or feel more comfortable interacting with other Chinese rather than the indigenes:

> Being around Chinese naturally made me feel more Chinese. At least I could identify with the people around me without feeling any shame, reluctance or pretense because we were all alike in terms of skin color, to a certain extent language. In fact all are Chinese. I don't mix around much with people of other races anymore. Even if I meet an old pribumi friend from primary school or in the neighborhood, I just say hi and that's it.

Another informant noted,

> Yes, my closest friends are all Chinese. I have a very small group of close friends, although I know many other people who I consider to be friends. But my close circle of friends is all Chinese.

5.3.3 Multiple Chineseness

While it is true that the data collected from the informants suggest a strong sense of Chinese identity and being discriminated against because of that identity, it is important to emphasize that in Indonesia, there in fact many forms of Chineseness. For example, most previous research on the Chinese in Indonesia have pointed to

the differentiation between the totoks and the peranakans. The totoks, on the one hand, being foreign born and later migrants to Indonesia, tended to remain distinctly Chinese in their outlook, saw China as their homeland, and have less interaction with the locals and the peranakans. Peranakans, on the other hand, have been in Indonesia for a much longer period, some for as many as 20 generations. They have a higher degree of intermarriage with the locals, and tended to be more assimilated into Indonesian society.

In the light of developments in Indonesian society and politics, it is difficult to speak of peranakan-totok differentiation today. Rather, the Chinese must be viewed as consisting of many diversified groups, and their strategies of ethnic identification are not merely dependent on whether they are peranakan or totok, but also to which faction they belong to, which in part, is determined by their socio-economic status, cultural differences, religious orientations, etc. It is the perception of individual Chinese, or group of Chinese, of their position in Indonesian society that defines their strategy of identification.

While there is general agreement among the informants that they are ethnically Chinese, there is less agreement when it comes to cultural markers of ethnicity. For example, most of the Chinese Indonesians that I spoke to indicated that their Chineseness could not be defined *generally* in terms of language (or speech groups, name, culture, traditions, religion, or appearance). Some of them felt that the Chinese language was extremely important, while others felt that it had no consequence in their ethnic identity as Chinese Indonesians. Most of them felt that their names, whether it was Chinese or not, did not define their Chinese identity. There were informants who felt that as a Chinese, they had to at least practice or participate in one or more Chinese cultural traditions, an example being Chinese New Year. However, there were others who said that it had little to do with culture, that being Chinese is simply to be born Chinese. While some claim that religion is an important marker of ethnicity, others said that it had little effect on their Chineseness because some were Christian, some Muslims, some Buddhists, and some atheists.

Moreover, what some informants mention, for them, as important markers of Chinese identity, they in fact do not possess or practice them. For example, one informant, who could not speak Chinese nevertheless regard it as an important marker of ethnicity. Another, who identify herself as Chinese mentioned that having Chinese culture and celebrating Chinese festivals is a marker of Chineseness, then proceeded to say that her family does not celebrate any festivals. In a sense, ethnic identity, for these people, is more a form of symbolic identity rather than as actual identity markers. There is a nostalgic identification with these markers, but practically speaking, it is not evident in their daily lives and in their cultural contact with the indigenous people.

Most studies on the Chinese in Indonesia have predominantly focused on the Chinese on the island of Java. It can be argued that a distinction should be made between the Chinese in Java and those on the Outer Islands. Ethnic identity in Indonesia takes on an added significance when one considers that within the boundaries of the already heterogeneous Southeast Asian Chinese people, there are also sub-sets of Chinese identities that are similar, yet at the same time somewhat

different, from absolute or mainstream Chinese identity that exists in Indonesia. This is due, in no small part, to the vast landscape of the Indonesian archipelago and the inability of the Indonesian government to exert control and hence diffuse its nation-building policies to the islands outside of Java. Regional and local cultural persistence thus play a crucial part in the differential ethnic identification of the Chinese Indonesian. For example, on the island of Bangka, there have been Chinese settlements for centuries, with a large proportion being local-born, but the Chinese in these places remain overwhelming Chinese in speech and cultural behavior. In these communities, the Chinese are in mining and small-scale agriculture. In the fishing town of Bagan Siapi-api, there is a large majority of Chinese compared to the local population.

In other areas, like Padang in Sumatra, the scenario is one with a mainly urban Chinese population engaged in small-scale trading activities. These Chinese speak Indonesian, or a regional Indonesian language, and are acculturated to the local culture. In Makassar, there is a significant Chinese community that remains essentially Chinese. Chinese there, according to one informant, continue to carry out their traditional cultural practices, and the children tend to speak Chinese. Similarly, in Irian, the Chinese there are mostly merchants, and tend to identify themselves as Chinese, distinct from the local Irian population. The Hakka Chinese in Kalimantan, who are mostly farmers, would be very different from the Chinese in Java, who are mostly merchants. The treatment of the Chinese by the local population is also quite diverse. As one informant noted, "on the island of Java, it is not very pleasant because the Javanese look down on the Chinese. It is not the same in Pontianak, or in Sumatra." Thus, the notion of regional identity is important, as people from different localities have very different ideas of Chineseness and Indonesian-ness, due to the influence of local culture from which they come from.

An understanding of the Chinese in Indonesia needs to be cognizant of the multiple nature of Chinese in Indonesia, and ethnic identity, and the expression of that identity is dependent on the local context and the historical and environmental conditions that the Chinese migrants find themselves in. Even on the island of Java, it is possible to argue that there are regional differences. The Chinese in Cirebon, for example, exhibit different attributes of their ethnic identity compared to those in Jakarta. As one informant noted, "The place you come from plays a big part. The Chinese in Java are totally different from the Chinese in Medan, or Bali. The Chinese in Jakarta are different from the Chinese in the outskirts of Java. It is totally different – your dialect, your mentality, is different. For example, my friend said that the Chinese in Medan are famous for being conmen; but that is a stereotype and I don't buy that argument. They are known as 'chi-med'. If you want to see them you should go to Pluit, very close to the airport and very exclusive." There are towns in West Java where the Chinese look like pribumi, but will not attempt to speak Bahasa Indonesia.

At another level, there is also multiple Chineseness in terms of the various types of community organizations the individual belongs to and the ideological position towards assimilation and the state. There are at least two different factions, the Baperki group, which basically supported assimilation and the Partai Tionghua

Indonesia, which advocated Chinese cultural autonomy in the Indonesia state. Coppel has also identified three different Chinese strategies; the "Nationalist", in which political activities are primarily extensions of politics in China, the "integrationist", which seeks to represent the interest of the Chinese community in local politics, and the "assimilationist", which advocates the dissociation of collective Chinese representation. These different positions reflect very different attitudes and behavior toward the local population, and color their own perception of ethnic identity. The question then is not whether the Chinese have or have not retained their Chineseness, but to what extent have they done so and at what expense? Which parts of Indonesia are we talking about? Also, to what extent have the ethnic Chinese "influenced" Indonesian society, in the sense that they have left the Indonesians with something Chinese as well.

5.3.4 Generational Differences and Their Impact on Chinese Identification

The fieldwork data suggest that generational differences play a part in people's determination of their identity. I do not mean to say that if someone is older or younger than another person, then his markers of identity would be different. Rather, people from different age groups classify the Chinese differently. The division into totok, peranakan and Indonesia-oriented groups come largely from the older generation ethnic Chinese. For the middle-generation (people between 40 and 50 years old), they usually say that the Chinese are better divided according to their speech groups, their educational backgrounds, and the region that they originated from. Being totok or peranakan does not make much of a difference to them, because the totoks from Medan would still be different from a totok from Pontianak and so on. Regional differences are still the key factor in their judgment.

For the younger generation, they emphasized regional differences first, and local languages second in their differentiation. Even then, generational difference is not an accurate criterion in determining attitudes towards levels of Chineseness. What is more certain is that everyone thinks that regional differences are extremely important, and everyone knows the differentiation between the totoks and the peranakans. Hoon, for example, found that the older generation Chinese insist on imposing their "Chineseness" on the younger generation, which very much reflects their concept of identity. Many older Chinese Indonesians are apologetic about the younger generation who no longer speak Chinese. They tend to equate people who do not speak Chinese as deprived of Chinese values (Hoon, 2006: 114).

The assimilation process in Indonesia should, at the very least, be seen from a multidimensional point of view rather than the unilineal approaches that have characterized studies on the Chinese Indonesians in the 1950s and 1960s which have nevertheless contributed immensely to our knowledge of the Chinese Indonesian community. Mackie and Coppel (1976: 2) did well to point out that the status of the overseas Chinese was very much influenced by their own behaviors as well as their "treatment by the host societies".

It is possible to propose an alternative model towards studying the ethnic Chinese in Indonesia that encompasses multidimensional forces from four different axes: the role of the state and nation-building processes (in the form of state policies towards the citizens); global influences (e.g. the mass media, increasing emphasis for democratization in previously authoritarian countries); the individual's and communities' responses towards state policies (which helps to define the situational yet primordial nature of ethnic Chinese identity); and the institutional and environmental factors that prevail in the country (e.g. size of the Chinese community, their occupations, historical and situational variables that define identity). All these variables intertwine to produce cultural contact at the centre that influences the ethnic identification of the Chinese Indonesian with reference to the state and their Indonesian counterparts.

5.3.5 *Ethnic Discrimination and Prejudice*

While there may be differential Chinese, and they are just one of a multitude of ethnic groups in Indonesia, when it comes to state policies, or inter-ethnic relations between the "Indonesians" and the Chinese, the latter is often viewed as, and dealt with, as a homogenous group. This is especially so when we examine the issues of ethnic discrimination and ethnic prejudice in Indonesia, which will be analyzed both at the level of the discourse of everyday life as well as at the level of the community and the state.

The fieldwork shows that, in daily life, the Chinese in Indonesia experiences a high degree of ethnic discrimination. As one informant noted, "When you are walking around, especially in small groups, they will say, cina, cina, what are you doing here." The discrimination is most obvious when dealing with the bureaucracy. As several informants mentioned:

> You know that there are so many discriminatory practices that still exist beneath the surface, like the Chinese are required to possess a citizenship certificate, and that is by law. For example in my case, I have to provide a kind of letter if I want to get a passport, or if I want to get married, and if I want to have children I also need that kind of letter for them. So there is still this kind of bureaucratic problems that we as Chinese face on a daily basis, even though the government says that there is no discrimination that all Indonesian citizens are of equal stature. But in practice, all these discriminatory practices actually happens everyday, everywhere.

> Chinese in Indonesia is a second-class citizen, such as work and education. When Chinese go to the university, for example, they are discriminated against because more places will be reserved for the natives as compared to the Chinese. The Chinese have to achieve better grades during secondary school to stand a chance of qualifying or entering the local university. So many Chinese end up in private schools as compared to government schools because it is almost impossible for Chinese to enter government schools. For the more wealthy Chinese, they prefer to go abroad. So pribumi or Chineseness is already determined for us in Indonesia by the government, and that cannot be changed no matter what.

> You will feel very weak and helpless as a Chinese. What I mean is that it is very difficult for a Chinese to get what he wants from the government, like for example a simple thing like

getting a passport or getting married even. And jobs – as a Chinese, it is almost impossible for you to be employed in the government. I know a close friend. She was an economic analyst, and it wasn't even paying her very well – she just wanted to do it because she like the job and she considered herself to be a loyal Indonesian citizen – she was educated in the University of Indonesia, so she wanted to help her country in her job but unfortunately, she wasn't given the chance to do so.

In the face of formal and informal stereotyping and discrimination, the Chinese have to situate their ethnicity and identity to survive. These personal experiences shape the discourse of Chinese identity in Indonesia. For example, many of the informants indicate that in public, they rather identify themselves as Indonesians rather than as Chinese, in the hope of avoiding discrimination. At the personal level, this is possible to a certain extent. However, when it comes to dealing with the bureaucracy, what a person identifies himself or herself as makes little difference. The Chinese are dealt with as a separate and distinct group. It is really about being between a rock and a hard place. For some of the Chinese who chose to identify themselves as Indonesian, and to assimilate into Indonesian society, they are not allowed to do so, and they continue to be discriminated against. For those who choose to retain and display their Chineseness, they are viewed as unpatriotic, and parasites of the Indonesian economy. As one informant succinctly puts it, "the policies towards the Chinese were very paradoxical, on the one hand they have to give up their Chineseness, and on the other hand, they are restricted from becoming full Indonesians. Stupid."

Ethnic prejudice, however, is a two way process. Just as the Indonesians have stereotypes of the Chinese; many Chinese too display negative stereotypes of the local population. Some Chinese informants see the locals as corrupt, laid back, and always wanting to borrow money[9]:

In Indonesia, their servants, their employees, their attitude; you know what they call the pribumis? *Hwana*; it is something that is very low. The Indonesians also feel that it is something very bad and derogatory, just like cina. They also call the Indonesians *hwana tiko*, meaning "not to be trusted". Always borrowing money and not paying your debts. If you are poor, of course you will borrow money and not pay back.

In fact, some of the informants use their own stereotype of the indigenous population as a way to explain why they themselves are being discriminated against as Chinese.

I think Chinese are discriminated by the natives because they are jealous of Chinese money, Chinese status in society. The problem also I think is that they are laid back people and they don't want to work hard. If they want to work, then I think they can catch up with the Chinese. Because you know Chinese are successful because all the while, our grandparents, our parents are all willing to work, and they save a lot of money and they pass it on to their children and grandchildren. So since the Chinese think that the pribumi are dangerous and jealous etc., they consciously stay away from them and they are encouraged to stay away from them by other people.

OK the pribumi are racist towards the Chinese because they are jealous of Chinese economic success and they think that the Chinese are taking everything away from them. They feel that it is unfair for a yellow-skin "foreigner", so to speak, to come to their country and make use of their resources to grow rich and powerful, while the natives are all suffering in poverty. I think also that the government traditionally has not helped the Chinese in the

sense that they try to promote anti-Chinese sentiment among the people. My father told me before that because the population of natives are generally quite uneducated, they will believe everything that is said to them, especially government-inspired propaganda.

As I noted earlier, it is important to understand ethnic discrimination in Indonesia from both a micro and macro level. At the macro level, many writers have drawn attention to the fact that the roots of discrimination against the Chinese in Indonesia started with Dutch colonial rule (see Chandra, 2002; Coppel, 2002; Cribb and Brown, 1995; Lohanda, 2002; Rush, 1991, van der Kroef, 1950. See Kahn (1982) for several concepts on Indonesian social structure during colonial times. See Maier (1993) for the specific development of the Malay and Dutch languages during colonial times). The year 1830 has been marked by the historian Ricklefs (1981: 114) as the benchmark from which the "truly colonial period of Javanese history began" because they were in a position to "fully *exploit* and control the whole of the island." Here, the interviewees' comments become invaluable, because it is they – the Chinese Indonesians themselves – who have experienced or who have heard directly about discriminatory practices and discrimination in general, towards the ethnic Chinese. All my interviewees agree that the roots of discrimination started from Dutch colonial rule, because it was the Dutch who first separated East Indies society into three distinct groups within a pyramidal framework – the Europeans at the top, the Foreign Orientals (comprising the Chinese, the Arabs and some other Eurasians) in the middle, and the natives or inlanders (pribumi) at the bottom.

> . . .discrimination in Indonesia. . .dates back from the Dutch colonial period. Most Indonesians and some Chinese believe that the Dutch favored the Chinese, but that is not true. For instance, until the late 19th century, the Dutch still enforced the so-called *passen stelsel* system, or pass system, and it meant that Chinese have to get a pass to enter other regions in Java. Chinese also had to live in their ghettos, or neighborhoods.

> I don't know how this discrimination came about, although I know that Suharto stressed it. I think, but I am not sure, that the Dutch had a hand in it because they demarcated the Chinese into Chinatown, and Malay village and all those things. The Chinese who came here were very daring, like my grandfather. . .they made their money. . .and they were very proud in their living. . .they speak in Chinese loudly. . .and of course the government officials regarded them as easy prey. . .and they shamefully bribed the officials. . .so I think that brought about the discrimination against the Chinese by the indigenous people.

> The first time it happened of course during the colonial period when the Dutch instigated both the Chinese and the pribumi to fight against each other. . .the Dutch knew that the two groups cannot be together because they would outnumber the Dutch, so they deliberately separated them. Before that, I am told that there were no problems and both the Chinese and pribumi lived together in mutual co-existence. The Dutch set the legacy. . .because I believe that the towns and cities all over Indonesia are structured in a way that divides those two groups up. That is historical, but the point is that these things are passed down from generation to generation. Suharto made it worse, but this time he was on top rather than at the bottom, and the riots are caused because of this inequality thing.

> They had this terrible divide and conquer policy and they divided the population of Indonesia at that time into three racial groups. It was a racist policy that shaped Indonesia into a pyramidal hierarchy. . .so it was very divided since three hundred years ago. And that is the root of the anti-Chinese sentiment that exists today, I feel. . .the Chinese were placed as a buffer between the colonizers and the pribumis, so of course there was resentment due to jealousy.

Many thus believe that this anti-Chinese sentiment, which had been caused either directly or indirectly by the Dutch, is related to the historical context in which the Chinese and the pribumi belonged to. The Dutch, as a trading company, sought economic profits to bolster the "deteriorating financial position in the Netherlands" (Ricklefs, 1981: 114). By imposing their three-strata system on Indonesian society, economic differences and racial differences indirectly became conjoined more than three hundred years ago. It will therefore take many generations before such racial stereotypes are erased from the mindset of the people. This interviewee's comments give a clearer picture of the situation that prevailed during colonial times between the three so-called racial groups:

> So there is animosity between the middle group and the pribumis. This has happened for about three or four centuries. And then all of a sudden, the top people went away, so some middle class people moved to the upper class. The Chinese and the Arabs of course look down on the pribumis because they are poorer, and they are lower class. And the poorer people envy the people on top. At the same time, this economic difference, when forced together, is parallel to racial differences, because it is obvious – the ethnic Chinese and the other minorities are of different race and are also richer than the pribumis. How could you expect that there is no discrimination from both sides?

> . . .the Dutch passed a law that confirmed and legalized the rights of the indigenous people as owners of the land, so the Chinese now had to lease land from the pribumi, and there were countless amounts of atrocities that were committed by the Chinese – for example they extorted the land owners who were pribumi; they took many pribumi women as their sexual slaves, so we as *peranakan* are descendants of those Chinese!

Understanding this historical period under the Dutch is crucially important, because one will then realize that the Chinese and the pribumi were thrust into positions that they did not necessarily accept. Furthermore, this separation accounts for the historical roots of the discrimination in colonial Indonesia, because economic differentiation was, in many ways, equated with racial or ethnic differentiation.

If the Dutch separated Indonesian society into three racial groups and caused discrimination between the Chinese and the pribumi, then Suharto has been accused on several occasions of worsening that tension, firstly through his assimilation program, and secondly through his policy of economic nationalism (Anderson, 1990; Robison, 1997; The, 1994). By banning or restricting the three pillars of Chinese culture in Indonesia, Suharto made it known that he officially discriminated against the Chinese minorities.[10] However, his contradictory policies seemed to have an adverse effect on the Chinese as a whole, because they felt that they were given "special treatment". Suharto's "special treatment" of the Chinese made them more wary of their status as second-class citizens, and although he succeeded in some ways in lessening the display of Chinese culture in Indonesia, he created latent hostility towards his own government and aroused stronger Chinese ethnic sentiments because not all Chinese shared his visions for an "assimilated" Indonesia that had no traces of Chinese culture.

It is here that many commentators have drawn attention to the historical context of the 1960s in post-independence Indonesia. At that time, Indonesia was recognized as having the third largest communist party, after Russia and China.

Anderson (1990: 109) noted that Suharto's New Order regime is best seen in the light of the "resurrection of the state and its triumph vis-à-vis society and nation", in which the basis of this triumph lay in the "physical annihilation of the PKI and its allies...and the removal of President Sukarno as an effective political force." Once Suharto achieved unlimited power in the country, he immediately sought to destroy communist influence, and was strongly supported by the American government in his quest to subvert any traces of communist activities (Scott, 1985). Here, the views of my interviewees diverged, because the stories behind the crucial transition period in 1965–1966 are different, depending on who I spoke with. Nevertheless, it is necessary to highlight the conditions that prevailed between the two opposing Chinese-dominated political groups – the assimilationists and the integrationists.

> Do you know what happened before '65? There were two groups among the Chinese – the assimilationists and the integrationists. The integrationists want to retain their Chineseness, but they also want to be known as Indonesians. But people like Mr. T, and also Mr. J want to assimilate, so Chinese have to abandon their Chineseness completely, and become Indonesians. They argue that the Chinese are not trying hard enough to assimilate, but what does it mean? How hard can they try? They are, after all, still Chinese, not pribumi or Javanese. On the one hand, they want them to assimilate totally...on the other hand they make the Chinese a distinct ethnic community who are discriminated against through certain policies and they restrict the Chinese in becoming Indonesian.

According to another interviewee:

> You have to understand this situation first. In '45, you have about one and a half million Chinese who had dual nationality...suddenly, Indonesia is independent, and they become aliens...What should the government do with one and a half million Chinese who are economically very powerful?...The Chinese are divided – some want to be Chinese nationals, some say we live and die in Indonesia...That was the difficulty of the government at that time. So we suggested at one time, also at the request of many Chinese, to convert their names to Indonesian-sounding names. For Javanese, they are used to changing names if it is important to them; same for the Chinese also, because names are important to them. So by changing their names, those who want to stay are confirming their loyalty to Indonesia. But the government was attacked by the BAPERKI, an exclusive ethnic Chinese party, who wanted the Chinese to have a lot of power and not to be discriminated against, but that is one-sided, right? BAPERKI looks for power – who is powerful? Sukarno. At one time he was leaning towards the communists and befriended the PKI...BAPERKI had left-wing and also right-wing people, so at one time not everyone in BAPERKI was happy, especially the religious groups, because they knew BAPERKI was slowly becoming communist...So some of them established the LPKB which was mixed. BAPERKI at one time had 600,000 members,...and if you diminish the babies and children, it means one of two adults are members of BAPERKI, who are working with the communist party...And then the coup in '65... So it is not a surprise that they proved BAPERKI and PKI as brothers, and there was a very anti-Chinese sentiment. By diminishing Chinese culture, it was a pre-emptive strike by us to promote them to speak good Indonesian, ...especially at that time there was the Kuomintang,...so we closed the Chinese schools, like we have closed the Dutch schools. By changing their names to Indonesian-sounding names, they can better assimilate or integrate better with the people, because the Chinese name is very hard to speak. But name-changing only promotes that both parties come together – it does not solve the problem.

So there existed two basic political groups amongst the ethnic Chinese then –
the right-wing assimilationists that comprised members of the LPKB, who wanted
the Chinese to "assimilate" with the rest of Indonesian society by losing all traces
of their Chineseness; and the left-wing integrationists that comprised the BAPERKI
and the PKI, who wanted the Chinese to be recognized as a separate ethnic group
(*suku*) with equal rights and privileges as their indigenous Indonesian counter-
parts (see Tan, 1991). Many Chinese still feel that by subverting the three pillars
of Chinese culture, Suharto gave the impression that he discriminated against all
Chinese in general. Thus, he may have gone too far in his efforts, so much so that
young ethnic Chinese today think that they are being discriminated simply because
the word "Chinese" is stated on their identity cards. As one informant noted,

> But the government in Indonesia is like a pendulum – they go extremely to the left or
> extremely to the right. We promoted that in Indonesia people should change their names
> and try to assimilate into society, but the government goes too far and bans everything that
> is Chinese.

5.3.6 After Suharto

Reformasi (reform) has brought about significant changes in the way the Indonesian
government conducts itself and none more so than in its attitude towards the ethnic
Chinese community. Then President Megawati had installed an open, more demo-
cratic society that in theory was aimed at representing the interests of the people.
This replaced Suharto's authoritarian government, where the military had played a
prominent role in all socio-political aspects of the country (Crouch, 1975). The pub-
lic Chinese New Year celebrations in February 2003 also saw the president and some
other "non-Chinese" politicians adorn traditional Chinese costumes in an obvious
display of support for the Chinese community. Several informants suggested that
after Gus Dur opened Indonesia up to democratic rule, state policies have strongly
favored the Chinese, such as the lifting of the ban on Chinese publications. As Hoon
(2006: 154) argues, even though the competence or familiarity with the Chinese lan-
guage no longer reflect the "Chineseness" of most Chinese Indonesians, the revival
of Chinese language publications is still perceived as an acknowledgement of the
culture and identity of Chinese Indonesians (Hoon, 2006: 154).[11]

However, in the interviews with informants, it is clear that there is still a sense
of caution and weariness. As one informant noted, "Yes, for now, Chineseness is
the new fashion. But history seems to repeat itself. Come back ten years later,
and I might tell you a different story." Thus, despite efforts at reform, many eth-
nic Chinese Indonesians still feel that the one problem that is holding the country
back is the corruption factor. It is in this area that most of my interviewees have
indicated the most amount of discrimination towards the ethnic Chinese, so much
so that it is "legalized" or "constitutionalised". To them, corruption at the govern-
ment or bureaucratic level is in itself a form of discrimination. As Anderson (1972)
says, "corruption on a large scale typically takes the form of the allotting of the

'surplus' of certain key sectors of the economy to favored officials or cliques of officials" (p. 49). In many ways, that observation is still accurate in today's context. As some of my interviewees say,

> When Chinese want to apply to go to university, they are discriminated because more places will be reserved for the natives. Chinese have to achieve better grades during secondary school to qualify to enter university…If you want to get a job that pays well, you must be pribumi…Most of time, employers prefer to employ a pribumi, even though they may be less qualified than the Chinese.

> Now, it's better a little bit, especially after Suharto's time, but still, there is a lot of discrimination that a non-Indonesian cannot see…there are still things underneath the surface. Like you call us Indonesian, then how come we have these special papers for the Chinese and when government people see us, they will treat us differently.

> When it comes to government and bureaucracy, I don't think that Chinese will stand a chance at all. You will feel very weak and helpless as a Chinese…it is very difficult for a Chinese to get what he wants from the government, like for example a simple thing like getting a passport or getting married even. The only Chinese minister who stays with the government for a long time is Kwik Kian Gie. Otherwise, it is impossible for a Chinese to be employed in the government.

> After Gus Dur became president, there was less discrimination. But there are still so many discriminatory practices that exist beneath the surface, like the Chinese are required to possess a citizenship certificate, and that is by law…there are still these kinds of bureaucratic problems that we as Chinese face on a daily basis, even though the government says there is no discrimination because now it is democratic. But in practice, all these discriminatory practices happen everywhere, everyday…that is the problem of law in this country – the rule of law and the implementation is very different…There is both implicit and explicit discrimination here.

> Your school fees tend to be higher if you are a Chinese. Also when I scored high marks in school, the pribumis will say that I use money to achieve that. Anyway in Indonesia, if you cannot pass your exams, you just have to pay money and it is settled…Pribumis will have the first choice in getting government jobs and anything that is related to the government. If Chinese want the same job, he must be related to a famous pribumi or just pay.

> When I am dealing with the government officials or any type of bureaucracy. That is the most obvious form of discrimination that any Chinese will say he or she experiences. You always have to pay more money or wait a longer time, depending on which one you prefer. As a Chinese, you cannot enter any university you want, unless maybe you are the top two percent in that year, or if you want to pay crazy amounts of money to get in.

To many of these people, the state has a crucial and decisive role to play in lessening discrimination against the ethnic Chinese, since much of the discrimination is actually in the form of corruption at the bureaucratic or government levels. Most of them agree that the Chinese are now in a more advantageous position, but they would rather have the government scrap all forms of policies and regulations that differentiate between the Chinese and the pribumis and give everyone equal opportunities to live their lives as Indonesian citizens in the current climate of democracy. Also, most of the people who acknowledge the increased "power" of the Chinese minority are usually business people, thus indicating that the current political climate is strikingly reminiscent of the 1960s, when Coppel (2002) predicted that there were overwhelming opportunities for Chinese businessmen to succeed.

5.3.7 Chinese Community

The final issue concerns the notion of a "Chinese community" and the extent to which there is a sense of a community amongst today's Chinese Indonesians. If Suharto had attempted to assimilate everyone into a single Indonesian community in the form of an Indonesian nation, and if many Chinese Indonesians prefer to call themselves "Indonesian" rather than "Chinese", then how useful are the Chinese today as a social, political, and economic entity? Is there a point in calling Chinese Indonesians Chinese anymore? Also, can the Chinese still be divided into various groups like the totoks and the peranakans? Or are there different distinctions or groups of Chinese Indonesians?

The first obvious finding is that Chinese Indonesians, like all their other Southeast Asian Chinese counterparts, are an extremely heterogeneous group of people. The data suggest that Chinese in Jakarta are probably the most "assimilated" Chinese in Indonesia based on the fact that most of them were more comfortable speaking either in English or Bahasa Indonesia. But my interviewees also acknowledged that it was unfair to overgeneralize the Chinese in Indonesia, because the Chinese in other parts of Indonesia were very different from the Chinese in Jakarta. Hence, there are many other sub-groups of Chinese who may not have "assimilated" over the years, and who still retain most of the traditional markers of ethnic Chinese identity. Regional distinction is again a critical difference amongst the Chinese, and their identities vary over space (from region to region) and over time (historical factors). That being the case, how can we characterize the Chinese into their various groups?

Mely Tan (1991) wrote that the Chinese could be characterized along a continuum with the totoks at one end, the Indonesia-oriented group at the other end, and the peranakans in the middle. Most of my interviewees' comments have supported her views, and they believe that the Chinese can be divided *broadly* into three groups: the more culturally Chinese-oriented totoks who speak Mandarin or other dialects regularly; the extremely diverse peranakans who generally speak Bahasa Indonesia or their local languages, and who have acculturated at different rates depending on regional variation; and the Indonesia-oriented group who do not speak Chinese at all and who identify themselves solely as Indonesian. These distinctions are useful insofar that they are *general*, but even *within* the various groups, there are several differences that set each peranakan apart from another peranakan, for example. Some of my interviewees had this to say:

> Yes, there is a separate Chinese community in Indonesia that is different from Indonesian culture, and I think they separate themselves because the government pressurizes the Chinese to do so. It is difficult to say whether the Chinese are strong or not, because it depends on what you mean by separated. I think that the rich Chinese are separated from everything else around them except money, but if you talk about the middle or lower classes, then I can say that they are quite united.

> They can be divided between the totoks and the peranakans, but only in a very general sense. But it is really not so simple. Maybe someone on the street might say that, but as an academic I can tell you that in different parts of Indonesia where I travelled, you cannot

divide them like that. If a totok comes here and marries someone who is even a little bit peranakan, then you cannot call them totok anymore right?

Yes, they are very strong, because now they are starting to celebrate Chinese New Year openly. So maybe now the Chinese are on equal status with the pribumi. But there is still a lot of discrimination in the government places that make you feel second class.

Now the wind is blowing towards Chineseness. . .everyone can do what he wants. But you see, the politicians here are hypocrites. . .and the Chinese are fellow travellers. Like always, they go where the wind blows. So now, they are strong economically, politically a little bit better, and as a social and cultural unit I think they are much better off because there are many schools that teach Chinese and Chinese culture. But you wait and see. . .

In every city or town, you will definitely see a Chinatown or if not, then a Chinese neighbourhood. In small towns in the centre of a city, there is a Chinese community that plays a strong role in the economy. Now also you have Chinese associations, where previously under Suharto they were prohibited. Of course there is still a lot of corruption that make the Chinese feel low, but in essence at least, the Chinese have become the major and most powerful group again almost overnight.

It has become a rootless community. There is nothing much left of Chineseness of Chinese communities, culturally speaking. . .I feel that the Chinese here are very boring, because they don't do anything except spend their parent's money on stupid things, and they don't know that discrimination works both ways, meaning they also discriminate against other people, so they should expect discrimination from others and they should try to change their attitudes.

I think you know there are two kinds of Chinese in Indonesia, and they can be divided between the more conservative totoks and the less conservative peranakan Chinese. . .Socially they are not a strong community because look what happened in 1998? They all left their countrymen behind and took their money away. Economically, of course they are strong because they have good guanxi networks. . .No guanxi is not about social life, but about economic and business life. Politically speaking, the Chinese are extremely weak. . .but economically, they are very strong.

The last verbatim may offer a clue as to what holds the Chinese community together, in the face of the loss of what are regarded as traditional markers of identity, such as language, education, community organizations and religion. The new imagined community of Chineseness rest not on cultural markers, but on economic ones.[12] In a sense, it can be termed "economic ethnicity", where identification with other Chinese is based on economic networks. It is thus strategically advantageous, in certain situations, to be identified as a community to ensure survival in Indonesia. In general, Chinese businessmen hold a general distrust towards "outsiders, preferring to do business with other Chinese. *Guanxi* is fundamental to Chinese economic transaction" (Tong, 1998). Thus, maintaining Chineseness and an imagined community facilitate economic survival for the Chinese in Indonesia.

Notes

1. There is some debate about the origins of the Sarekat Islam. According to Shiraishi, the SI evolved out of the Rekso Roemekso, an organization established in Surakarta by Haji Samanhudi and other batik manufacturers and traders as a Javanese "secret society". See

Shiraishi, Takashi, *An age in motion: popular radicalism in Java, 1912–1926,* Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990 for a more detailed account of the SI.

2. At its first congress in January 1913 in Surabaya, Haji Samanhudi was recognized as the founder of the Sarekat Islam while Haji Umar Said Tjokroaminoto was elected as Chairperson of the Leadership Council.

3. The law could be circumvented by allowing the China born Chinese to become associate members without voting rights or by splitting an organization into political and social sections and restricting membership of the former to the Indies born Chinese.

4. For example, during a meeting of the Committee for the Investigation of Indonesian Independence in July 1945, Liem Koen Hian urged the Committee to declare Indonesian born Chinese as Indonesian citizens in the future constitution. Oei Tiong Hauw, the son of the "Sugar King" Oei Tiong Ham and an ex- CHH leader on the other hand pushed for the Indonesia Chinese to remain as citizens of China, although they would like to continue living in Indonesia. Oei Tiang Tjoei, the editor of a newspaper argued that Chinese should be allowed to choose between Indonesia and Chinese citizenship (Suryadinata, 1997: 70). Five Chinese also participated in the drafting of the Constitution. This included Liem Koen Hian, Tan Eng Hoa, Oei Tiong Hauw and Oei Tiang Tjoei and Yap Jwan Bing.

5. Most killings took place in the rural areas of Java and Bali, while most of the ethnic Chinese resided in urban areas on these islands. In the wake of the anti-Communist massacre, many Chinese must have feared that the violence might extend to them but in most cases, the violence took the form of destruction of property rather than against the Chinese people themselves (Coppel, 2002: 15).

6. Interestingly, other ethnic minorities like the Arabs did not face similar assimilatory pressures. The aspects of colonial policy which helped to preserve a separate group identity among the Chinese and to discourage their assimilation either to European or Javanese society applied equally to the Arabs. They too were subject to the pass and ghetto system and the classification as "foreign orientals". However the Arab minority has not been a target of violence from the indigenous Indonesians even though their economic role was similar to the Chinese. One factor may have been due to their population size. The Arab community was smaller than the Chinese community and their commercial centres were less visible since they tended to cluster in the areas around the mosque intermingled with the pious Muslim Javanese (*santri*). However, size does not account fully for the difference in treatment between the Arabs and Chinese. Another factor for the differential treatment could be the size and proximity to China and the conflicting ideologies of the Chinese and Indonesian governments (during that period) have contributed to suspicion of the Chinese minority as a source of subversion and any sign of orientation toward China is disapproved. The Arab countries, however, are relatively distant and disunited so that Arab nationalism is not seen as a threat to Indonesian security. Orientation towards Mecca was also shared by the Indonesian Muslims and although the Indonesian government was wary of Islam as a political force, no special significance seems to be attached to political activity by those who are of Arab descent (Coppel, 2002: 101–102). Hostility against minority groups may result from the economic competition between the ethnic groups. One would expect a similar sort of conflict between the natives and the Arabs as well since the Arabs were also heavily involved in economic activities. However, in the case of Indonesia, there was a bipolar competition between the Chinese on the one side and the Arabs and Javanese on the other. Some argue that the sharing of the same faith between the Arabs and Indonesians helped to ease the communal conflict between the two ethnic groups. Such an explanation, Coppel argues is too simplistic because it ignores the fundamental cleavage in Javanese society and incorrectly implies a greater degree of acculturation among Arabs than among Chinese. Many Javanese are nominally Muslim and there is a gulf between the nominally Muslim (*abangan)* and the strictly Muslim (*santri*) Javanese. However, since the Javanese trading class was largely *santri* rather than *abangan* Muslims, it was easier for Arabs to assimilate to a *santri* Javanese commercial class. For the Chinese, however, there was no

similar *abangan* Javanese commercial class to which they could assimilate. This in their trading role, the Arabs could therefore pass as Javanese (albeit of a particular kind) under the banner of Islam; but for the Chinese whatever the degree of acculturation in other respects, they were still perceived as aliens (Coppel, 2002: 100–102).

7. On May 21st, President Suharto resigned, paving the way for Vice-President Habibie to take over. Although Habibie set up a Joint Fact-Finding Team (TGPF) to try to ascertain the causes of the riots, many writers have remarked that the results are dubious and do not justify the gravity of the whole situation (see Coppel, 2002; Purdey, 2002). However, the TGPF and other independent fact-finding teams have widely agreed that the 1998 riots were instigated, although they do not have conclusive evidence that can adequately implicate the perpetrators. It is obvious to most, however, that if the riots were indeed instigated, then the military had a part to play in it, considering its prominent role in the politics of the autocratic country and the historical animosity it possessed towards people of ethnic Chinese descent.

8. In 2000, conservative estimate of the Chinese population put the figure at 2.92 million, about 1.5% of the Indonesian population (Suryadinata et al., 2003: 79). However, it has been difficult to determine the actual numbers of Chinese in Indonesia since self identification was used in the 2,000 population census. Thus if an ethnic Chinese refused to identify himself or herself as Chinese, the person was recorded as a non-Chinese. Suryadinata *et al* (2003: 74) observed that as the census was done soon after the May 1998 anti-Chinese riots, some ethnic Chinese may have been afraid of identifying themselves as ethnic Chinese.

9. These verbatim are drawn from some of the interviews with the informants. They do not reflect the views of *all* informants in the study, nor of the author's personal position.

10. Suharto's understanding of the concept of assimilation is similar to what Williams (1966) postulated, which was the process of overseas Chinese becoming more oriented towards their host societies. Or as Somers (1964) suggests, it is a process whereby Chinese become Indonesians and hence cease to be culturally distinct from the Indonesian majority by dissociating themselves from Chinese traditions. This is very much in line with the American melting-pot, straight line thesis of assimilation, whereby smaller or subordinate ethnic groups are supposed to be absorbed into the larger or more dominant ethnic group or host society over a period of time, and should eventually become indistinguishable from one another (see Gans, 1979; Glazer and Moynihan, 1975).

11. A more detailed discussion on the impact of the rise of China on ethnic relations in Indonesia can be found in Chapter 9.

12. Personal communications, Prof. Vedi Hediz (2007).

Chapter 6
Half-Chinese or Three-Quarters Chinese: The Chinese in Contemporary Burma

6.1 Introduction

The Chinese began migrating to Burma in large numbers in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. At present, it is estimated that there are about one to one and a half million ethnic Chinese in Burma today, constituting between 2 and 3% of the total population.[1] Yet, despite their long sojourn and large numbers, very little is known about them. Partly due to the political situation in Burma in the last 40 years, there have been very few studies on this ethnic group compared to scholarly work on the Chinese in Indonesia, Thailand, and Malaysia. Based on in-depth interviews with Burmese Chinese informants, this chapter seeks to make sense and analyze the empirical phenomenon of being ethnic Chinese in Burma; how the Chinese construct the notion of "Chineseness" or "being Chinese" in contemporary Burma.[2] Using this data, the chapter seeks to reconceptualize existing theories regarding ethnic identity and ethnic relations in Southeast Asia.

It begins with an empirical investigation of who is "Chinese" and what constitutes "Chineseness" in Burma. Theoretically, the chapter examines the primordial and circumstantial approaches to understanding ethnic identity, suggesting that greater conceptual clarity can be obtained by combining these two seemingly opposing perspectives. Interviews with the Chinese suggest "primordial" sentiments in ethnic identification, drawing on phenotypical and genotypical characteristics for identity construction. This is particularly true when they determine their identity vis a vis non-Chinese. At the same time, in those areas that they do not consider to be central to identity, there is a constructionist angle to identity maintenance. In making sense of inter-ethnic boundaries, this chapter attempts to incorporate these two seemingly oppositional categories. Using the concept of "ethno-racialization," this chapter suggests that the Chinese in Burma, in constructing and negotiating identity, naturalize and racialize ethnic differences to strengthen the construction of inter-ethnic group boundaries.

Other than inter-ethnic differentiation, it is important to examine intra-ethnic differentiation as well. Too often, the Chinese in the diaspora has been treated as if they are a homogenous group. In Burma, intra-ethnic differentiations reflect a deeper consideration as to "Who is more Chinese". Concepts like *zhong guo ren* and *hua*

qiao undergo a re-definition and are used to differentiate the different groups of Chinese in Burma. Historically, Chinese ethnic identity within the context of Burma under Ne Win's military rule is fraught with negative stereotypes. Ethnic identity of the Chinese in Burma is thus affected by the political backdrop of the society. This minority and discriminated status affects the way the Chinese relate with the indigenous Burmese. This chapter examines the juncture at which ethnic identity and national identity meet and the ways in which ethnic Chinese negotiate being Chinese in Burma. Before I proceed, it is important to provide an overview of the historical conditions as it relates to the Chinese in Burma.

6.2 The Chinese in Burma: A Historical Overview

The relationship between Burma and China, especially Yunnan, has existed for many years.[3] China was regarded as the suzerain state of Burma for much of its history and received nominal tribute from Burma. Four Chinese invasions from 1765 to 1769 under the Ching dynasty failed to conquer Burma. As Burma was far from the major Chinese sources of power, most of the Chinese invasions were mounted by local leaders from Yunnan. Each side would attempt to assert control over the border region, both with limited success (Steinberg, 1982: 12).

According to Mya Than (1997: 117), Chinese from Guangdong and Fujian in China began emigrating into Burma in small numbers during the Song (960–1279 A.D.) and Ming (1368–1644 A.D.) dynasties. Their numbers grew during the Yuan dynasty (1271–1368 A.D.) when Chinese businessmen expanded their businesses into Burma. However, since the Sino-Burmese border is long and ill defined, Mya Than (1997: 117) points out that Chinese immigration into Burma might have been even earlier than historical records show.

6.2.1 Growth of the Chinese Community in Burma

The early movement of Chinese into Burma was usually impermanent and seasonal. Many of the Chinese were caravan traders and formed the bulk of the overland cross-border trade. This cross border trade was very important, with numerous caravans carrying silk and other merchandise between China and the Burmese border town of Bhamo (Purcell, 1965: 51).Burmese exports to China included raw cotton, salt, ornamental feathers, swallows' nests, rhinoceros horns, precious stones (mainly jade) and ivory (Mya Than, 1996: 3). On the whole Yunnan trade between 1600 and 1820 seems to have been more vigorous than maritime trade.[4] Yunnan's population grew dramatically between 1740 and 1850, and thus exchanges with Burma expanded to service both Yunnan itself and the Chinese interior. By 1820s, the cross border traders were estimated to be taking back about 7000 tons of Burmese cotton a year, over six times the estimated annual figure at the turn of the seventeenth century. In the early 1820s, the annual value of Burma's overland exports and imports was

said to range between 67 and 117% of the value of trade at Rangoon (Lieberman, 2003: 170).

Most of the early Chinese immigrants who trade along the border and eventually settled in Burma were known as "mountain Chinese". However, the vast majority came from China by sea after the British conquest.[5] They were called the "maritime Chinese". The movement of Chinese who arrived by sea were attracted by the extension of British power into Burma and the opening up of the country to trade in the late nineteenth century. In the first decade of British rule, the population in Lower Burma doubled. However this population increase was due more to the migration of people from regions elsewhere in South and Southeast Asia, as well as China. The uniting of Burma and India under British colonial rule made it possible for the movement of people across both territories. Many Indians took advantage of this and during the first hundred years of British rule in Burma, there was an influx of Indian labourers, peasants, merchants, and professionals as there were no barriers erected to limit their numbers (Silverstein, 1980: 32). The Colonial government also encouraged the migration of Chinese from the west coast of Malaya (Taylor, 1987: 158) and this added to the heterogeneity of the Chinese community in Burma.

By 1891, a total of 37,000 Chinese were counted in Burma, more than half of whom had come in by sea routes (Purcell, 1965: 67). According to the population census, the Chinese population grew to 122,000 by 1911 (quoted in Christian, 1942: 286). In 1931, there was an estimated 194,000 Chinese, comprising 1.3% of the total population (Mya Than, 1997: 118). The Burma-born Chinese of 103,518 accounted for more than half of the total Chinese population (Christian, 1942: 287). According to estimates by Mya Than (1997: 119) the Chinese now constitute about 2–3% of the total population of 45 million in Burma. They belong to several dialect groups, namely the Yunnanese, Cantonese, Hokkien and Hakka. Apart from these, there are local ethnic Chinese called Kokang Chinese who live along the Yunnan-Myanmar border and speak Mandarin. In the northern region, the Chinese are mostly Yunnanese, Hokkien, and Kokang while Hokkien and Cantonese are mostly settled in the lower part of Myanmar along the Irrawaddy delta, including Yangon, and Tenaserrim coast. The Kokang and Yunnanese now comprise about 30–40% of the total ethnic Chinese in Myanmar (Mya Than, 1997: 121).

6.2.2 Economic Position of the Chinese

The immigration of Chinese in the pre war era was not regarded as a serious menace although the government did keep an eye out for the Chinese because many of them ran the illicit opium and gambling dens, tea shops and liquor shops. Chinese general merchandise and trading shops were found in most of the cities and towns in Burma. In many towns, the Chinese were the sole agent for the sale of petroleum products and they controlled the local liquor and opium licenses (Christian, 1942: 288). The businessmen in the Chinese community were fairly well organized and had a Chamber of Commerce in Rangoon to promote their common interests.

Besides trade and commerce, another important occupation was in mining. Silver mining at the Bawdwin mines near the Sino-Burma border town of Lashio was an ancient industry on which the Chinese had worked since the sixteenth century. After the British took over the site in the early twentieth century the mines continued to reap substantial revenue. Another important mine was the tungsten mine at Mawchi in Karenni state. Besides the local Karenni people, Indians and Gurkhas who were employed at the mine, the Chinese were an important group of mine workers. A few mines were also Chinese-owned (Tinker, 1967: 283).

The widening social and economic status between the Burmese and the alien community (in particular the Indians and Chinese) did lead to some inter-ethnic tensions. Many of the Burmese felt cut off from the economic development of the country and an ethnic division of labor developed. The Burmese were positioned on the lower strata of society and many were involved in agriculture and were at the mercy of local moneylenders who were usually Indian (Steinberg, 1982: 39). In 1931, the Indians numbered 7% while the Chinese consisted of 1.3% of the total population. However, the Indians were employed in 36.3% of all mining jobs, 14.7% of industry, 43.2% of transport, 15.6% of trade, 43.3% of the public forces and 26.6% of public administration positions. They also owned 5 million of the 12 million acres of cultivated land. Shipping was mainly in the hands of the British and the Indians. The Chinese were much less numerous than the Indians and held 9.7% of the mining and 6.9% of the trade jobs (Steinberg, 1982: 39). Many of them were also self-employed in commercial undertakings, small hotels, cafes etc.

The deep resentment towards the alien community of Indians and Chinese who were perceived to be dominating the economy led to several anti-Indian riots[6] especially in the decade from 1930 to 1940 and the anti-Chinese riots of 1931. During the Second World War, an estimated 500,000 Indians were chased out of the country by elements of the Thakin movement and nationalists of the Burma Independence Army and an unknown number were killed (Smith, 1997: 101).

According to Purcell (1965: 70) however, relations between the Burmese and the Chinese were generally friendly. Some Burmese even referred to their Chinese counterparts as *pauk paw*, or next of kin. Purcell attributed this to the unobtrusive nature of the Chinese community. Although they were important in the trading and commercial sectors, the Chinese in Burma did not dominate the economy like their counterparts did in Thailand, Indonesia and Malaya. In the commercial life in Burma, they also took second place to the Indians (Christian, 1942: 287). Hence Purcell contends that the Chinese were not subjected to the same level of criticism and resentment levelled against the Indians in Burma and the other prosperous Chinese communities in Southeast Asia (Purcell, 1965: 71).

In the 1940s however, some public opinion turned against the Chinese when troops and officials from Kuomintang (KMT) entered Burma to aid in the Allied battle against the Japanese. The KMT treated the local civilian population harshly and plundered the countryside. Even after the Chinese troops were formally withdrawn in 1945, there were still fears of a possible Chinese conquest as Purcell (1965: 48) points out that schools and training centres in Chungking used maps showing all northern Burma and parts of Assam as "*China Irredenta*". In February 1946,

some Chinese troops marched into North Burma, striking fear among the Burmese people of a possible invasion by the Chinese. The troops finally retreated when a large British land and air force was mobilized and Chiang Kai Shek himself gave the orders (Tinker, 1967: 341).

6.2.3 The Chinese Community in the Post War Era

After the war, the largely seasonal pre-war migration of Chinese in northern Burma was reduced because of the adverse economic situation in the border regions. However, the influx of KMT troops into Burma contributed to the growing number of Chinese immigrants in Burma in the 1950s (Thompson and Adloff, 1955: 54). The KMT who were fleeing the Communist in China were viewed by the Burmese government with suspicion because they believed that the government of Formosa intended to use Burma as a potential springboard for a counter-revolution against the Chinese communists (Purcell, 1965: 79). However, no official action was taken at that time to regulate the immigration at the northern border. The Emergency Immigration Act of 1947 which was set up was mainly designed to restrict the entry of Indians into Burma and did not check the flow of Chinese immigration into Burma (Thompson and Adloff, 1955: 55).

From the 1960s to the early 1970s however, the Chinese population showed a decline, mainly due to the policies of the autocratic military government which came into power during a coup d'etat in 1962. In 1964, the government embarked on a bold nationalization programme which affected industries, trading houses, and banks, especially those owned by ethnic Indians and Chinese. Nationalization of both foreign as well as domestic businesses was considered necessary to bring about the Burmanization of the economy. By the early 1970s, all major economic services had been nationalized. The new policies also gave a larger share of retail trading and importing to Burmese nationals through import-licensing and quotas. The alien businesses faced liquidation, and were driven out of their shops and factories. As a result, about 300,000 Indians and 100,000 Chinese left the country after 1962 (Mya Than, 1997: 119). Those who remained were subjected to legal and economic discrimination, probably stemming from the long-standing ill feelings towards the more economically dominant alien community. The Indian population which was estimated at 800,000 in 1957 subsequently declined quickly (Steinberg, 1982: 13). By the mid 1960s, the Indians were no longer a significant force in Burma (Tinker, 1967: 190).

Although many Chinese left Burma as well, overall their position was slightly better than that of the Indian population. With the departure of the Indians, the Chinese were quick to move into the occupations to replace them. The pre-war economic pattern has remained much the same though as most of the Chinese continued their involvement in trade and commerce or in the professions (Purcell, 1965: 78). However, they were not unscathed by the Burmanization policies of the military regime.

Burma's turbulent post-independent period witnessed a critical shift in political ideology from experimentation with parliamentary democracy and democratic socialism that characterised the *pyidawtha* era under U Nu from 1948–1958, to the monolithic socialism in the name of the "Burmese Way to Socialism" of the *pyidawcha* era which corresponded to the military *coup d'etat* headed by General Ne Win in 1962. Mya Maung (1990: 603) suggests that the socio-political and economic developments of both the *pyidawtha* and *pyidawcha* eras reveal a declining trend toward regression and stagnation. The Ne Win era was marked by the institutionalisation of an indigenization policy, the introduction of citizenship laws, a Sino-Burmese riot in 1967 and a bloody coup by the present military regime that led to the installation of the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) in 1988. Combined, these factors brought significant changes with respect to the political, social and economic positions of the ethnic Chinese in Burma. They had a significant impact on how the Chinese constructed their own identity as well as the dynamics of the interaction between ethnic Chinese and the indigenous groups of Burma.

Burma's nation-building process, pursued in 1964/1965, under the military regime, was characterised by the introduction of a rigorous policy of indigenisation of the entire political, organizational and economic sectors. The effect of the indigenisation policies was the significant decline in the political, economic and social autonomy of the ethnic Chinese community in Burma. "Burmanisation" of the administrative sector entailed the indigenisation of the education system and the mass media. Every citizen was also required to adopt a Burmese name in the process of nation-building. Chinese schools which traditionally performed the dual function of teaching the Chinese language, and perpetuating Chinese values and culture to the younger generation, were, with the onset of the indigenization policy, banned.[7] Prior to nationalization measures, there were four Chinese dailies and three weeklies (Mya Than, 1997). With the nationalization and Burmanization of the mass media, the Chinese media, which provided coverage of the socio-economic and political issues faced by China and ethnic Chinese in Burma, disappeared.

During the same period, Chinese community organizations, such as clan, dialect and regional associations, which traditionally carry out social and cultural functions for the Chinese, were closely monitored by the military regime and their roles curtailed. The military regime ensured that these associations, including other community organizations such as the Chinese Chamber of Commerce and temple associations were depoliticized.[8] All these measures resulted in the Chinese losing most of the social structures that are important in terms of socializing younger Chinese in Burma into the cultural components of their ethnicity, such as language and education as well as the institutions that hold the community together. As Tan (1988: 1410) succinctly noted, "other than having to look after their own cultural, economic and political interests, the Chinese also have to think about their identity and even be concerned with the identity of their future generations. Being Chinese can no longer be taken for granted. Indeed they even have to redefine their own view of Chineseness."

Indigenisation of the economy saw Burma's major industries such as timber, transport and oil being nationalised and a larger share of retail trading and importing were accorded to Burmese nationals through import-licensing and quotas (Mya Than, 1997: 125). The Enterprise Nationalization Law of 1963, placed almost all retail, wholesale, and import trade, manufacturing businesses and the banking sector under the government's control. The nationalization of the economy stemmed from Ne Win's belief that the Chinese, along with the Europeans and Indians, were exploiting the indigenous people and Burma's natural resources for their own selfish interest (Mya Maung, 1990).

In addition to the nationalization of the economy and the administrative sectors, the military regime introduced the Burma Citizenship Law in 1982, which "discriminates" against ethnic races of foreign origin. Using the premise of nation-building, the Chinese, together with the Europeans and Indians, were regarded as "aliens," "foreigners," and "exploiters of Burma's natural resources," from whom the Burmese people must be protected. The visible delineation between "Burmese" and "non-Burmese," meant that non-Burmese citizens, especially the Chinese and Indians, were classified as "outsiders," and subjected to discriminatory policies.

The indigenization policies, coupled with the Burma Citizenship Law resulted in a sharp decline in the ethnic Chinese population in Burma. Prior to the Ne Win regime, the population of Chinese in Burma numbered about 350 thousand in 1961, or 1.6% of the total population. According to the census in 1973 and 1983 however, the Chinese comprised about 0.8% (227,000) and 0.6% (234,000) of the total population respectively. Burma's nationalization policies in the 1960s saw about a hundred thousand ethnic Chinese leaving Burma. In 1982, a new citizenship law which discriminated against ethnic races of foreign origin saw more ethnic Chinese leaving for countries such as Taiwan, the United States, Hong Kong and Australia. However there is a possibility that some Chinese were registered under the "mixed foreign and Burmese" category in both the censuses. Therefore the actual number of ethnic Chinese in the census of 1973 and 1983 may be under-estimated (Mya Than, 1997: 119).

In September 1988, the present military regime of Burma, the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) staged a bloody coup against General Ne Win's 26 year totalitarian military rule and seized power.[9] Following the military coup, the SLORC formally legalised border trade with China and other neighbouring countries. In particular, Chinese trade, investment, economic and especially military aid were sought by the SLORC. China became one of the few countries to recognise the Burmese government. The "open-door economy" and reapproachment with China resulted in increased trade links, particularly with the Yunnanese in western China, and improved relations between the ethnic Chinese and the Burmese government. The excellent economic opportunities increased the migration of Chinese, particularly the Yunnanese Chinese to Mandalay, in northern Burma.

The social and political upheavals experienced by the Chinese in Burma have often forced the Chinese community to re-examine their ethnic identity. The wave of Chinese nationalism which swept through the various overseas Chinese communities in the early twentieth century did have a small impact on the local Chinese

population in Burma. However, even at the peak of Chinese nationalist identity in the 1930s and 1940s, not all overseas Chinese communities favoured the nationalist movements. The majority of the Chinese were not drawn to China's politics and were content to regard Burma as their home (Tinker, 1967: 340). They sought to identify with the local nationalist movements instead and were prepared to accept a new identity based on anti-colonialism and modern principles of nation-building. However few of the Chinese were prepared to be totally assimilated at this early stage (Wang, 1988: 3). As Mya Than (1997: 141) pointed out, at the national level, the ethnic Chinese considered Burma as their national identity in terms of their political and legal status but they did not lose consciousness of being Chinese.

Despite the considerable number of inter-marriages the Chinese in Burma still retained their separate identity. The male offspring from these mixed marriages frequently wore Chinese costume and had both a Burmese and Chinese name, while the girls usually wore the Burmese longyi and used a Burmese name (Christian, 1942: 289). Purcell (1965: 69) noted that while the Chinese learnt Burmese readily, most of them used their native Chinese for communications between themselves even though their families had been in Burma for more than a century. Chinese newspapers were found in Rangoon and many towns. There was an all-Burma Chinese athletic association and numerous Chinese religious, social and fraternal societies (Christian, 1942: 289). There was also a Chinese consulate for many decades before this was raised to a consulate-general in 1940 (Christian, 1942: 291).

Chinese education in Burma was regarded as an important priority among the Chinese. In 1935, there were 12,707 Chinese children between the ages of 5 and 10 years. Of these 837 were in the Chinese Anglo-vernacular schools and 2965 were in sixty five unrecognized Chinese schools. In 1937, the number of pupils in the latter category rose to 3308. Some of the schools received financial aid from the Educational Association in China and many were supported by Chinese clubs and associations (Purcell, 1965: 72). Overall the schools existed as independent entities and the lack of government supervision from the Burmese government left the school curriculum open to contest between the pro-KMT and the pro-Peking factions. However most of the textbooks used in the Chinese schools were imported from communist China, owing the unpopularity of the KMT in Burma and the influence of the Chinese ambassador (Thompson and Adloff, 1955: 56).

Although there are still some Chinese temples and associations in Burma today, the Chinese mass media and schools did not survive the military regime's nationalization policy. Mya Than (1997: 141) argues that since the two major pillars of Chinese identity (Chinese media and education) are no longer in existence, the Chinese community will become well assimilated into Burmese society. He claims that presently many Chinese in Myanmar no longer speak the language, observe Chinese customs or retain their Chinese names. While this may be true of the early Chinese migrants to a certain extent, the current situation in Myanmar points towards a revival of Chinese-ness especially with the growing number of Chinese immigrants in the northern areas of Burma.

Relations between Myanmar and Beijing are now closer than before, especially after the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) government was installed in 1988. The open door economic measures introduced by the military government have permitted much freer movement of people and goods across the Sino-Myanmar border. Under an agreement made in 1988, the legal two way trade between China and Myanmar has boomed, reaching an estimated US$ 1.5 billion per year (Selth, 1996: 214). Chinese trade, investment, economic and military aid were sought in particular. Since then, Chinese goods and arms have been flooding into Myanmar.

The city of Mandalay and other major urban centres in the north have also seen an influx of Yunnanese Chinese migrants. Many of the high rise buildings, hotels, restaurants, shops and homes are now owned and operated by ethnic Chinese and Yunnanese businessmen (Mya Maung, 1994: 447–448). In the official census of 1993, Mandalay's population is over 653,000, with about 2670 aliens. However Mya Maung (1994: 453) estimates that the actual population of Mandalay is as high as 1 million because of the large number of unregistered aliens. The majority of these aliens are foreign born Chinese who reportedly can become Burmese nationals overnight by acquiring the National Registration Cards in the black market.

Real estate in key sites in Mandalay has been acquired by wealthy Chinese investors, ethnic Chinese Kokang and Wa businessmen (notorious for their drug connections) at exorbitant prices. This had the effect of pricing out the ordinary Burmese resident who could not afford the housing and land costs in central Mandalay. As a result, the central area of Mandalay has been transformed into a thriving centre of alien (especially Chinese) culture with modern homes, hotels, shops and high rise buildings filled with rich Chinese businessmen. Only a handful of native-owned business establishments are left because they have been priced out by the influx of cheaper Chinese consumer goods (Mya Maung, 1994: 456). The large numbers of Chinese has left Maung (1994: 455) likening the influx of Chinese in Mandalay and Northern Myanmar to a form of colonization – but this time by the Chinese. The next section of the chapter will explore the impact this has had on Chinese ethnic identity in Myanmar.

6.3 Constructing the Logic of Being Chinese in Burma

In analyzing the data collected on the Chinese in Burma, it can be argued that holding primordialism and circumstantialism to be antithetical hinders the understanding of the nature, conceptualisation or definition of ethnic sentiment and ethnic groups. Although seemingly paradoxical, this chapter argues that primordialism and circumstantialism can be combined to provide a clearer understanding of ethnic identification, as the data suggest that both permanence and fluidity are simultaneously empirically evident in the study of ethnicity in Burma. Drawing on Barth (1969), it can be argued that social identity in Burma is not entirely ascribed; people can in fact change their identity and their social/ethnic affiliation in different social

situations.[10] At the same time, however, the Chinese in Burma, in delineating their ethnic identity, turn to primordial markers, such as hair and skin colour, and bloodline. For the Chinese in Burma, cultural content does not remain constant or static, as the later section of the chapter on differential Chineseness will show.

The emergence of primordial factors in the process of defining "who is Chinese" suggests that "race", commonality of descent, character and physical similarities are inseparable from the process of constructing inter-ethnic group boundaries by the ethnic Chinese and other ethnic groups. Classifying members who comprise the in-group as opposed to out-group reflects a heavy reliance on ascribed attributes, specifically "blood, ancestral ties and bloodline," which is located outside of the process of negotiation, rather than culture. The conflation of "race" with "ethnic groups" constitutes a vital element in the conceptualisation of "Chinese" and in the production of inter-ethnic group boundaries for the Chinese in Burma, as the data collected in the interviews with ethnic Chinese in Burma clearly suggest:

> To me, it must be the appearance and the blood factors. Chinese people are naturally fair-skinned, so if they have Chinese blood, then naturally they will also be fair-skinned, being the descendants of Chinese people who are of pure Chinese ancestry.

> I am a Chinese first and foremost because I have Chinese blood. My parents and ancestors from China were all Chinese. So naturally I am also Chinese. It is in my blood. Same with Indians- they are Indians because they have Indian blood, and their ancestors are from India.

> Most important is that my ancestors were zhong guo ren, and that my parents are also Chinese. So being their daughter, naturally I am Chinese because I have their blood in me.

> I am Chinese because I have Chinese blood, and because my parents are Chinese. I am also Chinese because of my appearance- Chinese people are easy to tell from their appearance because they have sharper noses and smaller eyes. From the eyes, people can see that someone is Chinese. Chinese people have a certain kind of look that you can pick out.

Almost all the informants interviewed tended to define Chineseness through ascribed factors of "blood, ancestry and physical appearance," while relegating the cultural dimensions, including language, custom, name, religion associated with being Chinese, suggests a "conceptual deflation" of the term "Chinese". "Conceptual deflation," does not imply that the concept is necessarily reduced to a single dimension, merely that it is diminished in scope, so as to exclude relevant potential content as much as possible (Alatas, 1977: 229).

Being Chinese encompasses both primary markers as well as secondary markers for in-group identification. Primary markers include bloodline and blood, which informants translate to unique physical attributes that characterise the Chinese race such as "small eyes, sharp noses, fair skin and black hair." Secondary ethnic markers include "speaking Chinese language, having Chinese names, practising ancestor worship, following their ancestors marriage and death rituals, celebrating Chinese cultural festivals like Chinese New Year, Sticky Rice Dumpling festival, Qing Ming, Mooncake festival, counting the years and dates following the Chinese calendar."

Primary markers constitute a "core" dimension in boundary formation because they form an unambiguous basis for in-group identification. It has exclusionary characteristics, as a Chinese will always be Chinese, whether he/she possess the cultural

content of Chineseness, while a non Chinese will always be outsiders, even if they adopt Chinese cultural practices. A conceptually deflated definition of "Chinese" along primordial lines renders the basis for inclusion and exclusion unambiguous, and natural. Such a definition effects an ideology that both implies the homogeneity of the members of the Chinese race and naturalize inter-group differences, making it impossible to "become or un-become" Chinese.

> A Chinese will always be a Chinese, no matter whether he speaks the language, or whether he celebrates Chinese festivals, or whether he looks Chinese. As long as there is Chinese blood, he will be Chinese.

> If I can speak English, then I should be considered English, or American, or Australian. But the fact is I am not any of those because my blood is not from those races, and my ancestors were also not from those races. . .It doesn't mean that if a person can speak Chinese, or eats Chinese food, or marries a Chinese, then he has become Chinese. But if the person wants to think that he is Chinese then so be it. But definitely I will not see him as Chinese.

> There are many people who are not Chinese, but obviously Burmese, and who are learning Chinese now. So just because next time they can speak Chinese, it doesn't mean that they are Chinese then right? Language is just a tool for communication, not a signifier that someone is of a particular race.

Ultimately blood, ancestral ties and bloodline are incapable of being hybridised. Compared to the fluidity of cultural elements, primordial qualities facilitate the formation of inter-ethnic group boundaries and strengthen the boundaries by intertwining the notions of ethnicity with race. For this reason, intermarriage has been described derogatorily.

> I don't believe in intermarriage because our ancestors have taught us to protect our race as much as possible, and one of the factors that will help us do that is not to intermarry.

> If someone has Chinese blood, and his ancestors have not intermarried, then definitely he will look Chinese. If the ancestors have intermarried, then they are not pure Chinese anymore, because they have hun xue (mixed blood).

> If you are not a Chinese, and you marry into a Chinese family, then most of the time you will learn the traditions like ancestor worship, eating Chinese food, and so on. So you can learn how to be a Chinese culturally. But you will never be a real Chinese, because it is not in your blood.

6.3.1 Economic Identity and Racialization

The dominance of the ethnic Chinese over trade, industry and even agriculture is well documented (Mya Than, 1997; Mya Maung, 1964; Liang, 1997). However, most studies neglect the impact of the economic standing of the ethnic Chinese on inter-ethnic group boundary construction. It is can be suggested that the ethnic Chinese's visible dominance creates a situation that "racializes" or naturalizes their economic position, both by the ethnic Chinese as well as the Burmese themselves. For example, many Chinese informants characterised the Burmese as "economically unmotivated and easily contented." Despite the "agrarian reforms, co-operative

movements, nationalisation of land, and socialization of trade and industry to check the ethnic Chinese's economic dominance in Burma, Burmese entrepreneurship still lags far behind the Chinese" (Mya Maung, 1964: 761). Similarly, the Burmese regard the Chinese as "greedy," "only interested in money," and "exploiting the Burmese for their own benefits."

"Race consciousness" refers to the myriad of factors that are capable of both influencing an individual's conception of himself as well as his status in the community and enforcing social distance from the "other" (Park, 2000). Factors which could trigger "race consciousness" include stereotypic behavioural traits ascribed to a particular race, essentialized "ethnic" or cultural differences that maintain in-group identification, the status ranking of a particular race in a social system relative to the position of "others" reflected in terms of criteria like wealth, education, income and so on, or a permanent physical trait that increases an individual's visibility and simultaneously makes more obvious his identity with a particular ethnic or genetic group (Goldberg, 1992). This is exemplified in the following comments by informants,

> The Chinese are always more hardworking, more trustworthy, and more honourable when they deal with business partners compared to the locals. These are also Chinese values like *yi chi*, *xin yong*, that make the Chinese succeed so much in business compared to the other people. . .you know my parents and my boss always tells us this saying: earn money like the Indians, save money like the Chinese, but don't spend money like the Burmese.

> I personally believe that the Chinese have a certain way of doing business that makes people say "he is Chinese."

> The Chinese always earn their money because they are more hardworking, they are willing to work longer hours, they have certain unique values like *yi qi* (honour), *xin yong* (trust) and they are very good business people.

> It is not that I look down on Burmese culture, but they are simply different to us, and they are not Chinese. Their way of doing things is different, and they are certainly not as hardworking as us Chinese. They are easily contented.

> The Burmese are different from the Chinese. They only work for today; they don't think about tomorrow. They are very contented people who do not strive to make the most of the opportunities around them.

The construction of ethnic Chinese economic dominance is seen as inherent. I argue that the concept of "ethno-racialization", as earlier outlined in the introduction of the book, proves particularly useful in understanding the Chinese in Burma. To briefly recap, racialization refers "to a political and ideological process by which particular populations are identified by direct or indirect reference to their real or imagined phenotypical characteristics in such a way as to suggest that the population can only be understood as a supposedly biological unity" (Cashmore, 1988: 246), that is, the basis for the differences that exist between a group and members of other "races" are viewed as natural.

While race and racialization are significant in understanding inter-group relations between Burmese and Chinese, the question of the continuing relevance of ethnicity and how ethnicity is incorporated in the discourse of racialization needs to be

addressed. Here the concept of "ethnorace" (Goldberg, 1992: 553) which indicates that race and ethnicity need not be mutually exclusive in practice proves useful. The process of differentiating the "self" from the "other" does not necessitate enforcing a distinction between cultural and physical origins in order to distinguish themselves as either an ethnic group or race. This is conceptually important because it points to the idea that the process of in-group identification could rely on either rhetoric of cultural content (ethnicity) or rhetoric of descent (race).

The strengthening of the construction of in-group identification, whether on the premise of "a rhetoric of cultural content or descent", however, is contingent on the naturalization or racialization of such constructions. Therefore "ethno-racialization" suggests that in addition to descent, "ethnicity or the cultural conception of race which includes identifying race with language group, religion, group habits, mores, a dominant style of behaviour and so on" (Goldberg, 1992: 548) which are themselves the product of construction and group-circumscribed values, can be naturalized through the process of discursive racialization. Conceptually, "ethno-racialization" suggests a deeper reflectivity and accords greater plasticity to the process of racialization since it is able to resolve and account for the empirical racialization or essentialization of culturally-constructed ethnicity, exemplified in the comment of an informant,

> I think in most other places, the fact that you are a Chinese will help more than restrict you, because the Chinese are known in most business circles as people who have *yi chi*, *xin yong*, and the guan xi that we use among one another makes the difference between a Chinese person doing business, and a Burmese, or a Malay, or an Indian.

A description of who is ethnic Chinese, what constitutes Chineseness, why certain identity markers are attributed core status for in-group identification while others are considered peripheral and how differences are naturalised in order to differentiate "us" from "them" reveals a coherent logic underlying the construction of inter-ethnic group boundaries.

The period of experimentation with monolithic socialism and the Sino-Soviet model of a polity by the military regime of General Ne Win in the name of "the Burmese way to Socialism" and the shift to an "open-door economy" in 1988, which sought in particular Chinese trade, investment, economic and, especially, military aid, constitute pertinent circumstantial factors affecting the construction of ethnic Chinese identity (Mya Maung, 1990). As shown earlier, "The Burmese Way to Socialism" called for a stronger approach to nationalization and indigenization in both administrative and economic affairs as part of the nation-building process essentially pursued a policy that aimed to restrict the economic power of the Chinese, to limit Chinese education, and to force the assimilation of the ethnic Chinese into Bamar society by adopting Burmese names, dress and language (Mya Than, 1997; Lintner, 1998; Mya Maung, 1990).

Circumstantial constraints influence primordial in-group identity markers as core and cultural markers of identity including having Chinese names, and speaking Chinese language. Cultural markers of identity are situated on the periphery of

inter-ethnic group boundaries construction because they are subjected to environmental factors, testifying to the constructed nature of inter-ethnic group boundaries. Cultural elements which can be hybridised in terms of their importance, relevance and even their continuity as a basis for in-group identification is simultaneously capable of threatening the construction of inter-ethnic group boundaries.

> I don't think it is important to have Chinese names. The name to me is a political issue. Sometimes Chinese in other countries do not have obvious Chinese names because of the circumstances of that particular country. It is the requirement of the country that its citizens maybe cannot have Chinese names, just like in 1962 here, the Prime Minister also closed all the Chinese schools and took away all the Chinese newspapers and discouraged people from showing off their Chinese identity.

> Name and language are not important here in Myanmar, because last time, the government tried to force the Chinese to abandon their Chinese identity and become pure Burmese people. Because of that, there are many Chinese who have Burmese names and cannot speak Chinese because the schools were closed and newspapers were taken away. Last time the Prime Minister wanted all the people to assimilate into one Burmese people.

> The Chinese interact a lot with the Burmese. All of them go to Burmese schools, because now there no more Chinese schools. All of them are Buddhists and the spoken language is the same, so there are a lot of similarities. In terms of dressing, it is mostly the same. They all wear the *longyi* on a daily basis.

At different times, however, cultural markers, such as Chinese language or education, can resurrect in importance due to changed circumstances. For example, the 1988 installation of the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) which favoured an "open door" policy and promoted foreign direct investment, placed ethnic Chinese at the forefront of Burma's economy as they monopolised the majority of retail, wholesale and import trade, including cross-border trade and big restaurants (Mya Than, 1997; Mya Maung, 1994; Smith, 1997). Much of the foreign direct investment entering the country is channelled through ethnic Chinese networks throughout Southeast Asia. As such, speaking Chinese language became economically advantageous in terms of obtaining jobs in Chinese businesses. Thus, learning the Chinese language becomes important, to take advantage of the economic opportunities.

> Now Myanmar and China are very close in terms of economic and political sense, and there are a lot of Chinese in northern Myanmar. It is definitely advantageous for anybody to speak Chinese, not only the Chinese themselves, but for the Burmese as well. It is much easier for them to get jobs if they can speak Chinese.

> Being Chinese and being able to speak Chinese is a lot better because there are so many Chinese companies in the northern part of Myanmar, and also many Singaporean companies here who are putting a lot of money in Myanmar. One of the first things they want to know is whether you can speak Chinese, because other than English, I think it is the next most important international language, especially with the opening up of mainland China and its proximity to Myanmar.

Mya Than (1997) argues that Burma's indigenization policies have induced assimilation, the dilution of ethnic identification or the weakening of inter-ethnic group boundaries between the ethnic Chinese and Burmese. He suggests that out of

the three pillars, namely Chinese education, clan or dialect association and Chinese mass media, supporting the identity of the ethnic Chinese, the survival of only the clan or dialect association shows that the Chinese are "well Myanmarised." Additionally, the military regime's "Myanmarfication" policies have induced a great extent of assimilation and integration of the ethnic Chinese into Burma society in terms of the former's adoption of Burma language, dress and local customs.

I would argue that, on the contrary, "Myanmarfication" have in fact led to a greater reliance on primordialism as a basis for conceptualising and constructing the notion of "Chinese" and "Chineseness". Assimilation, which proposes that the eventual absorption of minorities into the dominant culture and the acceptance of the gradual disappearance of ethnicity not only in terms of what they are and what they will be, but also in terms of what they should be, neglects a *verstehen* understanding of how indigenization policies have affected the process of constructing "Chinese" and "Chineseness" in Burma. As I have noted earlier, the assimilation approaches tend to produce ideologically-inclined theories of ethnic relations and social change which prescribes rather than describes. The adoption of Burmese names, language, dressing, does not necessarily point towards assimilation. Instead the forced "Myanmarfication" of the ethnic Chinese leads them to use primordial factors as the core aspect of in-group identification as opposed to cultural factors since the latter are affected by government policies. The political circumstance in Burma results in primordialism not simply as a mode of ethnic identification, but to preserve inter-ethnic group boundaries. This is reflected in the following quote:

> If Burma has Chinese schools today, then I am sure I can speak Chinese. But it cannot be that the government policies that determine whether somebody is a Chinese or not Chinese, right?

> I have to behave like a Burmese in some contexts, but that is just a strategy for survival. I need to do that because the situation here makes me do it, not because I am insincere or anything like that. Anyway being Chinese is in the blood and nothing can change that.

6.4   Long Sleeve and Short Sleeve Chinese: Intra-Ethnic Differentiation

While the Chinese in Burma conceptualize ethnic identity as primordial, and unchangeable, what constitutes the cultural content of being Chinese is variable and negotiable. Thus, being Chinese is both homogenous and heterogeneous at the same time. These instances of differentiation among the ethnic Chinese exemplify intra-ethnic group boundaries or differentiation as opposed to inter-ethnic group boundaries.

In Burma, intra-ethnic group differentiation among the Chinese can be seen through the dichotomous conceptualisation of "*leto*" Chinese (literally short sleeve) and "*letshe*" (long sleeve) Chinese. Historically, these are actually occupational categories, where *leto* were mostly carpenters, coolies and farmers while *letshe* Chinese were traders, bankers and brokers. At the same time, the classification

of *leto* and *letshe* corresponds to dialect groups, with Cantonese being *leto* and Hokkien as *letshe* (Chen, 1976). Differentiating the ethnic Chinese in Burma into *leto* and *letshe* is, however, increasingly being challenged by the changes in the socio-political and economic structure of contemporary Burma. The introduction of indigenization policies and the citizenship laws during the period of 1962 to 1988 and the introduction of an "open-door" economic policy which has plugged Myanmar into the regional network especially to ASEAN and China following the institution of the State Law and Order Restoration Council have brought on changes to the process of intra-ethnic group differentiation.

One of the consequences of indigenization and discrimination, as noted earlier, was the mass emigration of Chinese out of Burma, with over one hundred thousand ethnic Chinese, mostly Hokkiens and Cantonese, leaving the country, which relegates the differentiation of the ethnic Chinese as *leto* and *letshe* (Mya Than, 1997; Mya Maung, 1990; Smith, 1997). In 1967, following nationalization measures and serious anti-Chinese riots,[11] provoked by the rapid growth in the Chinese population under British rule, especially over their dominance in business and in response to the spill over effect of the Cultural Revolution in China, numerous ethnic Chinese businesses and homes were destroyed and ethnic Chinese traditional associations, mass media and schools were banned (Mya Than, 1997; Smith, 1997).

The promulgation of the 1982 racist Burma Citizenship Law which characterised descendants of alien-Burmese unions, like full aliens untrustworthy due to their alleged foreign contacts and possible external economic or political interests was the hardest blow to the ethnic Chinese community (Mya Than, 1997; Taylor, 1993). Ethnic Chinese were barred from attending professional tertiary educational institutions, such as medical, engineering, agricultural and even economic colleges, students of ethnic Chinese origin who were already studying were expelled and ethnic Chinese holding important political posts were forced to resign. These demographic changes among the ethnic Chinese in Burma have consequently induced changes in intra-ethnic group differentiation. The declining relevance of *leto* and *letshe* can be seen in the younger generation's ignorance of this differentiation. As some informants noted,

> The *lei she* are the "long sleeved" Chinese, and the *lei to* are the "short-sleeved." What this means is that the *lei she* are Hokkien people, while the *lei to* are Cantonese. But this kind of differentiation is mostly used during the pre-war days, and not much so today anymore.

> There is no more lei to and lei she. If you ask me now, there are two types of Chinese in Myanmar Hokkiens and Yunnanese, because after 1962, the Cantonese mostly went back to China. That was after Prime Minister Ne Win nationalised the whole economy, and for some reason that I don't know about, the Cantonese felt it was best if they left and they either returned to their hometown in China, or migrated to other Southeast Asian countries.

> *Lei to* and *lei she* are no longer in use now. There are not many Cantonese left in Myanmar now. Mostly are Yunnanese and Hokkiens only.

Demographically, the declining population of Hokkiens and Cantonese was followed by an influx of another group of Chinese, the Yunnanese, following the military coup of 1988. The proximity of three districts of the Yunnan province,

namely Yingchiang, Lungchuan, and Tengchung, adjacent to the northern Burmese border, especially the northern town of Mandalay and its outskirts, encouraged the Yunnanese to take advantage of the excellent economic opportunities. The Yunnanese in northern Burma has built their reputation as prominent jade and ruby merchants (see Mya Maung, 1994). The distinction between Yunnanese Chinese and "Burmese Chinese" was clearly evident in the fieldwork. For example, many Chinese complain that the Yunnanese Chinese were given special status and permits, some even being allowed to carry guns in Mandalay. There were also many instances of conflicts and disputes between the Yunnanese and the Chinese.[12]

In addition to the proximity between northern Burma and China, the influx of Yunnanese is related to the inability of the military government to extend its full control in the northern Burmese states otherwise known as the "frontier" regions due to geographical hindrances and the large size of the country (Toyota, 2002). The weak hold of the central authority in northern Burma can be seen in the fact that a deceased person's identification papers are a commodity to buyers from Yunnan province for entry into Mandalay (Lintner, 1998). The strong links maintained by the Yunnanese with mainland Chinese, the importance of a strong ethnic Chinese identity in the maintenance of *guanxi* or Chinese business networks, and the absence of the military gaze in the northern Burmese states have led the Yunnanese to be identified as the least assimilated group of ethnic Chinese in Burma. This is affirmed by an informant:

> The Yunnanese find it more important and useful to maintain their Chinese identity and to teach their young ones to speak the language because they go back and forth so frequently, and the proximity to China is so close, that they find that they have no choice but to learn Chinese because they never know when they need to use it. But for us Hokkiens and Cantonese, we know that we are not going to return to China, and moreover it is so far away from Yangon that we will not be involved in any direct contact with them; in fact we have more contact with the Bamars than the Chinese.

> Yunnanese businesses are much more complex and diverse, and they have their own networks of mainland Chinese people to deal with as well. The nature of the typical Hokkien business is geared more inwards rather than outward expansion. The businesses are all centred around and within Myanmar itself, with no motive for expansion or diversification. The Yunnanese however, will always seek to expand and improve their businesses and networks with all sorts of people.

"Northern" Chinese as opposed to "southern" Chinese, emerge as relevant concepts for intra-ethnic group differentiation among the ethnic Chinese in contemporary Burma, replacing that of *leto* and *letshe*. Conceptually the distinction between "northern" and "southern" Chinese reveals a greater degree of complexity compared to *leto* and *letshe* as corresponding to blue-collar Cantonese and white-collar Hokkiens. "Northern" versus "southern," at the most basic level, corresponds to a dialect group differentiation, since "northern" Chinese are mostly Yunnanese while "southern" Chinese are a mixture of a majority of Hokkiens and a minority Cantonese population. Compared to the concepts of *leto* and *letshe* which encompasses only two dialect groups, "northern" and "southern" Chinese reveals the

presence of three prominent ethnic Chinese dialect groups in Burma, the Hokkiens, Yunnanese and a minority of Cantonese.

> In Lashio and the northern states, most of the Chinese are Yunnanese, but in Yangon there are lots of Hokkien and some Cantonese Chinese, and I am reluctant to mix with them, because I think they are quite different from the Yunnanese. My parents also tell me that Yunnanese are not the same type of Chinese as other Chinese in Myanmar in terms of mentality. I am more comfortable dealing with Yunnanese Chinese.

One interesting feature regarding Chinese identity in Burma is the hierarchical construction of intra-ethnic group boundaries based on the quantification of an individual's Chineseness or the quantification of the "degree of Chineseness," by the Chinese themselves. During the interviews, it is very common to hear informants referring to whether a person is "pure" Chinese, "half" Chinese, or "three-quarters" Chinese.

> How much Chinese is a person? Yes, that's why in Myanmar you know we say one dollar Chinese, fifty cents Chinese, and so on.

> A Chinese person who cannot speak Chinese but has Chinese blood, at the most, I would consider him to be half Chinese, not pure. In Myanmar, we have this saying that someone is half Chinese, or one quarter Chinese, or three quarters Chinese. And only if he celebrates his cultural festivals like Chinese New Year, ancestor worship, will I call him a Chinese.

> The "true" (pure) Chinese are those Chinese like myself who migrated to Myanmar, but they remain traditional and "true" because they did not have any time, or they did not want to receive any Burmese education. They stick to themselves and their practices, and because of that, they have maintained their identity for many generations, right through to their grandchildren.

Determining an individual's degree of Chineseness or the extent to which an individual has resisted being assimilated into Burmese society can be graded on a scale comprising the four main cultural attributes that are seen as central in maintaining a "pure," "un-Burmanised" ethnic Chinese identity. Hierarchically, in terms of importance, practising the customs and traditions inherited from the ancestors, including ancestor worship, Qing Ming; being knowledgeable of the importance of, and the meanings attached to these customs and traditions in order that the knowledge may be perpetuated in future generations; speaking the Chinese language; and having a Chinese name, in that order.[13]

Based on the number of cultural attributes an ethnic Chinese possesses, he would be classified as "half" Chinese, "one quarter" Chinese or "pure" Chinese. In quantifying the degree of Chineseness and the "purity of an individual's ethnic Chinese identity," it is noteworthy that cultural attributes, which the Chinese have relinquished as peripheral in the process of constructing inter-ethnic group boundaries, now becomes core elements. This difference is due to the fact that in inter-ethnic group differentiation, the question of "who is Chinese" is of a qualitative nature, however, in intra-ethnic group differentiation the question of "who is more Chinese" or rather "who is pure Chinese, half Chinese, one quarter Chinese or three quarters Chinese," shifts to reflect a more quantitative nature.

In the process of constructing inter-ethnic group boundaries and a notion of who is Chinese, "*xue*" or blood figures as a core, primordial element, functioning to maintain the ethnic Chinese as a homogenous population and distinct from members of other "races" who are without "Chinese blood." In the process of intra-ethnic group differentiation, however, blood becomes insignificant in determining the degree of Chineseness because all ethnic Chinese have "Chinese blood" and this primordial element does not necessarily transpire into visible characteristics that are culturally associated with being an ethnic Chinese and neither does it aid in perpetuating ethnic Chinese identity. Depending solely on the primordial element "blood" threatens the preservation of the cultural identity of the ethnic Chinese, which threatens assimilation. This is affirmed by the following informants.

> I also believe that Chinese customs is something that should not be changed, because what is the use of having Chinese blood when you don't practice your ancestors' traditions or you don't believe in what you do on Chinese New Year, Qing Ming Festival, etc? Like the Chinese in America or Australia are Chinese by blood, but if they don't practice the customs, then there is no point calling them Chinese anymore isn't it?

> What is the point of saying you are Chinese is you cannot speak Chinese, right? What is the point of saying you have Chinese blood if you don't celebrate Chinese New Year or other cultural festivals. But I feel that essentially in Myanmar, the government wants the people to become more Burmese and to do away with Chinese customs. So in general, there are those who assimilated, and some who are partially assimilated and some who are not assimilated at all.

> Most people either do not know about these traditions, or they just follow blindly out of respect for their elders. Are they Chinese or Burmese? It is very important to know the meaning of festivals, so that you can pass them down to your followers. Only then will Chinese be able to remain strictly Chinese in the years to come.

> Language is only fifty percent of the whole thing. If the person cannot speak Chinese, then I will consider him to be half Burmese, half Chinese. Most important is that the person believes himself to be Chinese, and he follows the Chinese customs and traditions of his ancestors.

Another form of intra-ethnic group differentiation is between the ethnic Chinese residing in the northern Burma who are seen as exhibiting a greater degree of Chineseness compared to the ethnic Chinese in the southern Burmese capital of Yangon. This has led to an alternative construction of the terms "*zhong guo ren*" and "*hua qiao*". Although both groups of ethnic Chinese, "northern" and "southern" residing in Burma are essentially "*hua qiao*" or Chinese of the diaspora, the Yunnanese of northern Burma have instead classified themselves as "*zhong guo ren*," individuals of Chinese ancestry and who are citizens of China, while using the terminology "*hua qiao*" to refer to the ethnic Chinese in Yangon.

Ethnic Chinese in Yangon are under the direct surveillance of Burma's military regime, and have undergone sustained pressure to assimilate into Burmese society.[14] Unlike the Yunnanese, the Hokkiens and Cantonese in Yangon mostly do not participate in business networks with the mainland Chinese since the nature of their businesses are restricted within Myanmar and most have intermarried or are the products of intermarriage. The socio-political environment, in which the

ethnic Chinese in Yangon find themselves, is in direct opposition to that which characterises the northern Burmese states and in which most Yunnanese reside.

The inability of Burma's military government to exercise direct control in the northern Burmese states has created a fertile environment for the preservation and perpetuation of ethnic Chinese cultural identity. They are able to establish tuition centres to teach Chinese language, Chinese culture and literature to the younger generation, to practice Chinese customs and traditions uninterrupted and to be in constant contact with the *da lu ren* or mainland Chinese with whom the extend their business networks of *guan xi*. The distinction between the "northern" and "southern" Chinese can be seen in the following excerpts:

> They (Yangon Chinese) are already assimilated into Burmese culture. Some of them can't even speak Chinese anymore, and their parents don't care to teach them Chinese language and culture. In that sense they are different, but ultimately we still accept them as *hua qiao* with Chinese blood.

> In Yangon, I think the Chinese are far away from being Chinese, because they can only claim to be Chinese because they are born out of a Chinese family and have Chinese blood. Many of them cannot speak Chinese, and they don't know what the meaning of Chinese cultural festivals is. Yes they may know what is Chinese New Year, Sticky Rice Festival and other traditional festival, but do they really know what they really mean and do they really celebrate them in a proper manner, or are they just blindly following in the traditions of their ancestors? In Shan state, and especially in my town Lashio, we believe we are more Chinese than other Chinese in Myanmar. Firstly, we are located very near to Yunnan province in China, and so obviously we are heavily influenced by China culture. We speak Chinese every day with our family members and friends, we pray in the traditional Chinese way, and even our Buddhism is different from the Buddhism that is practised in Yangon. We are not as modern, so to speak, or more traditional and therefore more original Chinese.

> People have told me that many Hokkiens and Cantonese my age cannot speak Chinese, because they never felt that it was necessary to learn the language. Most of them are not involved in any trade with China, so maybe that's why they feel that Chinese is more or less a redundant language. But I can tell you that all Yunnanese will know how to speak Chinese and also know the history of China or at least their province.

> The Yunnanese only associate among themselves, and they are much more sinocized. The Hokkien are much more Burmanised already and many of them wear Burmese dresses. You can tell a Yunnanese by looking at him and the way he carries himself; and similarly for the Hokkien, you can also tell because he is more Burmanised, and behaves differently from the Yunnanese. The Yunnanese have a much narrower outlook compared to the Hokkien, who are much broader in their thinking and also more liberal in their outlook. Many of them believe in intermarriages, but the Yunnanese don't believe in that- they think they must keep their race.

The dichotomy of the "northern" Chinese as "pure" as opposed to the "southern" Chinese as "assimilated" is influenced by the values, interests, and motives of the informants. Unlike the Chinese in the south of Burma, the "northern" Chinese are better able to negotiate their ethnic identities due to two factors. First, the "northern" Chinese are independent of the government for employment. Second and more importantly, the Burmese government is however dependent on the continued investment by the "northern" Chinese in order to develop the country.[15] The fiscal investments of the "northern" Chinese in Burma's economy and the role

that they play in helping to develop the country becomes a currency with which they can negotiate their ethnic identities and to refrain from being assimilated into Burmese society. Ethnic Chinese from Yangon are dependent on the government for employment; therefore they become subservient to the indigenisation policies of the military regime. This is affirmed in the following excerpts:

> They (the Chinese) are very good at that- changing their identity and their attitudes when the time is right to suit the flow of the environment. That is why they have survived for so long as traders and merchants.

> The chambers of commerce is very active in promoting Chinese cultural functions and activities, and all the while, the head of the organisation, who is my friend, know the full status and position of the Chinese in Myanmar, so he knows what to do and what not to do to help maintain Chinese social identity here. But he is still considered a government servant, and there are many things that he cannot say or do, because it might put his position in jeopardy. For me I am different, because I am a businessman with lots of connections in the government so I don't care what I say or do.

6.5 Identity Maintenance, Ethnic Relations and the State

Throughout the eras of the "Burmese Way to Socialism" and that of the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC), "xenophobia" and "racism" have consistently remained conspicuous themes that have both effected the Burmese government's discussion on, as well as characterised their conceptualisation of, the ethnic Chinese minority (Mya Maung, 1990; Steinberg, 1991). Viewing the "Chinese" as a "race," characterised as predisposed towards and advantaged in trading and business enterprise, stereotypically led to related generalizations about the wealth and exclusivity- sometimes expressed as "clannishness" – of the Chinese (Douglas, 1997: 40). Such a conception of the ethnic Chinese minority had induced an elevated political apprehensiveness among the Burmese military regime. A closer scrutiny however reveals that Burma's apprehension over the ethnic Chinese minority stemmed as much from the country's own identity crisis characterised by the inability of the Burmese to trace their racial origin and heritage as from the fear that the economic dominance of the ethnic Chinese would translate into civil and political unrest. This was succinctly summed up by the following informant:

> There are so many ethnic tribes all around Myanmar, like the Mons, the Kachins, the Chins and the Shan state, that the government are more worried about their presence because they are armed armies. The Chinese are simply traders, and do not care about politics or ethnic insurgencies. They just want to make money and leave the government alone. The other groups want to break away- they want independence from Myanmar, so the government is wary of them. Yes, they (the government) did try to blend the Chinese with the Burmese, but they could not succeed because Myanmar is so big and diverse.

From the recorded history of Burmese kingdoms through a century of British rule to contemporary society, racial intermingling among the indigenous ethnic groups and between the so-called Burmese and foreign Asians took place, rendering pure

Burmese blood an unknown variable (Mya Maung, 1990: 611). Burma's identity crisis was a conspicuous weakness of the traditional Burmese body politic which reared its ugly head in the forms of well-documented ethnic disunity and continual strife among opposition groups (Rajah, 1998). This racial sensitivity, according to Mya Maung (1990) was exploited by Ne Win to provoke racism, ethnicism and nationalism and to incite violence. A clear illustration of Burma's need of a cohesive ideological underpinning to bind the heterogeneous state together was Ne Win's manipulation of the bloody Sino-Burmese riot of 1967, in order to boost his popularity as a nationalist Burmese hero.

From 1965, Ne Win repeatedly emphasised in his speeches the untrustworthiness of foreign advisors and how his regime had accomplished the Burmanization of the economy. The move to nationalise Burma's productive and trade sectors in an attempt to move the economy under the control of a homogenous, "pure" "Burmese people" must be viewed as being driven by a political, rather than an economic wisdom, since the final outcome of the indigenization of the Burmese economy was the reduction of Burma to the status of "least developed country" applied for by the government and granted by the United Nations at the end of 1987. Xenophobia and racism, which are powerful forces in destroying political opponents in all system, traditional and modern, were effectively used by Ne Win to sustain his political grip (Mya Maung, 1990: 611).

The dominance of this theme in the controlled press continued into the SLORC era. This has been exacerbated by charges that foreigners are threatening to split the Myanmar "races," and that aliens cannot be trusted. To illustrate, Lt. General Phone Myin, secretary of the National Intelligence Bureau and Minister of Home and Religious Affairs has charged the Burma Communist Party, the CIA, Europeans, Indians and Chinese as follows:

> There is no other race that can love you except your own...foreigners can never love you...They just love to exploit us and because they want our natural resources. There is no other way that they can like us. This must always be kept in your mind...We do not trust foreigners one bit, nor do we think highly of them. We stand on our own feet, and we trust our own race and nationalities.[16]

Burma's complex mix of peoples comprising seven major ethnic groups, namely Shan, Kachin, Chin, Karen, Mon, Yakhine and Kayah, and more than 130 minor ethnic minorities and the ambiguous racial origin and identity of the so-called majority ethnic race known as Myanmah or Bamah, poses a problem in the country's nation-building process. In order to achieve the political goal of a unitary state, which was in fact an attempt to foster "the fusion of the different ethnic peoples of overarching common goals and aspiration" (Steinberg, 1982: 47), members of Burma's military government pursued first the policy of forcible assimilation or "Burmanisation." This was achieved through the indigenization of Burma's economic system, education system, and mass media. More importantly, the military regime also perpetuated the idea that the Chinese are foreigners or aliens, the "other," who choose to "live side by side with the Burmese without the desire to be Burmese citizens or to culturally assimilate into Burmese

society and driven solely by an interest in making money". This induces a negative ethnic stereotyping of the ethnic Chinese, confirmed by the following informant:

> Last time, the Chinese were discriminated against in various stages in society, because traditionally, business people were disliked in society. They think that people in business are untrustworthy and are only concerned about making money.

Historically, the negative stereotyping of the "Chinese" as a "people" with alien blood who "do business only serving their selfish ends," (Ne Win's speech at the 1987 BSPP Congress quoted in Mya Maung, 1990: 612) has resulted in the tension, among the Chinese, between their national identities as "people of Myanmar," and their ethnic identity.[17]

Managing the tension between their ethnic identity which is seen as increasingly diluted and their national identity as citizens of Myanmar which the government portrays as dubious since their strong ethnic identity threatens the nation-building process becomes a tight rope situation which the ethnic Chinese have to cautiously traverse. To uphold the ethnic Chinese identity while at the same time being a loyal citizen of Myanmar, the ethnic Chinese negotiate these competing identities by juggling their nationalist sentiments as "people of Myanmar," on the one hand and their ethnic loyalty as "*zhong guo ren*," on the other. To do this, it required the ethnic Chinese to draw on the ideology of multiculturalism. Multiculturalism is seen as promoting cultural pluralism and protecting cultural variety.

However, given the dominance of Burma's military regime, the ideology of "multiculturalism" and respect for the other "races" can only be negotiated at the micro-level of society; at the level of everyday, face-to-face interaction. Among the Chinese in Burma, there is a push for the idea of cultural plurality as the basis for the cohesiveness of Burmese society and the peaceful co-existence of the various ethnic groups. "People of Myanmar," thus becomes an ideology that cultivates nationalism by anchoring ethnic diversity to a sense of place, locality and home community.

Despite the differences among the various ethnic groups, the recognition of Myanmar as their chosen "home," that living in Myanmar is something that they share and it is this attachment to the land of Myanmar and to recognise themselves as "people of Myanmar" that binds them together.

> There is no such thing as Myanmarese people, like how I have heard some people say before. People from Myanmar yes, but no Myanmarese people. So people normally refer to themselves as coming from one of these regions in Burma or Myanmar. I am from Shan state, although I have Chinese blood. But I don not go around saying I am Chinese…Nobody will ask you whether you have Chinese blood or not, because there is no point. We are people from Myanmar, and we come from our respective regions, so either call us Shan or Karen or Chin, or people from Myanmar.

> What I want to tell you is that people from Myanmar don't say that they are Chinese anymore, only they may look Chinese and they can trace their family history back and they know that somebody somewhere in their family is Chinese.

> In the end, the Shans now accept that they are part of the people from Myanmar, so they believe they have a common national goal. But actually, they are originally different from

the majority of Burmans, so of course in that sense they are different people. But they accept that all people living in Myanmar are living in the same country, with the same government.

The process of "othering," and the stigma attached to the ethnic Chinese identity has created a situation of ambivalence, fragmentation, and outright discrimination. It is important to note, however, that the discrimination faced by the ethnic Chinese with respect to gaining employment in the government sectors is constructed as a way to level the playing field for the different races to compete with the economically dominant and the economically more inclined ethnic Chinese compared to members of the other ethnic groups. The Chinese who are characteristically commercially inclined compared to members of the other indigenous "race" naturalise this predisposition as a "racial" quality which is absent in the other races. This serves as a way of explaining the need for the government to employ the indigenous Burmese, who are simply not economically inclined as a "race." This form of rationalising discrimination faced by the ethnic Chinese is clearly illustrated below:

> Practically speaking, there is no such conflict between the Chinese and the Burmese people. Chinese people are successful in business, and the Burmese are not, so there is some kind of balance there, because the Chinese are not allowed to work in the government as well. In a way, both the Chinese and the Burmese need one another for the country to survive.

> In some areas, like the government, Chinese people cannot expect to get a job. But in other areas, like business, the Chinese control mostly the jewellery trade and other trades like groceries, restaurants and other very profitable businesses. So in the end, it evens out, and I don't think that race affects our ability as Chinese to fit into Myanmar society too much.

> There will always be jealousy by the poorer people over the rich- it is not necessarily due to race. It just so happens that the richer people are the Chinese, so it is very easy for outsiders to see that and they say that there is discrimination, or there is hatred, between the Bamars and the Chinese. But I tell you that is not the case here.

At another level, this form of rationalising the employment discrimination faced by the ethnic Chinese in government sectors functions to downplay the discrimination that the ethnic Chinese themselves practice, with respect to employing only ethnic Chinese in their businesses, which has earned them the reputation of being "exclusive".

In making sense of the discrimination that the ethnic Chinese themselves practise with respect to employment, the concept of ethno-racialization, is again useful. The ethnic Chinese categorize the "Burmese people" as a "racial group" and impute essentialized traits to the members of this group. The poverty of the Burmese people is constructed as being the result of their inherent "untrustworthy nature, their contented attitude and the absence of an inclination towards business or economic achievement." The real economic challenge to the Burmese has been posed by the economically more aggressive Chinese communities whose dominance of trade, industry and even agriculture has been one of the hardest problems to solve in independent Burma. This situation has led to a series of agrarian reforms, co-operative movements, nationalization of land, and socialization of trade and industry. However, despite these measures, there is a lack of desire to

enhance material well-being even when opportunities are available to the rural villagers.

According to Mya Maung (1964: 750) the leisure-preference function of an average Burmese cultivator is determined by at least three important factors: the festive environment moulded and preserved by the Buddhist culture, the lack of challenge which can be traced to certain cultural values, and the recent liberal economic policy of the government with respect to easy procurement of credit and other forms of support. Managing the discrimination against ethnic Chinese with respect to employment in the government sectors have necessitated the reliance of the Chinese on informal networking or "*guan xi*" for employment since employment by the Burmese government is thought to be economically undesirable.

> Definitely I will give preference to Chinese people, because in this business, you need people who can speak Chinese and Burmese. . .From my experience Chinese people get turned off when they come in and they speak to someone who cannot speak Chinese. But it is not a racial thing, solely a business point of view. I do not exclude people based on their colour, but you will find that most of the time, the Chinese people are much more trustworthy and hardworking, whereas the locals are not like that.

> It is not that I look down on Burmese culture, but they are simply different to us and they are not Chinese. Their way of doing things is different, and they are certainly not as hardworking as us Chinese. They are easily contented and don't see the need to earn more money for their children's future.

To manage the perception that the interests underlying the presence of ethnic Chinese in Burma is purely commercial, as perpetuated by Ne Win and members of his military regime, the nationalism of the ethnic Chinese as "people from Myanmar" additionally translates itself through the perpetuation of a discourse that the economic interests of the ethnic Chinese must not be tangential to Burma's economic and political interests. As "people from Myanmar" and in the interest of all "people from Myanmar" the economic interests of the ethnic Chinese must not be seen as exploiting Burma's indigenous people and natural resources in the interests of China's socio-economic development. This discourse reflects the way in which the ethnic Chinese citizens of Burma have internalised the government's discourse. As citizens of Myanmar, the ethnic Chinese feel that loyalty to Myanmar's socio-economic development is important and therefore a balance needs to be struck in order that investments from China do not become an unequal, one-way economic transaction, which leaves Myanmar and its people impoverished or disadvantaged.

> The Myanmar government cannot overlook China. As you said, they are a big country with a lot of international backing. There are also many Chinese people who want to invest heavily in countries like Thailand, Myanmar, Indonesia, and Philippines. . .So very important for the government to have close relations but you cannot let them take advantage of everything in Myanmar. There must be some big projects, but the Chinese must share with the Burmese people or the government. You cannot have everything Chinese, and then all the profit goes back to China.

> I am happy that Chinese people are coming here, rather than other races like Americans or British, but the Chinese people must learn to respect the customs and lifestyle of the Burmese as well, and not be so concerned about making so much money out of the poorer Burmese people.

The data on the Chinese in Burma suggest that ethnic identity and ethnic relations is far more nuanced than previously thought. The political circumstances in which the migrant Chinese found themselves in, and Burma's nation-building process, centering on an indigenization policy that in effect discriminated against the Chinese and the elimination of Chinese institutions, including schools and clan associations, has led to a process of racializing ethnicity,[18] and accentuating the use of primordial sentiments as a means of delineating the in-group as opposed to the out-group in Burmese society. However, at the same time, and especially in intra-ethnic differentiation, the cultural content of Chinese identity is negotiable and variable, and there are many notions of Chineseness in Burma. Conceptually, the basis of ethnicity and ethnic identity has commonly been presented in terms of a binary opposition between ascriptive identity and instrumental identity. The data on the Chinese in Burma suggest that the two are not necessarily mutually exclusive. Rather, the factors that contribute to the negotiation and construction of Chinese identity are numerous and complex.

Notes

1. Mya Than (1997: 119). This is at best, an estimate. Like the other countries in Southeast Asia, it is difficult to get an accurate estimate of the number of ethnic Chinese in Myanmar. In the first place, Chinese as an ethnic category is not elicited in the Census. Also, who is a Chinese remains a problematic category.

2. For a detailed analysis on the emergence of a "Burmese" identity in pre-colonial Burma, refer to Victor Lieberman's book *Strange Parallels: Southeast Asia in Global Context c800–1830*. Victor Lieberman argues that over a thousand years, each of mainland Southeast Asia's lowland territories experienced a pattern of integration punctuated by recurrent collapse. In the case of western mainland Southeast Asia (the area roughly corresponding to modern day Myanmar), as successive interregna grew progressively shorter and less institutionally disruptive, the dominant Burman state expanded its territory, centralized its administration and saw elements of the population adopt more uniform cultural and ethnic identities. From the fourteenth century and with accelerating vigour in the seventeenth to the early nineteenth centuries, Burman ethnicity and language came to dominate at the expense of the Mons (who were dominant in the south) and the other ethnic groups. Before 1740, some Burmanization was represented by a voluntary or partial shift in self identification among ethnic groups seeking patronage and prestige. Revolts were frequent against the Burmans and each revolt typically was followed by fresh deportations, and punitive cultural proscriptions. Assimilation, intermarriage and displacement in Burma proceeded apace and by the 1830s, Burman cultural influence had expanded substantially (Lieberman, 2003: 202–206). By the time of the arrival of the British and subsequent immigration of a large alien population of Indian and Chinese, the core of the western mainland Southeast Asia that had once been an extremely fragmented zone had a strong Burman cultural as well as political identity.

3. In pre-colonial times, the relationship between the communities at the borderlands of modern day Burma and China was dynamic. The borders waxed and waned, depending on the conquests waged by powers on either side who sought to increase their territory and zones of influence.

4. Aung-Thwin (2008: 196) suggests that historically it was Upper Burma more than any other region in the country that should be considered the "heartland" of the country's culture and society. Lieberman (2003: 159) emphasized that Upper Burma's agricultural and demographic superiority made it the centre of political gravity throughout most of Burmese history.

Although the north lacked direct access to maritime trade, more importantly, it profited from commerce with Yunnan. Upper Burma was considered very important to the trade and commercial life of the territory because of its proximity to China which was its main trade gateway; its "front door" for trade. Many colonial historians believed that the British, by conquering Lower Burma and gaining control of its coastal ports and maritime trade, had penetrated Burma from its "front door" when in actual fact they had entered the "back door" from a Burmese perspective.

5. The first two Anglo-Burmese wars of 1824–1826 and 1852 resulted in the annexation of Arakan, Tenasserim, and Pegu (Lower Burma). Upper Burma (as it was referred to) then became a small kingdom, completely landlocked. Finally, the third Anglo-Burmese war of 1885 resulted in the annexation of Upper Burma (Trager, 1966: 38).

6. Silverstein (1980: 33) argues that although Indian-Burman relation under British rule was a long one of antipathy and occasional violence, there was a small degree of harmony and assimilation as well. There is scattered evidence that numerous Indians settled among the local population; changed their names, religion and way of dress. They married the local women and managed to merge with the indigenous people. Some Indians who were born in Burma even identified themselves with the indigenous population.

7. The growth of English-language schools and the use of English as the language of governance during the colonial period had already led to the decline of many Chinese educational institutions. During the British colonial period, education was not viewed so much as an important agency of cultural continuity. Rather its importance lay in the training of a labour force which could provide skilled labour for the trading offices of foreign firms and fill government positions with English speaking clerks. The opportunities for well paid and comfortable employment provided by an English education made English schools highly popular among those few who could gain access to it (Taylor, 1987: 113).

8. The surveillance and de-politicization of the Chinese organizations may have been due to the communist threat in Burma. The Communist Party of Burma had been in insurrection since 1948 and by the 1950s had established links with the Chinese Communist Party over the Burma-Yunnan border. From 1949 till 1989, Beijing had a dual track approach to its relations with Burma. One track was the normal state to state relations with the government of Burma. The other track was the fraternal relations between the Chinese Communist Party and the Communist Party in Burma which waged armed conflict against the Burmese government. Following the military take over in Burma in 1962, the Chinese Communist Party began to actively support the CPB insurgency. During the late 1960s and early 1970s, the assistance in terms of the provision of funds, training and recruitment and modern weapons provided to the CPB was quite substantial (Garver, 2001: 255).

9. In 1997, the ruling junta changed its name to the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC).

10. Based on his research on the Kachin in Burma, Leach (1954) also drew a similar conclusion. He contends that it was "largely academic fiction that distinct tribes are distributed about the map in ordinary fashion and clear cut boundaries" (Leach, 1954: 290). He argues that the identity of an ethnic group should not be seen as static and genetically determined, but one which is variable in social relations.

11. In the middle of 1967, Chinese diplomats in Burma encouraged the ethnic Chinese students to participate in Maoist activities. A backlash soon followed and serious anti-Chinese riots broke out in Burma. Beijing reacted strongly and diplomatic relations soured as Beijing even began calling for the overthrow of the Rangoon government (Garver, 2001: 255).

12. While doing fieldwork, I was told of an incident when a Yunnanese shot a Mandalay Chinese over a dispute.

13. Other than in terms of the number of cultural attributes, being half, three quarters or one quarter Chinese, among the informants, also applies to intermarriage.

14. This does not mean that the Chinese in Yangon are assimilated. They remain essentially Chinese, drawing on phenotypical and genotypical characteristics for ethnic identification.

15. For example, when conducting fieldwork in Mandalay, it is possible to see, on a daily basis, convoys of trucks bringing goods to Burma from Yunnan for trade.
16. Quoted in Mya Maung. (1990) "The Burma Road from the Union of Burma to Myanmar," *Asian Survey*, 30(6): 602–623.
17. The point should be reiterated here that it is only when discussing intra-ethnic differentiation, these factors, such as northern and southern Chinese, or citizenship status versus ethnic identity, come into play. In inter ethnic relations, as the interviews with the informants show, the policy to forcibly assimilate the Chinese has failed, and the Chinese in Burma today remains essentially Chinese.
18. It was during the British colonial period that the population in Burma was first divided into racial categories and labeled. This racializing of ethnicity which began during the colonial period was carried through by the successive post-colonial independent governments. Modern nations became associated with a set of sharply identified populations and this has led ruling powers to continue their racial classification of people (Toyota, 2003: 311–312).

Chapter 7
A Love-Hate Relationship: The Chinese in Vietnam

7.1 Introduction

Among all Southeast Asian countries, Vietnam is unique in that it is the only state that was "conquered" and under direct rule by the Chinese. Moreover, the period of colonization lasted from the late second century to the early tenth century. This clearly will have an impact on the Chinese migrants in Vietnam. As such, unlike other Southeast Asian countries, there are cultural similarities between the Chinese and Vietnamese. Even so, the data suggest that there is an almost love hate relationship between the two groups.[1] This is clearly evident in the primacy and politics of intermarriage. For the Chinese, intermarriage has the potential impact of eroding Chinese culture and ethnic identity, and there is resistance to intermarriage, particularly of Chinese women to Vietnamese men, to avoid the loss of sons and grandchildren.

Like the Chinese elsewhere in Southeast Asia, the Chinese in Vietnam draw on primordial sentiments to define their identity. However, because of the many years of acculturation and the fact that, at least in physical appearance, there is very little difference, the Chinese in Vietnam draw more on bloodline and descent, rather than phenotypical characteristics to define their identity. In addition, language becomes a primary marker of ethnicity: A Chinese must be able to speak Chinese.

7.2 History of the Chinese in Vietnam

7.2.1 Early Migration of the Chinese to Vietnam

For about a thousand years from 111 B.C., Vietnam was a province of China. During this first phase of Sino-Vietnamese relations, the presence of Chinese in Vietnam was not simply a matter of migration. Many of the Chinese remained in Vietnam as administrators and soldiers. There were also merchants who had established themselves in Vietnam. According to Ky (1963: 24) the ties between the two countries extended long after Vietnam gained independence from China in 938 A.D. Vietnamese emperors continued to pay tribute to the Chinese emperors in exchange

for protection and the Chinese state continued to be a model for the intellectual, political, administrative and social realm of Vietnamese society and Chinese culture was considered prestigious among all strata of Vietnamese society.

Modern day Vietnam includes the area formerly known as Tonkin in the North, Annam in the centre and Cochinchina at the southern end. Many of the Chinese immigrants were mostly Chinese refugees who left China after the fall of the Ming dynasty. They arrived by sea from the two provinces of Kwangtung and Fukien in the seventeenth century and settled directly in the southern area of Vietnam (then called Cochinchina) because the Vietnamese Emperor permitted them to live there. The villages where they settled were called "Minh Huong".[2] This term was later used to designate the mixed blood arising from the intermarriage between Chinese and Vietnamese (Le, 2004: 67). The status of the early Chinese migrants was not very different from the Vietnamese themselves. They enjoyed the same civil rights as the Vietnamese and many ethnic Chinese were politically influential as they served as envoys to China. Until 1829, the children from mixed Chinese-Vietnamese parentage were still considered to be Chinese. Thereafter, they were regarded as Vietnamese and granted political rights.

7.2.2 Chinese Pattern of Settlement in Vietnam

The Chinese were drawn to Vietnam because of job opportunities. In many cases, after an immigrant from Chinese arrived in Vietnam and located work, they would send for their younger brothers or male relatives from their villages to join them. Their original intention was to return to their home village in China whenever circumstances allowed. Ky (1963: 4) contends that it was a result of this sentiment that emigrants from China tended to maintain close contact with their families in China and to remit large amounts of money to their home villages. The close kinship ties between many of the immigrant Chinese usually drew them to the area where there was a strong Chinese presence which could help them to acclimatize (Marsot, 1993: 41). The mass immigration of the Chinese in the late nineteenth century and the early twentieth century saw many of the new migrants naturally settled in the southern part of Vietnam which already had a sizeable Chinese community (Le, 2004: 67–68). In fact, by 1952, over 90% of all Chinese were residing in South Vietnam. The Chinese settlers favored living in the urban centers in the southern region of Cochinchina where there were generally more opportunities for employment.[3]

7.2.3 Impact of the French Colonization on the Ethnic Chinese

7.2.3.1 Increase in Chinese Immigrants

From 1859, the French started their colonization of Vietnam beginning in the south. The entire country came under French control in 1883. By the time of the French colonization, the Chinese were already well settled in Cochinchina and in control of

most of the trade (Le, 2004: 67). The French colonization led to an increase in the number of Chinese, mostly because the French authorities did not inhibit Chinese immigration despite some protests by the native Vietnamese population against the presence of the Chinese and the economic power they held (Marsot, 1993: 40–41).

In fact, as Khanh (1993: 57) pointed out, they found that the Chinese, with their marketing expertise and business contacts, were a useful class of middlemen traders and industrious laborers.[4] The French welcomed the Chinese and there was a certain co-operation between them in both the import and export sectors. In principle, they would enjoy the same treatment as the French but in return for these privileges; the French obtained the right to levy special taxes on the Chinese. Most of the immigrants who arrived in Vietnam during the French colonial era were male who arrived singly, leaving their families behind. The sex ratio of the immigrants was markedly disproportionate. This resulted in a large number of mixed marriages between Chinese settlers and local Vietnamese women, giving rise to a mixed population of Chinese-Vietnamese known as *Minh Huongs*. The Chinese found that an added advantage of intermarriage greatly helped their commercial contacts and thus there was an economic incentive to take a Vietnamese wife (Marsot, 1993: 89).

7.2.3.2   Social Segregation of Chinese

The French administrators also maintained the system of congregations (*bangs*) for the management of the Chinese population. The congregations which pre-dated French rule were especially useful for handling the tax assessment of the Chinese and controlling the immigration to Vietnam. The congregations also had the traditional social role of managing schools and hospitals but it also contributed in making the Chinese socially isolated from the native Vietnamese population (Amer, 1991: 10–11). Ky (1962: 139) also argues that the assimilation process of the ethnic Chinese was strongly impeded because of the congregations. These were very influential in perpetuating compartmentalization and social segregation between the Chinese and the Vietnamese.

Each "bang" comprised Chinese migrants from the same region in China and was headed by a headman who was responsible for the members of his "bang". In Vietnam, there were 5 bangs divided along the lines of regions and dialects – Cantonese, Teochiu, Hakka, Hokkien and Hainanese.[5] Such associations held great advantages for new arrivals from China. When a Chinese arrived, one of the compatriots would secure him admission into the *bang*, speak up for him, and provide aid and assistance. They would also help him to set up his profession, give him an idea about where to find employment and may even help him to cover initial expenses (Marsot, 1993: 41). Once established in a congregation, the Chinese were never isolated from each other, but worked in close contact with their fellow countrymen. There was a strong sense of solidarity and mutual aid societies, and professional organizations flourished among the immigrants. In 1926, there were more than seventy such organizations in Cholon itself (Marsot, 1993: 137). Each dialect group was also concerned with establishing schools for their children, hospitals for the

poor, cemeteries, temples and other social amenities (Ky, 1962: 76). Interestingly, the regional backgrounds of the ethnic Chinese were often strongly correlated to their occupational and business activities.

7.2.3.3 Economic Activities of the Chinese

For the ethnic Chinese, the most prevalent characteristic of the occupational and regional community organizations was that of provincialism. The Cantonese congregation was the largest and comprised mainly traders and industrialists. In Cholon and Saigon, they owned the rice husking plants, the silk shops, saw mills, brick making factories, shipyards and export shops. They were also masons, furniture makers, carpenters, tailors, shoemakers and butchers (Marsot, 1993: 138). The wealthier Cantonese were also engaged in the service sector and ran hotels, theatres, department stores, construction firms and large restaurants (Ky, 1962: 77).

The Hokkiens constituted the commercial aristocracy. They owned many of the commercial stores in Saigon and Cholon, most of the Cholon factories and also controlled the rice trade (Marsot, 1993: 138). In the service sector, many Hokkiens were engaged in shipbuilding, shipping and banking. The Teochius were also engaged in trade, including rice and other local products. They dominated pawnbroking and were dock workers, paddy dealers, rice mill laborers, textile merchants and butchers. The Hakkas were often employed as clerks, small traders, artisans, specialized in tea shops and were agriculturists involved in market gardening. Those from Hainan were mostly pepper planters and market gardeners. Besides growing produce, many of the Hainanese were employed in small scale restaurants, tea rooms and eating establishments. They were generally the poorest of the dialect groups and formed a high proportion of domestic servants, waiters, cooks, factory workers, tea shop operators, estate workers and peddlers (Ky, 1962: 77–79).

However, it was in the trading and commerce field that the Chinese played a crucial important role. The industries controlled by the Chinese included the rice industry, transport and banking and finance. They also had large landholdings, especially in Saigon. In the rice industry they not only had a monopoly of the retail trade but also of the wholesale trade. With their network of guilds and agency organizations, they were able to control the purchasing and exporting of rice. Apart from rice, the Chinese also dealt with most of the trade with China and Hong Kong as well as much of the retail trade with Cochinchina, especially those commodities which were not used by the French or other Europeans (Le, 2004: 71). The Chinese economic dominance was less pervasive in Tonkin compared to Cochinchina. Haiphong was the city with the next highest concentration of Chinese. Like many of their counterparts in Cochinchina, many Chinese in the north were involved in retail trade and import-export, but a significant number worked in the mines, in industry as well as in handicrafts. In Annam, the Chinese were also engaged in trade. They were the main buyers of cinnamon bark, silk fabric and rattan for export (Le, 2004: 71).

7.2.4 Pacific War Era

When the Sino-Japanese war broke out in 1937, Chinese migration into Vietnam increased considerably. By 1939, the number of Chinese immigrants increased to 68,000 into Cochinchina, 9,500 into Tonkin and 1,200 into Amman. By 1940, there was an estimated 380,000 Chinese in Cochinchina, most of whom lived in Cholon. By agreement with the Vichy government, the Japanese were allowed to station troops in Indochina while the French remained in power until March 1945 when they were subsequently disarmed and interned. Within a month of this change in administration, independent regimes were declared in Vietnam,[6] Cambodia and Laos. But their independence was short-lived when the French resumed military and administrative control in late 1945 and early 1946. Even though Vietnam enjoyed only a brief period of national independence, it provided a strong incentive to the nationalist spirit in the country because for the first time in almost a century, the Vietnamese were in full control of the mechanics of government and administration (Ky, 1962: 145–146).

The first Indochina war, which was to last seven years, thus began when the French attempted to wrest power from the Vietnamese. The French would not tolerate Vietnamese independence and the Vietnamese would not accept a return to colonialism. The conflict evolved from an anti-colonial struggle into a "cold war". Backed by Communist China, the Vietminh had access to heavy artillery, trench warfare and some crucial anti-aircraft guns. From 1949 onwards, the United States became involved in the war as they believed it necessary to stem the tide of communism. The US supported the French politically and financially, and, by 1954, was bearing 80% of the cost of the French war effort. Like the local population, many of the ethnic Chinese were caught in the domestic and political instability as there was a general lawlessness and lack of security. However, some *Hoa* businessmen profited from the war. The Chinese traders were the main suppliers for both the French held cities and the Vietminh troops (Ky, 1962: 148).

7.2.5 Post Independence Period in North Vietnam

In July 1954, the first Indochina War came to an end with Vietnam "temporarily" divided at the 17th parallel until general elections could be held to resolve the political situation. However, the elections never materialized and the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV) which was formed in 1945, controlled the northern part of Vietnam. The southern region was proclaimed as the Republic of Vietnam (RVN). With the partition of Vietnam, about 40,000 to 45,00 ethnic Chinese left the DRV for the South as the imminent Communist rule made their position as an alien commercial minority uneasy (Amer, 1991: 12).

With independence, the Chinese community found themselves in a precarious situation as the nationalist government in Vietnam was anxious to assert its independence. However, as Chang (1982: 5) points out the pervasiveness of the Chinese

in Vietnam and Vietnam's contiguity to China meant that the expressions of concern for the well-being of overseas Chinese on the part of China would likely be perceived in Vietnam as interference in its domestic affairs. By the same token, Vietnam had to manage any measures and policies involving the ethnic Chinese for fear of immediate adverse effects upon her relations with China. For example, China was influential in the organization of education for the ethnic Chinese living in the DRV. The Commission of Overseas Chinese Affairs from China built schools, sent books and set up the Hanoi Teacher's Training Institute to train teachers for the Chinese educational establishments in the DRV (Amer, 1991: 13). In early 1955, the CCP and the Workers' Party of Vietnam agreed on the rights and the status of the Chinese in the DRV. Basically both sides believed that the ethnic Chinese should work towards Vietnamese nationality.

In 1958, the authority over the Chinese schools was transferred to the Vietnamese. The Vietnamese authorities rapidly pursued a Vietnamization of the education system and made significant changes to the Chinese schools. By the mid 1960s, the Chinese language was downgraded to the level of a foreign language in the Chinese schools (Amer, 1991: 15). The aim of the DRV was to transform the country into a socialist society. Such a transformation meant that private trade, property and businesses would be nationalized. These changes were not targeting any ethnic group in particular, but rather, were directed towards specific classes. However, since many of the Chinese were involved in business, the suppression of private trade badly affected them although as Amer (1991: 18) noted, small scale private trade still survived the Communist period.[7]

7.2.6 Nationalism in South Vietnam and its Effects on the Ethnic Chinese

In South Vietnam, there were roughly 1.5 million ethnic Chinese, constituting more than 99% of its foreign population.[8] Despite their larger numbers, the position of the ethnic Chinese in the south was also tenuous because after its independence in 1954, South Vietnam underwent a period of nationalism and embarked on several strategies which were detrimental to the Chinese interests. The South Vietnam government began their campaign to resolve the "Chinese problem" in four main areas. These included the problem of nationality arising from China's and Taiwan's citizenship claims over all persons of Chinese descent, the economic dominance of the Chinese, the education of the locally born Chinese children and the organization of the Chinese into congregations which was deemed as anti-assimilationist (Ky, 1963: 151).

In December 1955, the government issued Decree No. 10 under which all children born out of mixed marriages between Vietnamese and Chinese persons were deemed to be Vietnamese citizens and their Vietnamese citizenship could not be renounced (Amer, 1991: 19). The Presidential decree No. 48 of August 1956 conferred Vietnamese citizenship on all Chinese born in Vietnam.[9] It also required

them to exchange their identity cards for the type of census cards possessed by Vietnamese citizens. Not only did the decree allow all Chinese children born in the future to become Vietnamese, it also gave citizenship to all Chinese children born in Vietnam in the past. It was also applicable only to the Chinese nationals and not to any other aliens born and residing in Vietnam (Ky, 1963: 155). All other ethnic Chinese would be considered aliens and would need to pay a high residence tax and would need residential permits which had to be renewed periodically (Khanh, 1993: 29). In September 1956, another government decree banning non-Vietnamese citizens from engaging in eleven specified occupations was announced. Foreigners who were involved in such professions were given six months to a year to terminate their activities or to transfer their businesses to Vietnamese citizens. Those who did not were liable to be fined up to 5 million piasters (Khanh, 1993: 53). Although the government claimed that the decree was not targeting the ethnic Chinese, it had a great impact on the Chinese community because of their heavy involvement in business.

As a consequence, about 90% of the Chinese became Vietnamese or allowed their families to become naturalized. A small minority of mostly elderly Chinese preserved their alien status while a few hundred Chinese were repatriated to Taiwan. The policy put a slight damper on the Chinese investments and inevitably helped to increase the volume of business run by local Vietnamese. The Vietnamization also extended to the education system. This included limiting the number of Chinese schools in Cholon, restricting the hours allocated to Chinese language teaching and obliging the students to adopt Vietnamese dress. Strict censorship was also exercised on books and articles giving information about the PRC[10] (Marsot, 1993: 168).

Unlike the Chinese in the DRV, the Chinese community in the South Vietnam was effectively cut off from the Communist regime of the PRC and was closely allied to Taiwan. Chinese education was supported by the Guomindang and at that time was strongly influenced by the politics in Taiwan (Amer, 1991: 18). Thus when the education of the ethnic Chinese in South Vietnam came under attack, the Taiwanese government protested against the nationalization policies and pledged to support the Chinese community in the RVN. However, Taiwanese efforts to resolve the matter through bilateral negotiations failed.

7.2.7 Demonstrations by the Ethnic Chinese

The restrictions and discriminatory nature of these policies galvanized the Chinese community in Vietnam into action. In the summer of 1957, the Chinese community voiced their protest against the RVN government by sabotaging the Vietnamese economy. They closed down their business establishments and schools and withdrew about a sixth of their money from circulation. As a result, the exchange rate of the piaster fell to a third its value and the South Vietnam economy practically came to a standstill. Chinese moneylenders who provided a crucial service to the rural economy suspended credit. In the markets of Singapore and Hong Kong, the

overseas Chinese made a united stand and launched a boycott of Vietnamese good which were not sold to them by Chinese businessmen in Vietnam (Alexander, 1973: 125–126).

The RVN government soon realized the extent of the Chinese community's domination of the economy and their capability at holding the country ransom. The government quickly decided to make certain concessions and decreed that Chinese were allowed to transfer their business to Vietnamese-born relatives. In addition, foreign-born Chinese could become Vietnamese citizens by simply registering themselves and the Chinese language was accepted as the teaching language in all subjects except history, geography and the Vietnamese language. In the economic field the required percentage of Vietnamese ownership in business, relating to the eleven restricted occupations was reduced to 51% by March 1958 and the application of the laws on military service was flexible with regard to the Chinese (Amer, 1991: 22).

In the immediate post war era, the attempts to Vietnamize the Chinese were not very successful. Only a few Vietnamese-born Chinese bothered to collect their Vietnamese identity documents. However many foreign born Chinese eventually chose to become Vietnamese citizens because it was much more convenient to be a Vietnamese citizen with full economic rights. Becoming a citizen of the RVN was also convenient since all that was needed was registration (Amer, 1991: 22). The Chinese economic dominance prevailed during the twenty years of the RV despite the fact that they only comprised about 5% (an estimated 900,000) of the Vietnamese population in 1969 (Arasaratnam, 1976: 7). The situation for the ethnic Chinese community changed drastically however when the Communist came to power with the fall of Saigon.

7.2.8 The Fall of Saigon and its Effect on the Chinese Business Community

After the fall of Saigon in April 1975, the Chinese were hit especially hard by the new socialist government and their publicized goal to transform the southern economy from capitalism to socialism since they were mostly involved in private businesses (Amer, 1991: 26). Beginning in 1975, the Provisional Revolutionary Government (PRG) issued a set of guidelines for their economic reforms. In September they announced a currency reform in the South. The old currency had to be exchanged and a certain amount of new money had to be put into state controlled accounts. In Da Nang, the people were given two days to change their money while in Ho Chin Minh city, the population of three and a half million were only given three days to change their money (Woodside, 1979: 394). While the intention of the government was to break the economic power of the wealthy, many of the common people were affected as well.

All enterprises were also required to register their stock, vehicles and machinery with the authorities (Stern, 1987b: 123). In the place of private enterprises,

consumers' co-operatives were established in Ho Chi Minh City. In the long run, these co-operatives were supposed to take over business from the private traders. However, for the government it was a constant battle to prevent the business-men from hoarding commodities and to get rid of speculative actions in the South (Amer, 1991: 28). The drive to eliminate the "Comprador Bourgeoisie" was implemented in September 1975. Typically the compradors were found in the large trading houses and banks and acted as intermediaries between the foreign interests and the native population. It was often through these Chinese compradors that the imported goods and materials from Europe were distributed into the hinterland and the native produce was exported (Marsot, 1993: 155). In the Vietnamese Communist Party's (VCP) jargon, *comprador bouregoisie* was usually a euphemism for the *Hoa* business magnates who held enormous power in the fields of industry, trade, communications and transport, banking, rice import and export and fertilizers (Stern, 1987b: 118).

The immediate impact on the Chinese community was that the businessmen with the largest assets had their property seized. At the middle level, there was the policy of gaining control through the registration of the machinery, vehicles and spare parts and the stocks of businessmen. Since many of the ethnic Chinese, especially those in Ho Chi Minh were businessmen, a large number of them were affected by the new socialist policies (Amer, 1991: 35). Although the VCP repeatedly claimed that their campaign was aimed at businessmen and their business practices and not a war against the Chinese minority, the categories of economic activities found in violation of state regulations were usually those in which the Chinese had influence or interest (Stern, 1985: 521). Although some ethnic Chinese businessmen and community leaders remained in Vietnam because they believed they could still do business with the new government, many fled Vietnam in the first wave of refugees during April to May 1975 (Stern, 1987b: 111).

To a certain extent, some campaigns by the communist government implicitly targeted the Chinese because of their anti-socialist economic activities which frustrated attempts to impose socialism on the South after 1975. For the first few years of socialist rule, the crackdown on "capitalist practices" was more to do with class and economic role rather than the ethnicity of the Chinese. However, with the worsening Sino-Vietnam ties, the Vietnamese government launched campaigns which were directed at the Chinese who were viewed as possible subversive elements.

From 1977 to 1978, it was the ethnicity and nationality issue which came to the forefront. This was because the main economic measures had already been put into place to transform the South into a socialist economy. Also the diplomatic relations between the two states had deteriorated so badly that Hanoi was less concerned about its explicit discrimination of the Hoa. In March 1978, Hanoi launched a new campaign aimed at the Hoa. It announced the nationalization of all private enterprise above the family level. The move affected the entire commercial and manufacturing sector, even though the primary target was the overseas Chinese community in the South (Duiker, 1986: 74).Vietnam removed from its leadership all ethnic Chinese, those who were sympathetic to China and even members of border area ethnic minorities. From 1978 to 1979, many Chinese were relocated to New Economic

Zones, usually in the sensitive border provinces along the sensitive Cambodian border and were faced with discrimination in employment (Stern, 1987b: 112).

In May, currency reforms were announced and a revalued dong was introduced. The old currency as well as any foreign currencies in circulation had to be given over to the authorities. In the urban areas, residents were allowed to change an amount equivalent to US$100 into the new dong per couple and US$25 for each child. The maximum allowed per family was US$250. In rural areas, the maximum allowed was US$150. As a result of the sweeping changes, many wealthy people as well as middle class families lost their money holdings (Amer, 1991: 55). The consequence of the economic policies was skyrocketing prices, and inflation which devastated what remained of the market stability after the Chinese businesses were destroyed. The country also suffered from machinery shortages and lack of managerial expertise among the cadres (Stern, 1985: 524). The *Hoa* in the north were also not spared. The state removed the ethnic Chinese from leadership positions in industrial establishments, schools and party functionaries. Social isolation increased and Chinese residents, even those who had lived a long time in Hanoi and Haiphong were subjected to searches and property confiscations (Stern, 1987b: 142).

7.2.9 Deteriorating Relations Between China and Vietnam

The treatment of the Hoa in Vietnam must be understood in the context of bilateral ties between Vietnam and China because these dramatically affected the Hoa in Vietnam in the late 1970s. Relations between China and Vietnam began to sour soon after the end of the Vietnam War. There were multiple reasons for this: the dispute over border territory as well as off-shore islands, the invasion of Cambodia, Vietnam's growing alliance with the Soviet Union, and the Vietnamese treatment of the overseas Chinese community. In the mid 1970s, the issue of ownership over the Spratly Islands and the Paracel islands in the South China Sea (or what Vietnam calls the East Sea) became a point of contention between Vietnam and China. The DRV initially took no action when the Chinese seized the Paracel islands in January 1974. However shortly after the Vietnam War in 1975, the Vietnamese People's Army seized six islands in the Spratlys that had been under South Vietnamese administration and issued a map labeling all the islands as Vietnamese territory. In 1977, the Vietnamese newspaper, People's Army published a map marking both the Spratlys and the Paracels as Vietnamese territory. This enraged the Chinese although no official talks were held over the border issue.

Another cause of the tension between China and Vietnam was the growing alliance between Vietnam and the Soviet Union which was viewed with displeasure in Beijing. In 1975, during his visit to Beijing, Vietnamese leader Le Duan was asked to condemn Soviet hegemonism. When Vietnam refused to do so, China withdrew further aid to Vietnam. Vietnam's reliance on the Soviet Union was further deepened as Russia then stepped in with financial assistance. In June 1978, as Vietnam successive food shortages and desperately needed food assistance

from Moscow, it joined the Soviet-led Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (COMECON) under pressure from Moscow. Moscow's intention of drawing closer to Vietnam politically, economically and militarily stemmed from its dual policy to weaken Sino-American friendship which was developing after Beijing and the US normalized ties in 1978 and also to frustrate China's ability to increase its influence in Southeast Asia. With the normalization of ties between the US and China in place, the Soviet Union pressured Vietnam for a formal military alliance against China and on 3 November 1978, the two countries signed a treaty of friendship and mutual assistance (SarDesai, 1988: 181–183).

Besides the territorial claims and the alignment of Vietnam with the Soviet Union against China, China was also angered by Vietnam's deliberate discrimination against the overseas Chinese population of more than one million. The persecution was supposed to have involved imposing Vietnamese citizenship on them during the census of 1976, forbidding them to work in certain occupations in 1977 because they were potential foreign subversives and forcibly expelling almost 200,000 of them back to China or elsewhere in 1978 (Woodside, 1979: 382).

The pressure applied by the Vietnamese government on the Hoa had resulted in a refugee crisis. In the spring of 1978, thousands of Chinese from North Vietnam crossed the land border into China with complaints of harassment because of their ethnic origins. Some fled because they were jobless or were forced to accept Vietnamese citizenship (Duiker, 1986: 74). According to Stern (1987a: 103) the mass migration was largely due to rumors of an upcoming war between Vietnam and the PRC. This would put the *Hoa* in a difficult position because they could be perceived as traitors or spies and according to the rumors would be at the receiving end of anti-Chinese acts across Vietnam. According to the Chinese reports, more than 50,000 people had crossed over by mid May. This number escalated to 70,000 by the end of May. In May 1978, China went public in its criticism of Vietnamese expulsion of ethnic Chinese, marking a period of open criticism between the two countries which lasted until China invaded Vietnam in 1979.

By early June, the number of ethnic Chinese returning to China was over 100,000 and in mid July the figure was in excess of 160,000 people (Amer, 1991: 46–47). This exodus had a serious impact on the economy of border provinces in north Vietnam. For example, in the province of Quang Ninh there were about 160,000 ethnic Chinese out of a population of 720,000 before the exodus. The mass departure of almost the entire community effectively disrupted the economy in the province (Amer, 1991: 49). The ethnic Chinese issue caused a severe strain in the relations between China and Vietnam, especially since it took place at a time when Beijing was already angered by Vietnam's plot to overthrow the Pol Pot regime.

In December 1978, Vietnam invaded Cambodia and pushed the Khmer Rouge to the Thai frontier. Firstly the border between Vietnam and Cambodia were contested as Cambodia claimed most of South Vietnam as its rightful territory. Border raids became more severe in 1978 and the official reason for launching the invasion of Cambodia was to defend Vietnam's territory. Another justification for the war was the genocide of ethnic Vietnamese by the Khmer Rouge government. It was convenient to emphasize the crimes of the Khmer Rouge regime since they legitimized

both the invasion and the new government installed by the Vietnam in Phnom Penh (Womack, 2006: 195). Another motive for the invasion of Cambodia was the concern over Cambodia's alliance with China. Chinese aid to Cambodia had increased while aid given to Vietnam had been on a decline. From Vietnam's point of view, Cambodia was an increasing threat because of the anti-Vietnamese Pol Pot regime which was rapidly developing an alliance to China and was receiving maximum Chinese military assistance (Womack, 2006: 194).

7.2.10 Chinese Invasion of Vietnam

The tension between China and Vietnam regarding the ethnic Chinese situation grew worse, exacerbated by differences over the Beijing-supported Kampuchean regime and Vietnam's alliance with the Soviet Union culminated in the invasion of Vietnam by China in February 1979. China claimed to have captured three of the provincial cities in the north as well as 17 other cities and counties before destructively withdrawing on March 5. The Chinese suffered heavy casualties even though Vietnam had mainly deployed their regional troops and local militia (Amer, 1991: 94).

The official reason for China's invasion was to restore order and stability to the land border, however its purpose was to teach Vietnam a "lesson". China wanted to punish Vietnam for its aggressive attitude and to demonstrate the limits of China's tolerance (Duiker, 1986: 86). This led to a cold war between Vietnam and China from 1979 until official normalization of ties in November 1991. China believed military pressure would compel Vietnam to control the human flow and also to change its policies against the ethnic Chinese. However, Chang (1982: 55) believes that the Chinese military action fell far below China's expectation. While Beijing did manage to slow down the influx of refugees temporarily, the war created more problems than it solved, especially for the ethnic Chinese. The war in itself was sufficient to warrant retaliation against the ethnic Chinese who were still in Vietnam.

Already, the ethnic Chinese who had remained in the country after the exodus in 1978 were generally looked upon with distrust. These feelings of suspicion grew even stronger after the Chinese invasion in 1979. The ethnic Chinese were constantly put under scrutiny and were regarded as a kind of "fifth column" (Amer, 1991: 102). After the war with China, Hanoi was even more determined to expel all Chinese from Vietnam. The fear and desperation among the Chinese resulted in one of the largest exodus in modern history as many of the fleeing Chinese "boat people" took to sea. In the first quarter of 1979, the monthly average number of boat people arriving in other Southeast Asian states was around 11,000. The figure increased to 28,000 in April and reached 55,000 in June 1979 (Chang, 1982: 56). In the meantime, China was also receiving waves of refugees. Four months after the border war with Vietnam, the monthly influx exceeded 10,000 and by mid-July another 50,000 refugees had reached China, mostly through Hainan Island and the southwestern coast of the Guangdong Province (Chang, 1982: 56).

In spite of the control measures taken by Beijing, at least 10,000 more refugees reached China between July 1979 and July 1980, bringing the total refugee population in China to 260,000. During 1979 alone, as many as 206,594 boat people, mostly from South Vietnam, reached the shores of other Southeast Asian states and were resettled elsewhere. The flow continued into 1980 with another 80,000 added to the boat population, bringing the total number of boat refugees to 400,000 by the end of 1980. This is a conservative estimate since it takes into account only those who reached the shores of other countries. Many more unfortunately perished at sea. Although the boat people have included both Vietnamese and ethnic Chinese, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees estimated that ethnic Chinese accounted for 70% of the boat refugee population (Chang, 1982: 59–60).

7.2.11   Revival and Control of Ethnic Chinese Private Businesses

Through late 1978 and early 1979, as the economy kept spiraling downhill, the communist regime was forced to look at alternatives. The government began to acknowledge that the socialist economy was faltering and it searched for a new way to revive the economy. In 1980, private markets and a distribution system were slowly allowed to emerge. The liberalization allowed the ethnic Chinese who had the ability and the means, an opportunity to start their businesses. This seemed acceptable as long as the overall development was monitored by the state which made sure that the Chinese businessmen did not dominate as many sectors of the economy as before (Amer, 1991: 112–113).

From the late 1980 to early 1982, the government reference to the overseas Chinese was one of a resounding victory of the socialist regime over the long economic stranglehold of the *Hoa*. But the reality in Vietnam was quite different from the propaganda dished out by the state. The overseas Chinese monopoly over the key businesses had been broken but the *Hoa* businessmen continued to operate and in some cases thrive. The activities of the *Hoa* business networks were taking place, in some cases with official acknowledgement if not complicity of certain levels of officialdom in the process. These private enterprises were tolerated simply because the *Hoa*-dominated system of distribution made goods available during an extremely difficult period (Stern, 1985: 531).

Economic policies from 1979 to 1986 fluctuated between continued control and grudging permissiveness. In mid 1985 in a sudden and surprising reversal, the Communist Party's Central Committee proposed a strategy of economic reforms called Doi Moi (which literally means Renovation), aimed at opening the country towards market capitalism.[11] By this time, the Central Committee had realized that its socialist programmes were flawed as the Vietnamese economic recovery was slow while inflation and international debts were mounting. However, the informal sector, which had existed alongside the socialist planned economy, demonstrated the potential for growth in Vietnam's private sector (Freeman, 1996: 194). Doi Moi was supposed to re-establish an economy driven by private investment but still under government supervision. Shortly after the Doi Moi policy was announced, economic

indicators showed a surge in the Vietnamese economy with a dramatic growth in the volume of petty Vietnamese and Hoa entrepreneurs.[12]

7.3 Contemporary Vietnam

What can be surmised in the brief description of the history of the Chinese in Vietnam is that, given its close proximity to China, and because Vietnam was under direct Chinese control for much of its history, there is an ambivalent relationship between the Chinese and Vietnamese. This fluctuating relationship is reflected in the fieldwork and in the interviews with both the Chinese and Vietnamese. State to state relations also affected the daily life and interaction between the Vietnamese Chinese and the local population. When relations between the states are good, the Chinese in Vietnam enjoyed relative peace. However, during the Sino-Vietnamese war of 1979, the Chinese in Vietnam were subjected to discrimination and, for a period in the late 1970s, even forcibly evicted from the country.

In recent years, the issues confronting the Chinese community have been the on-going diplomatic problems between China and Vietnam over their border issues. Most of the public conflict between China and Vietnam in the 1990s concerned conflicting sovereignty claims. Diplomatic relations between the two has seen many ups and downs since ties were normalized in 1991. Territorial claims over the Paracel Islands in the north of the South China Sea and the Spratly Islands in the south continue to add tension between Vietnam and China. There have been occasional naval clashes over the Spratly islands. In 1988 China gun boats sank Vietnamese transport boats supporting a landing party of Vietnamese soldiers. In July 2007, Chinese naval vessels fired on a Vietnamese boat near the Paracel Islands, causing one death and several injuries. Although the Chinese navy has detained Vietnamese fishing vessels for straying into contested waters, the use of force was unusual and seemed to represent an escalation in tension (Asia Times, 20 December 2007).

In 2007, hundreds of Vietnamese youth staged public anti-China protests in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh city over the disputed islands. Demonstrations of this scale in Vietnam are usually rare and in this case, they were significant because this round of protests were seen as having been "approved" by the Vietnamese government. Although the Vietnamese government dismissed the allegation, the territorial dispute between the two countries continues to be a threat to Sino-Vietnamese relations (BBC, 31 December 2007).

7.3.1 Inter-Ethnic Relations, Differentiation and Discrimination

As opposed to the Indonesian and Malaysian cases, the position of the Chinese in respect to ethnic discrimination is more complex. In the earlier instances, the Chinese experienced a high degree of discrimination, at the structural and policy level, as well as in every day life. In the case of Vietnamese, partly due to historical and environmental factors, there has been a degree of acculturation and ethnic

discrimination is less obvious, except for certain periods in Vietnamese history. From the perspective of some of the Vietnamese informants, the view is that the relationship between the Chinese and Vietnamese is one of harmony, and there is no ethnic discrimination.

Some of the Chinese informants do agree, saying that while there is less discrimination, at least at the formal level, ethnic discrimination does exist. For example, they cite differential life chances faced in education: "Yes, there are different treatments. Because we Chinese will mostly study Vietnamese until lower secondary. When it comes to upper secondary (or college), very few of us Chinese get to study there, because we cannot get in." This informant, however, was quick to clarify that it is not so much a case of structural discrimination as it is a case of Chinese being in a disadvantaged position because of their inferior command of the predominantly Vietnamese language, which the native speakers almost always do better in. Though it can be argued that the ability of the Chinese to speak Vietnamese is an indication of a degree of integration, it is also true that language itself becomes a mode of differentiation through the racializing of phonetics and sounds. As one Vietnamese informant noted, "For our current (first) generation, once you hear him speak, you will know instantly he is a Chinese. We will definitely carry with us our local accents."

Thus, despite the literacy of the Chinese in Vietnamese language, it becomes a salient boundary maintaining discourse, a "Vietnamese-tongue" prevents an ethnic Chinese from speaking "proper Vietnamese": "When we speak Vietnamese, they know we are Chinese because we do not speak it well."[13] Speech intonation constitutes a means of differentiating an "insider" or native speaker, as opposed to outsiders.

> If he speaks Chinese, I can tell from how he speaks he is a Chinese and not a Vietnamese. This is because a Vietnamese who learns Chinese- you can tell from his tone and pronunciation. It's not quite similar. For the Chinese, once they speak, it's very precise.

> When I speak Vietnamese, the pronunciation is not very accurate. So most Vietnamese can tell that I am not Vietnamese.

There is also subtle discrimination at many levels. For example, one informant noted, "From the viewpoint of dealing with the government, the Chinese are disadvantaged. For example, if you have a piece of land (whose deed) is being contested, then they will definitely help the Vietnamese rather than the Chinese. We Chinese will be disadvantaged." Another noted, "in business, when we Chinese have disputes with the Vietnamese which have to be settled by the courts. You will lose out a little. All the judges are Vietnamese. Chinese do not get to be government officials." This lack of political and bureaucratic representation of the Chinese in Vietnam has led to a degree of discrimination against the Chinese in Vietnam. However, compared to the Indonesian case, where the discrimination is structural, more obvious and systematic, the level of discrimination is much lower, and more subtle.

At the everyday life level, most Chinese claim that they do not really experience much discrimination. Some do mention instances of discrimination. However, even for those who claim not to be discriminated, the interaction and relationship between

the Chinese and the Vietnamese do not occur at an intimate level. As one informant noted, "When I meet them (Vietnamese), I only say a few words. I am not very close to them. So I feel that although we are all Vietnamese citizens who all speak Vietnamese, communication is still not very good." The picture painted is thus one where there may be intermingling, and a lack of overt discrimination, the two groups nonetheless maintain clearly defined boundaries.

These boundaries are clearly evident in the nature of the ethnic stereotypes held by both the Chinese and the Vietnamese. For example, while one informant describes her relationship with the Vietnamese as "normal," she added, "But my mother does not trust the Vietnamese. She thinks they are all cunning." Another said, "Some of them get along fine with the Vietnamese, but many distrust the Vietnamese too. They do not approve of their children marrying Vietnamese." A third informant noted, "Mostly, I think they do not like us Chinese. I am not sure why. In the past, it was much worse. Their treatment of Chinese is not o.k. That's how it is. As a result, I also do not like the Vietnamese. I have told my boss before – I don't like the Vietnamese."

As noted earlier, the Chinese in Vietnam have, in various periods, been subjected to serious discrimination and persecution by the Vietnamese, including wholesale deportation. As a result of this political discrimination, ethnic Chinese in Vietnam have come to perceive themselves as second class citizens and developed a sense of solidarity and an acute consciousness or their political and social marginalization. This sense of marginalization has instilled a barrier to prevent them from fully integrating into Vietnamese society. Many ethnic Chinese in Vietnam, as opposed to other Chinese found in Southeast Asia, often reminiscent about China and tend to identify closely with China. China, its socio-economic and political development, more than the Chinese in other Southeast Asian countries, becomes a compass which helps the Chinese develop a sense of solidarity. As some informants indicated:

> What can be changed is his lifestyle. But he cannot change his language and patriotism. He must keep everlasting love of his country and his Chinese ancestors. I myself cannot stand if someone makes bad comments on China. Patriotism must not be changed. For example, I do not like football, but I still try to watch any match of China and wish them to win. In order to remain as a Chinese, one has to be proud of China, think about China and look toward China.

> My ancestors are Chinese, and I'm affected by Chinese culture. Chinese civilization has been built for thousands of years; and it has strongly affected other civilizations as well as the mindset of every individuals. Therefore, I always have a sense of belonging to China no matter how long I live in foreign country.

7.3.2 Chinese Identity and Ethnicity

In the interviews with the informants, both primordialist and situationist understandings of Chinese ethnicity were evident. Most interviewees, however, more readily identify with the primordialist understanding of ethnic identity, sometimes

to the point of completely rejecting the situationist views. For example, most of the Chinese in Vietnam consider themselves Chinese because their ancestors were from China, and from the seemingly obvious fact that they were born into a Chinese family. As some informants noted,

> Bloodline. Because my ancestors are Chinese. I am Chinese.

> Of course. My father and mother are Chinese. How can I not be Chinese? It is not possible.

> So you are Chinese. No matter how many generations you go down, you are still Chinese. It is in the blood.

Unlike other Southeast Asian countries, where the physical appearance of the Chinese is quite distinct from the indigenes, and as such, becomes a marker of ethnic identity, in Vietnam, because the physical appearance between the Chinese and Vietnamese is not very different, phenotype is not often used as a marker. Rather, the focus is on bloodline and descent. For most of the Chinese informants, one's identity as Chinese is unchangeable. As one informant noted, "My ancestors come from China. It is something that cannot be changed." Another said, "One cannot become a non-Chinese. Of course not! He is born Chinese right? His father and mother are Chinese right? So how can he become non-Chinese? It is not possible."

In addition to this first level of identification, bloodline, for the Chinese in Vietnam, language is also used as a marker of identity. Most informants insist that Chinese should be able to speak Chinese. As one informant noted, "If we are Chinese and if we cannot speak Chinese, then how can you count yourself as Chinese?" However, like the Chinese in Thailand, the discourse of language is more complex. While insisting that a Chinese must be able to speak Chinese, most Chinese in Vietnam, particularly the younger Chinese, are effectively bilingual. The main language used by the Chinese, in day to day interactions, especially when dealing with ethnic Vietnamese, is conducted in Vietnamese. However, in interactions with other Chinese, the lingua franca used is often Chinese, especially the Cantonese dialect, which the majority of Chinese are from. In the fieldwork in Ho Chih Minh city for example, when one is in District 5, the equivalent of a Chinatown, Cantonese is the preferred medium of communications. However, I noticed that the shopkeepers switch quickly to the Vietnamese language when approached by Vietnamese customers. The Chinese in Vietnam are able to switch language codes easily, and readily. At home, however, when interacting with family members, most of the informants reported that Cantonese is used as the medium of communication.

> At home, I speak to my father and mother in Cantonese. When I am outside, because there are lots of Chinese around, I will speak to them in Chinese. And because there are lots of Vietnamese, I speak to them in Vietnamese. But at home, I speak to my family in Chinese, although occasionally, I speak to them in Vietnamese. After all, we are living in Vietnam.

Prolong contact with the host society has resulted in a bifurcation of language use. In different social situations, different language codes are appropriated. As one informant noted, "the ordinary people cannot tell that I am Chinese. They will think that I am Vietnamese because my spoken Vietnamese is very fluent. Sometimes I vary my tones of Vietnamese, such that the person I am speaking to will know

that although I am speaking Vietnamese, in fact, I am actually a Chinese." This situationist handling of ethnic identity reveals a strategy of survival in living in a foreign country, but at the same time, maintaining the importance of ethnic identity for the Chinese in Vietnam.

7.3.3　Primacy and Politics of Marriage

If factors such as language and appearance served as rather consistent markers of ethnic identity for the Chinese in Vietnam, the unique aspect of marriage occupies, in contrast, both a stabilizing and a destabilizing position. In its stabilizing role, marriage within the Chinese community is seen as one of the sites of expression for Chinese ethnic identity. Although some of the informants note that there has been some cross cultural influences on wedding ceremony traditions among the Chinese and Vietnamese, marriage is still considered by many of the informants as one of the ways in which Chinese traditions and culture is upheld. Among the Chinese in Vietnam, there is a high degree of resistance to intermarriage with the Vietnamese, as some of these verbatim illustrates,

> Chinese here don't like their women to marry the Vietnamese. If the husband is a Chinese and the wife is Vietnamese, it is ok. However, if the wife is Chinese and the husband is Vietnamese, then they don't quite like it.

> The Chinese in Vietnam do not like their women to marry the Vietnamese.

> It is our custom. I will only accept marriage with our own countrymen. This is to keep our bloodline and preserve our culture.

Thus, intermarriage between the Vietnamese and Chinese produces an opposite effect to ethnicity. When asked about the possibility of a Chinese losing his Chineseness in Vietnam, many of the informants identifies intermarriage with the Vietnamese as one of the main ways in which such a process can take place. Intermixing with other cultures, and more specifically, and often taken literally, by the Chinese informants, intermarriage with Vietnamese is regarded as a dilution of the blood of being Chinese. Also, they argue that intermarriage will, in the long run, lead to a decline in Chinese practices and culture being passed down to subsequent generations.

The resistance to intermarriage points to an important feature of Chinese identity and ethnicity in Vietnam: that of purity. Intermarriage is viewed as "mixing," therefore contributing to a form of contamination to the purity of one's Chineseness. One informant illustrates this with an example of an everyday slang that is used to refer to the offspring of intermarried couples: "Hai Dao Dam." This is in contrast to the common nickname of the Chinese, "Ba Dao." By calling a child "Hai Dao Dam," one is making an intentional reference to his or her incompleteness or ethnic contamination. Another informant, an older Chinese remarked when asked about intermarriage, "Personally, I will not approve of that. I want my children to marry a Teochew." What this statement suggests is that not only is purity of Chinese

blood important and desired there are even sub-ethnic prejudices. In this case, even being Chinese is insufficient, one's dialect group, marrying a Teochew rather than a Cantonese, becomes the defining boundary for ethnic purity and completeness.

The central role marriage plays in determining the outcomes of ethnic group identification and self identity in Vietnam cannot be overstated. In fact, intermarriage may, in addition to phenotypical and genotypical characteristics, act as the boundary that separates the Chinese from the Vietnamese, the "pure" Chinese from the "mixed." When intermarriage assumes such significance for the Chinese in Vietnam, a certain politics of marriage has also emerged. Intermarriage between Vietnamese males and Chinese women is more frowned upon by the Chinese than intermarriages between Chinese males and Vietnamese women. This is due to the predominantly patriarchal nature of Chinese culture, but also due to the belief that Chinese children receive more of their attributes, both the bones and the blood, from the father rather than the mother. Within a patriarchal system, marriage brings about fundamental changes in a women's identity. From the moment she is married, a girl moves from the subordination to her father to one of subordination to her husband and his parents. Upon marriage, a woman's predominant identity is that of daughter-in –law or "property of her husband's family" (Ebry, 1993: 46–49).

> It is laid down by our ancestors that if a Vietnamese woman got married with a Chinese man, she will belong to her Chinese husband's family so consequently she becomes Chinese. Conversely, if a Chinese woman got married with a Vietnamese man, she will become Vietnamese.

Thus, Chinese women marrying a Vietnamese man equates to the appropriation of Chinese women by Vietnamese men, the erosion of the ethnic identity of the women, and more importantly, of the offsprings they bear: an "ethnic Chinese woman married to a Vietnamese man must follow her husband in speaking the Vietnamese language, eating Vietnamese food and as a result will become more or less a Vietnamese." Another informant recounted her experience:

> I follow Vietnamese custom. Before, we (her husband and she) lived with my mother-in-law, so I ate what she cooked. Moreover, I did not have enough facilities to follow Chinese celebrating custom although I wanted to. And because I live with my Vietnamese family, so it's difficult for me to celebrate some festivals important in China but the Vietnamese do not celebrate such as Chinese National Day.

Thus, marriages between a Vietnamese male and a Chinese woman may be seen as the relinquishing and uprooting of one's Chinese roots to follow a Vietnamese way of life, whereas the marriage between a Chinese male and a Vietnamese woman, though still frowned upon and not encouraged, will have fewer consequences as the Chinese male would, supposedly, continue to uphold Chinese values in his family.[14] To avoid the loss of sons and grandchildren through the intermarriage of ethnic Chinese men and Vietnamese women, the latter are appropriated into the groom's family to be acquainted with Chinese culture, in other words, to become Chinese: "I will teach her mother along the way, because when I speak to (my daughter), her mother will listen to. She'll ask me what I'm saying, and I'll explain it to her, so bit by bit she will slowly understand the language. More often than not, she'll know

how to speak, but not how to write." Thus, most ethnic Chinese in Vietnam "only accept marriage with their countrymen in order to keep their bloodline and preserve the culture."

> In Saigon, Chinese only get married to Chinese. The Chinese cannot forget their origin. Descendants must be able to speak and understand Chinese. Everyone must respect their origin.

These two key markers of identity, language and intermarriage, cannot be separated. One interviewee, a young woman, gave this example, "Let's say I am a Chinese. If I get married to a Vietnamese, then I must follow him. I will follow him in speaking the Vietnamese language. I would not be able to speak Chinese anymore. Then I will be more or less a Vietnamese already." Thus, for the Chinese, the ability to speak the Chinese language is very much tied to the occurrence of intermarriage. When one marries outside of the Chinese community, there is a higher likelihood of not retaining the use of the Chinese language, and this in turn contributes to one losing his Chineseness.

However, a trend that came out in the interviews is that, especially among the older generation, they lament and worry about the increasing loss of use of the Chinese language. There is an increasing trend, among the younger generation, of not being able to speak Chinese. This is a result of the overwhelming use of Vietnamese in the daily discourse between the Chinese and Vietnamese, the increasing appeal of the English language, and also, the increasing lack of parental coercion for their children to learn Chinese. These factors contribute to the observed phenomenon affecting "third generation" Chinese, where there may be more intermixing between the Chinese and the Vietnamese. As one young informant noted, "We live in Vietnam, you see, so we cannot avoid having to speak in Vietnamese." However, this does not suggest that their sense of being Chinese is absent. As I noted earlier, almost all the Chinese I interviewed cling on to the view that they are Chinese. This may be due to the fact that descent and bloodline remain the first level of ethnic identification.

7.3.4 Generational Divide

The previous point, however, does demonstrate there is a certain divide in the Chinese community in Vietnam by age or generation. There is a general sentiment that the older generation Chinese guard their Chinese identity more closely, and tend to insist on the continued adherence to certain Chinese customs, traditions and practices. For example, one elderly Chinese man I interviewed remarked that he only feel comfortable in District 5 (Ho Chih Minh, where there are many Chinese living there), and that his shoes will feel awkward treading the pathways outside of District 5.

For many of the older generation, while they have adapted to living and surviving in Vietnam, including, for many, the use of Vietnamese language, they still profess as strong affinity to the Chinese community and resist assimilation into Vietnamese

culture. They tend to also distinguish themselves from the younger generation, whom they perceive to be becoming less and less Chinese as a result of intermixing with the Vietnamese. In the interviews with younger Chinese, they seem to be more open-minded and more accepting of Vietnamese culture. For example, some informants say that most of their friends are Vietnamese and that they have no problems mixing and interacting with them. However, and this point is important, most of these younger Chinese still claim, when asked what is their ethnicity, that they are Chinese, or at most, will differentiate between ethnicity and nationality, calling themselves, Vietnamese Chinese.

7.3.5 Cultural Similarities and Cultural Differences

A unique aspect of the Chinese in Vietnam is that, unlike other Southeast Asian countries, where the Chinese, in cultural terms, is distinctively different from the indigenous population, such as in Malaysia and Indonesia, the long years of subjugation of Vietnam by the Chinese state and the centuries of subsequent cultural borrowing by the Vietnamese has meant that there is a high degree of acculturation. In fact, many informants suggest that being Vietnamese is not cultural erosion, as Vietnamese culture is a derivative of Chinese culture. As the excepts by informants exemplify;

> They (Chinese and Vietnamese culture) are 90% similar. The Vietnamese have their roots in China- that was 2000 years ago. And China had control of Vietnam for about 1000 years. So you can see a lot of similarities- in marriage ceremonies and how the New Year is celebrated. Even language is not that far apart. The Vietnamese Buddhist priests still have to learn Chinese characters when he recites verses.

> Vietnam has a history of 1000 years under Chinese domination, so 90% of Vietnamese culture is affected by Chinese culture.

> Similarity is confirmed. First, both countries are Asian countries. Vietnamese culture was affected by Chinese culture for a long period of time in the past. There used to be time where intimate communication and exchange between two countries was established. So, basically they are similar. The ways we celebrate festivals have both similarities and differences. Even among Chinese there are differences.

Thus, within the Vietnamese context, there is no real sense of loss of Chinese culture, as much as admittance that Chinese culture has been adapted. This is an especially important discourse which appreciates Chineseness within the framework of ethnicity. More often, ethnic Chinese Vietnamese have readily admitted that "even in China, each province has its own system of traditional festivals and its own ways to celebrate festivals." Ethnic Chinese Vietnamese admit to the adaptability of Chinese people and Chinese culture in whatever context they find themselves, which does not equate to erosion:

> Actually Vietnamese and Chinese traditions are not much different. Vietnamese traditions almost follow Chinese tradition. Only the meaning is different. For example, Mid-Autumn Festival is a reunion occasion for Chinese people whereas to Vietnamese, this festival is for children. There are also some differences. For example, the way Vietnamese people

celebrate Lunar New Year is quite different from that of the Chinese. Or the Chinese eat dumplings in Lantern festival (the fifteenth day of the first Lunar months) but the Vietnamese eat on the third of March in Lunar calendar. Vietnamese also celebrate Double Five Festival as a killing insects' festival and eat fruits and fermented sticky rice while Chinese people eat square glutinous rice.

Intra-ethnic differentiations within the ethnic Chinese community in Vietnam, in terms of dialect groups, religious beliefs, clans associations, in addition to broader processes of cultural assimilation between ethnic Chinese and Vietnamese as a result of state's policies, have rendered the unambiguous conceptualization of what it means to be an ethnic Chinese especially difficult. Intra-ethnic differentiations among ethnic Chinese Vietnamese become a powerful dividing force among the latter in the absence of Chinese associations that are viewed as indispensable in preserving traditional Chinese customs and habits as well as consciousness. The absence of Chinese associations is directly related to the difficulty of appointing a "prestigious Chinese leader to assemble the ethnic Chinese, hold activities and have a great sense of responsibility, which is simultaneously trusted by the local government." Within the Vietnamese context, where ethnic Chinese are politically discriminated by the local government, Chinese associations and charismatic ethnic Chinese leaders are commonly perceived as a threat by the Vietnamese government. Two informants assert the following excerpts respectively:

> Yes, they (Chinese in Vietnam) are different. In Ho Chi Minh city, for example, the Chinese people often cooperate with each other in trade activities, but in Hanoi, they live and work separately. The Chinese Association in the south of Vietnam and Da Nang city are still active, while there is no Chinese association in Hanoi. Therefore the Chinese in Hanoi are different from the Chinese in Da Nang or in the south of Vietnam.

> The Chinese in Vietnam have a certain selfish attitude. Everyone is ultimately taking care of and protecting their own lives. . .if you're talking about unity, there is definitely unity among the Chinese in the clan associations. The 'Ngee Ann' association – it's for us Teochew people. The others are there too, but they usually establish relationships according to their family names. So if my family name is Chen, then I will be in touch with the others with that same family name.

Increased trends towards individualization among ethnic Chinese in Vietnam, manifested through a lack of participation in Chinese associations, absence of Chinese associations where there are any, a higher degree of enculturation into Vietnamese culture among some ethnic Chinese, restricting the celebration of important festivals within the boundaries of immediate family and even the abandoning of certain festivals commonly celebrated by ethnic Chinese, is commonly quoted as a factor that dilutes ethnic Chinese Vietnamese consciousness. Consequently, attempts into ironing out intra-ethnic differences among ethnic Chinese Vietnamese and an emphasis on a homogenous ethnic Chinese identity are subsequently emphasized. Various strategies are employed to this end. First, a discourse transpires where Chinese culture, specifically celebration of Chinese New Year, Mid Autumn Festival and Hungry Ghost Festival, praying to ancestors and Chinese gods, believed to be central occasions whose function is to disseminate to current generations their ancestral history, their lineage, the pride of their clans as well as processes of cultural continuities, is non-optional to individuals with Chinese

ancestry. Such a measure is meant to inculcate a sense of community, a sense of pride and consciousness of Chinese culture among the ethnic Chinese, whilst at the same time recognizing that there are intra-ethnic differentiations. Informants express these sentiments clearly in the excerpts below:

> Like the 15th day of the 8th month (Mid Autumn Festival) and the Hungry Ghost Festival in the 7th month- we definitely need to pray then. Whenever there is a day that needs prayers, we will pray at home. For all the Chinese, everyone has to do this, everyone had to pray to the gods, and everyone has to celebrate the New Year. As for Christmas, we Chinese don't celebrate it, because the religion is different.

> Nowadays there is no real Chinese person in Hanoi. Any association or organization of Chinese people established to support each other was abolished. Even the birds and the ants have their own flock to help each other, why don't we? Living without flock, without ethnic organization, how can we teach our children to preserve our cultural values and norms? The spiritual life of Chinese people in the north is very miserable because their root is being cut off.

7.3.6 Occupational Differentiation

Like the Chinese elsewhere in Southeast Asia, in Vietnam, there is a perception of occupational differentiation between the Chinese and the Vietnamese. As one informant noted:

> The Chinese here favor doing business and trade, but the Vietnamese here don't quite like to do business.[15] They are very skilled at running businesses. I personally think the Chinese all over the world are skilled at running businesses. In Vietnam, they also know how to relate to the Vietnamese.

It can be argued that the socio-economic dominance of the ethnic Chinese vis a vis the Vietnamese have historically set them apart. This very economic dominance has been ethno-racialized as a result of entrepreneurship being in the blood of the Chinese. Fundamentally, the discourse of ethno-racialization perpetuated by both the Chinese and Vietnamese is evident of a "racially structured social reality" (Back and Solomos, 2000).

Within the Vietnamese context, this racially structured reality, rooted in the larger society, shapes and dictates situations of race and ethnic contact, engenders beliefs about the nature of race, and dictates social relations between the Chinese and Vietnamese. Thus, entrepreneurship becomes, and is believed to be, an inherent attribute of being Chinese, and explains for their socio-economic dominance. As an ethnic enterprise, ethnic Chinese manipulate the discourse of ethno-racialization as capital to carve themselves a niche in the Vietnamese market. As one Chinese informant said:

> Some of the Vietnamese really respect the Chinese. For us Chinese, when we do business, we are first and foremost, trustworthy...some Vietnamese will be very happy to find out they are doing business with the Chinese...They will mostly respect us Chinese. They will be very happy to do business with the Chinese- they are trustworthy, when they do things, everything's ok. The Chinese are mostly bosses. Very few of them are employees. The Chinese usually own their businesses, so usually don't work for others. The Vietnamese, on the other hand, often work for others.[16]

7.3.7 *Community Identification and Associations*

The question returns to whether the Chinese in Vietnam may be regarded as a distinct community, and how they maintain these ties. The field work suggest that while there may be differentiation among the Chinese in terms of generations, dialect groups and social class, on the whole, there seems to be very strong sentiments in Vietnam for the Chinese to remain as a distinct group, differentiated from the larger Vietnamese population, and remains a rather closely knitted group. The common language, mainly of the Cantonese dialect variety, religion and celebration of Chinese festivals, and Chinese language schools (more popularly known as tuition centers outside of the Vietnamese school syllabus) act as markers which holds the community together. In fact, in the interviews, there is a sense of the taken for granted reality of being Chinese in Vietnam. Also, although the Chinese do interact, because of economic necessity, with the Vietnamese, many informants suggest that close social interactions are mostly conducted with other Chinese. As one informant puts it, "The Chinese will just spend their time and engage in recreational activities with other Chinese. Some of them do like and interact with the Vietnamese – the true Vietnamese – but others choose to sever their ties with the Vietnamese."

There does not appear to be very many institutional means by which such a community is held together. Most informants, when asked about clan associations, refer to them as a thing of the past, and none of my informants claim to have any active participation in their activities. There is a degree of shared geographical and residential location. For example, in Ho Chih Minh, where the bulk of the Chinese in Vietnam are found, they tend to reside mainly in District 5, 6, 10 and 11. Many of the Vietnamese informants in fact regard these as Chinese areas.[17] The absence of Chinese associations and community organizations may be related to the difficulty in appointing Chinese leaders who are willing to organize the Chinese as well as the perception that such associations are commonly perceived to be a threat by the Vietnamese government. However, there seems to be some differences between northern Vietnam and southern Vietnam. As some informants noted:

> Yes, they (Chinese in Vietnam are different). In Ho Chi Minh City, for example, the Chinese people often cooperate with each other in trade activities, but in Hanoi, they live and work separately. The Chinese Association in the south of Vietnam and Da Nang city are still active, while there is no Chinese association in Hanoi. Therefore the Chinese in Hanoi are different from the Chinese in Da Nang or in the south of Vietnam.

> The Chinese in Vietnam have a certain selfish attitude. Everyone is ultimately taking care of and protecting their own lives. . .if you're talking about unity, there is definitely unity among the Chinese in the clan associations. The 'Ngee Ann' association – it's for us Teochew people. The others are there too, but they usually establish relationships according to their family names. So if my family name is Chen, then I will be in touch with the others with that same family name.

The lack of associations and community organizations in the North which looks after the interest of the Chinese can be attributed to exodus of Chinese in the 1970s which probably destroyed most of the social infrastructure and associations that were part of it. In the South, where the Chinese population is larger, and where the

Chinese are more commercially oriented, there is greater community participation and the communal celebrations of festivals, such a Chinese New Year, Mid-Autumn Festivals and the Hungry Ghost festivals.

One comment that is often heard, and which may offer a clue as to how the Chinese community hold together, is that the Chinese like to maintain their pre-existing ties of doing things together, particularly in business. As I noted earlier, there is a degree of occupational bifurcation in Vietnam, with the Vietnamese holding the political and bureaucratic power, and the Chinese being more inclined to do business. Thus, maintaining the idea of a community benefit the Chinese businessmen as it provides a network of linkages and contacts for economic survival and success. I have written elsewhere that in business, the Chinese value personalism, especially guanxi relations, and interpersonal trust or xinyong. Personalism suggests an inclination to incorporate personal relationships in decision making. Guanxi refers to interpersonal relationships, which, for the Chinese, is seen as crucial for facilitating smooth business transactions. Good guanxi fosters the development of reliable xinyong, or trust. Chinese businessmen believe that interpersonal trust minimize fraud to ensure certainty and order. It is often used as a compensatory mechanism for the lack of confidence in the legal system. Because of guanxi and xinyong, the Chinese businessmen in Southeast Asia tend to have a distrust of outsiders, preferring to do business with other Chinese, on the assumption that co-ethnics are more trustworthy (Tong and Yong, 1998: 75–96).

Thus, it can be suggested that for the Chinese in Vietnam, particularly the businessmen, maintaining Chinese identity and community is a useful mechanism for ensuring economic success. Ethnicity thus becomes a form of social capital. As one informant noted:

> There have been a lot of changes. It is because of the rapid development of China continent in the recent 50 years. These changes have been so great, especially in the recent 30 years. China has obtained greater and greater prestige in the world, contributed more and more material products to the world. China has larger and larger market share from all over the world. Thus, the pride of China and self-identity of Chinese ethnics is getting greater.

Ethnic networking with its informal linkages based on blood, family, kinsmen, and ethnic ties of a shared historical heritage are activated and put to use in one's economic and entrepreneurial activities. Ethnicity lubricates business dealings, articulated as the advantage of having a culture or language shared with other Chinese. It can be regarded a form of economic ethnicity, where being Chinese becomes a cultural asset, bonding the Chinese together as a group, regardless of whether the basis for the common culture or heritage is real or imagined.

Notes

1. In fact, the cultural "gap" between the Chinese and the Vietnamese is significantly narrower than between the Chinese minority and any other majority in Southeast Asia, except perhaps for the Chinese Thais. In the Vietnamese context, cultural similarity has always

been over-ridden when there is a visible ethnic differentiation on the part of the unassimilated Chinese, with dress and language being the two most salient markers (Bruce Lockhart, personal communication).

2. The term alluded to the Chinese tradition of burning incense in memory of the Ming.

3. Cochinchina was more ethnically and culturally diverse and as such, the Chinese did not stand out as much. The large group of Chinese who settled down at the edge of the Mekong Delta in the seventeenth century formed the core of the future Chinese community in Vietnam.

4. Interestingly, the French colonialists allocated the role of middlemen trader and laborers to the Vietnamese in Laos and Cambodia, even though there were Chinese immigrants in those colonies as well.

5. Of all the Chinese, the Cantonese and Teochiu were the largest communities (Le, 2004: 68).

6. The Communists of Vietnam took advantage of the political turmoil created by the Japanese defeat to establish the first national Communist government during what was termed the August Revolution of 1945.

7. In general the Vietnamese were good traders and entrepreneurial business people and much of the on-going trade activities (both legitimate and illicit) were being carried out by the Vietnamese. Although the Chinese came to dominate certain sectors of the Vietnamese economy, the gap between the Chinese and the Vietnamese was significantly less in Vietnam than in other parts of Southeast Asia (such as Indonesia and Thailand) where the Chinese were economically dominant and a native entrepreneurial class often had to rely on partnerships with the Chinese.

8. The numbers are an approximation as the definition of ethnic Chinese varied. Moreover, the large amount of illegal immigration into Vietnam made it difficult to get accurate figures.

9. Prior to 1975, whereas the government in North Vietnam sought to negotiate the citizenship status of its Chinese residents, the South Vietnamese government settled the issue by fiat in 1955. At that time the PRC made no moves beyond verbal ones to protect the Chinese community in Saigon from being "compelled" to become Vietnamese citizens while Taiwan lodged a series of diplomatic protests (Ungar, 1987: 606).

10. This was in line with the strict anti-Communist stand rather than any real anti-Chinese sentiment.

11. Fforde and de Vylder (1996: 15) argue that the reforms were inspired by the rapid economic development experienced in the newly industrialized countries in Southeast Asia. The Vietnam reforms, when viewed as state policy, were more economic rather than political in character. Although there was some political liberalization, Vietnam retained its authoritarian one party system of governance.

12. This has given the impression that the expansion of the petty trader sector in Vietnam in the late 1980s was a consequence of a central government directive. However, far from being created by Doi Moi, Freeman (1996: 179–180) argues that the petty enterprise sector had simply emerged from the shadow economy which had operated outside the control of the communist government since the decade after the Vietnam War.

13. Even so, I found that this kind of attitude does vary slightly according to the age of the informants; younger Chinese do speak better Vietnamese, due to their education in Vietnamese schools, compared to the older Chinese.

14. While there were many Chinese informants who mentioned the loss of Chinese values, in the interviews with informants, the major concern tends to be the loss of Chinese language.

15. This is, in a sense, an ethnocentric assertion and reveals the mentality of the Chinese in Vietnam. There are Vietnamese who are excellent business people and Vietnam's economic dynamism, especially over the past ten years, is widely recognized.

16. These are, of course, stereotypical perceptions by the Chinese. There are a vast number of successful Vietnamese businessmen. However, it is interesting that such stereotypes, once conceived, continue to persist, despite evidence to the contrary.

17. The area is known as Cho Lon, which is essentially a Chinatown.

Chapter 8
Hybridization and Chineseness in the Philippines

8.1 Introduction

This chapter examines the Chinese in contemporary Philippines. In some ways, the Chinese here exhibit characteristics that are different when compared to the Chinese in other Southeast Asian countries. For example, many of the Chinese have converted to Christianity, although, as the chapter will show, their religion is hybridized, an intermixing of traditional Chinese Taoist and Buddhist practices with Christian beliefs and rituals. Also, unlike many Southeast Asian countries, the Chinese did not have to contend with overt ethnic discrimination by the state. As such, in the Philippines, a large number of Chinese schools and community organizations continue to perform important functions for the Chinese community.

Most studies have argued that the Chinese in the Philippines have integrated into Filipino society (see, for example, Alip, 1974; Suryadinata, 2007; Tan, 1992). Based on extensive fieldwork in the Philippines, this chapter argues that the Chinese in the Philippines remain essentially Chinese, drawing on primordial characteristics, such as bloodline and descent, for ethnic identification. There is also a strong desire to maintain the Chinese language and education as well as emphasizing the importance of traditional cultural values. There are generational differences. Older Chinese tend to be more secure in their ethnic identification, and emphasize cultural attributes such as language, Chinese education and culture. Younger Chinese, especially those educated in Filipino schools, seem to be more open to social integration, with the ability to speak Filipino, and interact more often with the locals. However, even among the younger generation, the sense of being Chinese remains. Cultural contact between the Chinese and Filipino has resulted in, for both sides, a degree of intermixing of cultures, especially evident in the religious sphere. The Chinese in the Philippines, the chapter will show, are racially primordial but culturally hybridized. Before analyzing the fieldwork data, a review of the history of the Chinese will provide the context for understanding Chinese identity and ethnicity in the Philippines.

8.2 Chinese During the Spanish Era

Prior to the arrival of the Spanish in 1521, the Chinese were already engaged in trade in the Philippines. With the encouragement of the early Spanish government which found trade with the Chinese lucrative, there was an expansion of Chinese economic activity during the Spanish colonial era. Besides trading, the Chinese were the principal artisans and laborers (Purcell, 1965: 508). As the Chinese population increased, the Spanish authorities became apprehensive of their numbers and success in business (Tan, 1972: 22). They also feared that the Chinese population, being several times larger than that of the Spanish might revolt against Spanish rule, possibly with assistance from China. Their strategy to manage the Chinese was three-fold: segregation, expulsion coupled with massacre and conversion (Dobbin, 1996: 23).

8.2.1 Segregation of the Chinese Population

All Chinese were required to reside in a marshy district outside the Manila city walls known as the *parian*. Confining the Chinese to the ghetto facilitated the collection of taxes and also had the added advantage of isolating the Chinese (Tan, 1972: 22). The Chinese were not allowed to travel in the islands and could not remain overnight in the city after the gates were closed on penalty of their lives. The *parian* became the Chinatown of Manila. At night fall, the gates of the *parian* were closed but in the morning, the gates were opened and a lively market trade ensued (Liao, 1964: 23). The only exceptions of this segregation were the Chinese Christians. Those who had been baptized or intermarried with the local Filipinas were allowed to live outside the *parian* in specially established communities in the Binondo and Santa Cruz areas (Ang See, 2004: 146–147).

8.2.2 Massacres and Expulsion

In the 1570s, there were about 150 Chinese in Manila. This number expanded to 10,000 in 1588. By 1603 there were 30,000 Chinese in Manila, but the community was almost wiped out by a massacre of 24,000 Chinese that same year. This was to become the typical response of the Spanish. When the Chinese showed an alarming increase or gave hint of uprising, they were either massacred or expelled from the Philippines (Liao, 1964: 25). After the bloodbath of 1603, the Spanish authorities felt the loss of the Chinese because they relied on them for trade and services which the Filipinos could not provide as efficiently. Soon new Chinese immigrants continued to arrive and by 1639, there were some 30,000 Chinese again. However, in 1639, a Chinese revolt which lasted nearly four months erupted and most of the Chinese population of Luzon was massacred. Some 22,000–24,000 Chinese perished, as against 34 Spaniards and 300 Filipinos (Purcell, 1965: 519).

8.2.3 Conversion, Inter-Marriage and the Chinese Mestizo Population

The expulsions and massacres of the Chinese stemmed from the fear that the Chinese, having their roots in China would be less loyal to the regime than the Christianized natives (Tan, 1985: 51). While they wanted to reduce the political threat posed by the Chinese population, the Spanish realized that economically the Chinese traders had become almost indispensable to their administration (Wickberg, 1964: 67). Thus the Spanish embarked on a policy of which would balance their political security issues with their economic ones. They believed that this could be done by creating a group of Catholic, Hispanicized Chinese merchants and artisans who would be loyal to Spain (Weightman, 1998: 69).

From the onset, the Spanish treated the Christian Chinese differently. In order to induce the Chinese to convert, the Spanish reduced taxes and imposed fewer restrictions on those who accepted the Catholic faith (Wickberg, 1964: 68). The attempts at conversion were complemented by efforts to create a Hispanicized *mestizo* community of Chinese origin (Dobbin, 1996: 25) by encouraging the inter-marrying between the Catholic Chinese and the Catholic Indios (most of whom had become Catholics in the seventeenth century), resulting in Chinese *mestizo* descendents.[1] In 1819, there were about 121,621 Chinese *mestizos* in an *indio* population of 2,395,676. In 1850 the Chinese *mestizo* population increased to about 240,000. The *mestizos* were concentrated in the most economically advanced areas of the Philippines, with over 60% of them residing in the three Central Luzon provinces of Tondo, Bulacan and Pampanga. About 90% of all the *mestizos* lived in Luzon. By the end of the nineteenth century, there were about half a million Chinese *mestizos*, with 46,000 living in Manila (Tan, 1985: 52). By the middle of the nineteenth century, the position of the Chinese *mestizo* in the Philippine society and economy was firmly established.[2]

8.2.4 The Influx of Chinese Immigrants

As mentioned earlier, from 1850, the Chinese population showed a marked increase with an estimated 50,000 Chinese in the whole of the Philippines, including 30,000 in the capital. The large waves of Chinese immigrants was partly due to the difficult living conditions in China. It was also attributed to the opening of trade in the Philippines and Southeast Asia, which brought about greater opportunities for business.[3] The Chinese who came to Philippines were almost exclusively from the southeastern provinces of China. Thus the community consisted of Chinese who were mainly from two dialect groups, in contrast to the other parts of Southeast Asia where an assortment of dialects were spoken – Hokkien, Teochew, Cantonese, Hakka, Hailam and other smaller groups (Tan, 1972: 31). While the regional diversity of the immigrants elsewhere in Southeast Asia facilitated the use of the national language (Mandarin) as the common language, in the Philippines, Hokkien persisted as the language of the Chinese community (Weightman, 1998: 74).

The new immigrants were mostly men whose main intention was not to stay but to save enough money and return to China as early as possible. Between 1875 and 1898, 204,707 Chinese left Amoy for Manila. During this same period, some 168,166 left Manila for Amoy (Tan, 1972: 34–35). Thus many of the Chinese who arrived in Philippines were viewed as sojourners (usually termed *hua chiao*) rather than immigrants. According to the Spanish census of 1886, there were 93,567 Chinese in the Philippines.[4]

8.2.5 Anti-Chinese Sentiment and the Development of a Minority Consciousness

Before the turn of the nineteenth century, although quantitatively the Chinese made up only a small proportion of the total population, their economic importance continued to be far greater than their numerical strength. With the increasing number and economic strength, there grew an anti-Chinese sentiment in the second half of the nineteenth century, from the Spanish merchants who began losing their commercial supremacy and also from the local Filipino population. In 1866, a campaign for Chinese exclusion was started by Spanish merchants and businessmen, together with a plan to encourage immigration of Spaniards into the Philippines, especially in Mindanao and Palawan (Purcell, 1965: 533). The local Filipinos were also becoming increasingly hostile towards the Chinese. Due to the liberalization of Spanish policy however, the influx of Chinese immigrants spread out into the provinces. They competed so effectively that many Filipinos were driven out of business (Eitzen, 1974: 111).

By the late nineteenth century, the growing Spanish pressure on the Chinese brought about the early stirrings of their national and political awakening as they were becoming conscious of themselves as a Chinese minority group (Tan, 1972: 5). Their grievances and hardships caused by oppressive Spanish policies stimulated unity in the Chinese community and encouraged them to look to the Imperial Chinese government for consular protection. This was prompted by a change in the policy by the Chinese government, which had begun to claim responsibility for the overseas Chinese. Prior to this, the Chinese government had showed little concern for their citizens overseas and the Chinese community was very much on their own in the Philippines. This attitude changed when the remittances of the overseas Chinese and their financial aid to China's early modernizing projects became substantial (Wickberg, 1997: 162). Despite the difficulties they faced during the Spanish occupation period, the Chinese persevered and to a large extent succeeded in their middleman role in trade. However, the domination of trade by the Chinese sometimes aroused resentment against them. The Chinese domination over the Philippine economy peaked during the American occupation with its emphasis on the import-export trade. The merchandising and management ability of the Chinese businessmen gave them a distinct advantage over the Filipinos (Tan, 1972: 350).

8.2.6 The American Era

In 1898, the Americans declared war on Spain and the Philippines was ceded to the United States. When the American military government took over the reigns from the Spanish, they found that the Chinese had already formed the backbone of the trading sector. In order to ensure that the Chinese did not have a total monopoly on trade, exclusion laws which applied to the Chinese in the US were quickly extended to the Philippines. This was continued even after the civil government took over in 1902. Under the Chinese Exclusion Act, Chinese immigration was prohibited, except for merchant and students who were allowed temporary stay.

The exclusion laws kept the rate of growth under control and prevented the great waves of migration which were seen in many of the other Southeast Asian countries such as Malaysia, Thailand and Indonesia. As females were also restricted from entry, the "pure" Chinese community was deprived of the chance for natural growth and the Chinese in Philippines were mainly a community of bachelors who maintained what See (1992: 156) refers to as a "split family". A bachelor would return to China to marry but leave his wife behind in China. Children were born and raised in China but would be brought to Manila as apprentices in their early teens. The sons would then return to China to marry. The cycle would be complete when the aged fathers returned to China to retire or after their death when their bones would be buried in the ancestral plot. This "split family" system kept many Chinese from sinking their roots in the Philippines and kept their attention focused on China (See, 1983: 157).

8.2.7 Socio-Economic and Political Situation of the Chinese

Under the Americans, the Chinese community openly developed their religious and institutional practices which could only have been done covertly during the Spanish era. Chinese religious practices with respect to Buddhism, Taoism and Shenism became more overt and festivals such as Chinese New Year and Ching Ming were celebrated (Weightman, 1998: 72). Such activities strengthened the Chinese ties in the community and turned them inward culturally. The Chinese community began adopting a strategy of communalism and stressing their Chineseness. In 1899, the first Chinese school was also founded (See, 1985: 33). It was also during this period that several community institutions such as the *Kwangtung Hui-Kuan* (Cantonese Association), *Shan-Chu Kung-So* (later known as the Chinese Charitable Association), the *Kuan-Ti Yeh-Hui* (the God of War and Commerce Association) and the Chinese Hospital were established. With the launch of the first Chinese newspaper, the *Hua Pao*, the Chinese community had the opportunity to reinforce group identification.

The Chinese also benefited from the close social and economic links which were developed in their own community. In 1904, the Chinese established the Chinese Commercial Council, which later developed into the Chinese General Chamber of

Commerce. The Chamber was an important organization which helped to strengthen the business as well as the social ties in the Chinese community. Together with the Chinese consul-general and the Philippine branch of the KMT, it was also a means by which the Chinese could express their views and raise their concerns to the Chinese government as well as the Philippine authorities and the general public (Purcell, 1965: 539).

Economically, the Chinese were a significant force in the retail trade and had a large share of the internal commerce of the islands. The Chinese wholesale business covered most of the Philippines. The growing, milling and distribution of rice were also largely financed by Chinese capital, while the retail trade in lumber was largely controlled by the Chinese. The Chinese traders were also quick to seek new opportunities in the less developed villages in Mindanao and throughout the Sulu Archipelago. The Chinese merchants brought in cotton and other goods and took out copra, hemp, *gutta percha* and other native products (Purcell, 1965: 540–541). With their marketing and purchasing networks, the Chinese functioned as middlemen and were able to sell many of the American made goods.

During the American occupation period, the Chinese community made large gains on all fronts and moved towards economic prosperity. Go (1996: 76) claimed that the Chinese entered its golden age in business and commerce during the American colonial regime. This sentiment is shared by Blaker (1970: 81) who noted that by the end of the American regime, the Chinese had become the central economic group in Philippine life. As their wealth increased, so too did the feelings of hostility towards the Chinese. It was manifested in periodic Filipino uprisings and protests, in addition to legislation aimed at curbing the Chinese dominance.[5] By the end of the American era, there was widespread resentment towards the Chinese. They were accused of unethical business practices, charging exorbitant interest rates, monopolizing trade, corrupting officials through bribery and drawing off large amounts of capital from the Philippines by contributing money to China (Eitzen, 1974: 112).

8.2.8 The Chinese During the Japanese Occupation

Prior to the Japanese invasion of the Philippines, the Chinese had experienced a strong sense of community. This was partly due to the national salvation movement among the overseas Chinese when Japan invaded China in 1937. Chinese nationalism increased as the Chinese in the Philippines boycotted Japanese goods and contributed money to China's war chest. The Chinese schools also played their part in raising Chinese national consciousness and Chinese patriotism among the youth. However, the Chinese community was severely affected when the Japanese invaded the Philippines.

The Japanese occupation led to increased harassments, heavier tax burdens and intensified surveillance on the Chinese community. However, by and large the Chinese were allowed to maintain their livelihood and possessions. Blaker

([1970](): 163) attributes this to the pivotal economic position enjoyed by the Chinese. The Japanese were conscious of the need to maximize the economic output of the Philippines with minimum delay and disruption. Thus instead of eliminating the Chinese and their business links, they sought to utilize the economic role performed by the community but modified the internal power structure of the community to maximize their profits.[6] In their place the Japanese established new organizations which seemed similar in form but were in a practical sense designed to facilitate Japanese control.

The three years of Japanese administration in the Philippines left the Chinese community in an authority crisis with the intentional destruction of its pre-war power and leadership structure. Old elites were tainted with their association with the Japanese during the occupation period while the Kuomintang group was plagued by internal fragmentation and was limited in their ability to resolve the power crisis. The radical elements in the community were keen to do away with the older leaders and transform the entire community. Yet, despite the power attained by the radical communist elements, they were ultimately unsuccessful in achieving a dominant position in the Philippines. Blaker ([1970](): 183) attributes this to the lack of co-ordination and discipline. In fact, like the Kuomintang, most of the Communist guerila groups existed as autonomous groups during the war.

8.2.9 Independent Philippines

The 1950s and 1960s was marked by a surge in Philippine nationalism; a period of intense nationalization and which put pressure on the Chinese community as the new nation adopted numerous restrictive policies towards the Chinese population aimed at reducing their economic strength (Suryadinata, [1994](): 72). Chinese businesses were badly affected as there was a desire to boost Filipino business enterprise and drastically reduce the part played by Chinese businesses. This was reflected in the number of provisions in the Constitution and in the legislation enacted from time to time excluding foreigners from retail business (Tan, [1972](): 360). Philippine citizenship became more difficult to attain and legal migration was further curtailed.

The long-standing pleas by the Filipino merchants for protection against the competition from the Chinese traders led to the Government enacting Republic Act No. 1180 in 1954. This was called the Retail Nationalization Act which aimed to eventually eliminate non-Filipinos from the retail business. The Act restricted retail trade to the Filipinos and to 100% Filipino-owned corporations by 1964. This meant that existing foreign-owned companies could continue running their business but would have to close down in ten years if they were not Filipino-owned. As the Chinese were well entrenched in the retail trade, at least 80% of them were affected (Cariño, [1998](): 33).

In 1960, more nationalization bills were passed regarding the trading, milling and warehousing of rice and corn (Cariño, [1998](): 35). The Chinese were banned from owning residential urban land, from engaging in rice milling or the retail trade, and

from all professions except medicine (Weightman, 1998: 76). In 1961, there was a "Filipino First" policy which gave priority in various economic activities to locally born Filipino citizens. Such policies and laws, Castillo (1964: 176) claimed was due to the long-standing pre-dominance of the Chinese in many sectors of the economy. This filled the Filipino population with a sense of apprehension on the possibility that the Chinese would use their economic power to eliminate Filipino competition.

The nationalization of retail trade and the "Filipino First" policy affected the livelihood of almost all Chinese and caused deep insecurities within the Chinese community. It was especially worrisome for the Chinese because the nationalistic policies closely followed the rounding and arrest of more than three hundred "Communist suspects" in December 1952. These incidents forced many of them to take stock of their situation (See, 1989: 69). Some educated professionals left the Philippines, many for North America but the majority stayed behind and tried to adjust to the new situation as they considered the Philippines as their only home (See, 1985: 36). The revolution which broke out in China resulted in the establishment of the new government in 1949. This raised the "bamboo curtain" which separated the overseas Chinese from China.

Deprived of the opportunities and rights afforded by citizenship, the Chinese clung tighter to their community and forged a bond that reinforced the ethnic identity of the Chinese community. In order to safeguard their already precarious business interests, the presidents of all 227 Chinese Chambers of Commerce banded together to form the Federation of the Chinese Chambers of Commerce in 1954. Ang See claims that at that time, the official ties and communication of the Federation "produced a closely knot Chinese community almost without parallel in Southeast Asia" (Ang See, 1985: 35).

8.2.10 Mass Naturalization of the Chinese

The discriminatory actions taken against the Chinese abated with the Marcos administration. In April 1975, as a prelude to establishing diplomatic ties between China and the Philippines, President Marcos promulgated a decree allowing the mass naturalization of the Chinese community. According to government estimates, at that time, there were some 100,000 Chinese who did not have Philippine citizenship (Cariño, 1998: 56).[7] With the decree, President Marcos enabled about 60% of the Chinese residents to acquire citizenship within five years. The mass naturalization exercise stemmed from a desire to maintain good relations with China rather than a conscious attempt to assimilate or integrate the Chinese population. The pressure to grant citizenship had come from China which had revoked dual nationality privileges for the overseas Chinese in the Philippines preferring them to adopt the citizenship of their country of residence (Cariño, 1994: 153).

The mass naturalization provided the conditions which encouraged new generations of Chinese Filipinos to become integrated into Philippine society. It also gave the ethnic Chinese increased opportunities for political expression. As citizens, they

were able to vote and run for political positions in the government. Legal citizenship status also provided a condition conducive to nurturing a Filipino identity as it gave the Chinese a greater sense of rootedness. Younger generations of Chinese born in the Philippines identify themselves as Chinese Filipinos. They are no longer confined to the business and trading sector but are found in a host of professions. They can also participate directly in electoral politics as voters and as party candidates (Cariño, 1994: 154).

When the Philippines normalized diplomatic ties with China, China opened its doors to the overseas Chinese. Many Chinese returned to their villages in China and Chinese associations in Philippines once again began their active support of reconstruction in their home towns. As See (1992: 159) notes, the acquisition of Filipino citizenship did not mean immediate integration of the Chinese. In fact the renewed contact with China added a new nationalistic fervor to the Chinese in the Philippines. However the "reunion" with their homeland was more sentimental than real as many of the Chinese realized that their future was in the Philippines.

Currently, the Chinese population comprises between 1.2 and 1.5% of the total population of over 64 million that is around 750,000–850,000 (Baviera, 1994: 1). The locally born Chinese comprise about 90% of the total ethnic population. There has been a decline in the old Chinese communities in many provincial towns especially those which were affected by civil unrest and economic decline. On the other hand, the Chinese population in Metro Manila has grown. According to Weightman (1998: 68), more than 70% of the remaining Chinese in the Philippines reside in the Greater Manila area. The old Chinatown in Manila has expanded northward while enclaves of Chinese have settled in the more exclusive suburbs of Manila. See (1992: 160) noted that the psychological need for associating with people of the same ethnic group has not completely vanished among the Chinese but it has not been sufficiently strong to limit them to the traditional Chinese districts.

8.3 Primordialism and Identity Construction

Many studies, including recent ones, have argued that the Chinese have basically integrated into Filipino society. For example, Alip (1974) suggests that today there appears hardly any distinction between the social life and ways of the Chinese in the Philippines and the Filipinos, both wear the same kind and style of clothing and dresses and personal adornments. The Chinese, especially those who have lived there long, have learned to speak the language or dialect of the community where they live; and have adopted most Filipino ways. By and large the descendents of Filipino-Chinese marriages have partaken of a more Filipino, rather than Chinese national trait. Hedman and Sidel (2000: 68) observe that many of the "Chinese Filipinos" have Philippine citizenship, speak better Tagalog or Cebuano than Hokkien or Mandarin and otherwise identify themselves more closely to Philippines than with the mainland People's Republic of Chinese, Taiwan or even with the looser "Chinese" diasporic community. Tan (1992) notes that,

notwithstanding the conscious efforts of the elder generation to keep Chinese values and institutions alive, the process towards nativization continues.

Similarly, Ang See (1997: 48), argues that integration of the Chinese has happened in the Philippines, dramatically so among the younger local born generation. This is so among the Chinese in Manila, but even more so among the Chinese in the provinces. Ninety percent of the local Chinese are already native born citizens who have gone to Philippine schools, joined Filipino organizations and learned to speak Tagalog and English as their first language has a tremendous effect on the present ethnic identity. The younger ethnic Chinese have long lost their ability to speak Hokkien (the lingua franca of the Chinese community) is a fact that many Chinese parents lament. Moreover, she contends that the reality of integration can be seen vividly in the everyday lives of the Chinese – in the manner of speaking, outlook, style of dressing, choices of career, religion, value system and attitudes. While the older generation of Chinese immigrant parents still persists in imposing the old Chinese traditions in the Philippines, it is a fast losing battle.

However, the fieldwork data I collected suggest that while there have been some changes to Chinese ethnic identity due to the long years of residence in the Philippines, a more nuanced understanding of Chinese identity and ethnic relations is necessary. The data show that the Chinese in the Philippines have remained essentially Chinese, while, at the same time, it has shifted and been reshaped to deal with the reality of a minority group living in a host society. These aforementioned facts have several implications. Firstly, in order to understand Chineseness in its entirety, one must realize that there is a distinct difference between conceptualizing Chineseness at the level of the self with that of the (ethnic) group and that perceptions of Chineseness within the group between different generations of members may also differ. While members of the early generation of Filipino-Chinese identify closely with the group, those from the later generations[8] are beginning to experience a different form of Chineseness, whereby the perceptive distance between self and group perceptions are widening. These changes in perception will consequently affect their behaviors and attitudes in Filipino society towards other Chinese and Filipinos alike.

Secondly, the formation of Chineseness is also affected by expectations of both members and non-members within that society. In this case, being a Chinese carries with it certain expectations of social behavior and cultural norms within the group, as well as being socially significant to both "native" and Chinese Filipinos. For instance, the rules of *guan xi* may be expected between two Chinese businessmen, as would other cultural values such as filial piety and respect for elders, while a Filipino may not expect the same trust and treatment from the same Chinese businessman. Conversely, a Filipino may expect a Chinese accountant or banker to be extremely frugal with his money matters based on certain racial stereotypes present in Filipino society.

In order to get at what it means to be Chinese, one must take into account not only the internal but also the external factors that act upon the Chinese identity. In fact, the history of the Chinese examined earlier in this chapter clearly shows the impact of societal as well as political forces on the notion of Chineseness. Even so, the key

to determining the core of Chineseness literally lies in the "blood". When asked how one would identify a "Chinese" individual, most of the respondents valued "blood purity" and ancestry above all other factors. Blood ties are seen as the most basic and primordial of values central to determining who or what a Chinese is. Most of the informants still return to primordial characteristics to define their Chineseness:

> It is all in the blood, my bloodline, and in my appearance. I look Chinese.

> It's just a tautological thing. You consider yourself Chinese, or other people perceive you to be Chinese. But objectively, I am Chinese because my father is Chinese. He migrated here from Xiamen (Southern China). I have Chinese blood, therefore I look Chinese.

> I am a Chinese-Filipino. Because I don't want to give them a misconception that I am a typical Filipino. Because my features are different.

> I think it is blood, which is more important. People identify themselves as Chinese, all based on blood and ancestry. Blood is a very pure definition. You don't have to speak Chinese to be Chinese. It is the way you were born that makes you Chinese.

> The first thing I would say is my blood and my appearance. People know I am Chinese just by looking at me, my features. Not so much my skin color, because there are some Filipinos with fair skin color, they are not Chinese. But my eyes are a giveaway that I am Chinese. Blood you cannot see, so only people who knows about my ancestry will know that.

> For me, I have no choice, because my face is Chinese. My appearance. When I go through custom, they would ask me questions, and I reply in Tagalog, and they are shock that I can speak fluently. So they ask me stupid questions like "how come you can speak Tagalog?" Where did you learn it? Just because I look Chinese, so they know I am Chinese.

In using primordial characteristics, identity becomes racialized. As one informant, no doubt ignorant about ethnic relations in America, noted, "Unlike say in the US, if you are an American, or African, or Asian, you are still American. But, in the Philippines, it is different. People look at the race. I will say that I am a Filipino citizen, but I will clarify that I am Chinese-Filipino." Bloodline and lineage are in a sense unchangeable, and becomes a basis of delineating the self from the other in society. Ethnic identity, using these primordial attributes as a first level marker, allows the Chinese in the Philippines to identify, and dissociate themselves, from the indigenous population, the Filipino.[9] I used dissociation, because, and of which I will elaborate in greater detail later, what does come across in the interviews is that many Chinese have very stereotypical, often derogatory, and ethnocentric views of the indigenous population. For most of the informants, this first level of identification, in phenotypical and genotypical terms, are central to the construction of Chineseness. However, once this is satisfied, other markers of Chinese identity are put into play.

8.3.1 Chinese Language and Identity

For the Chinese in the Philippines, in contrast with the Chinese in Singapore and Indonesia, language acquisition, particularly the mother tongue, which in the case of the Chinese in the Philippines is Hokkien, is seen as important. In Singapore,

language is in fact a divisive force among the Chinese, separating the Chinese educated Chinese and English educated Chinese. In Indonesia, because of a long standing ban on the use of Chinese language and Chinese education, the Indonesian Chinese draw on other symbolic markers as the basis of identity and community construction.

In the Philippines, however, most of the informants mention the importance of language in defining a person as Chinese. As evident from some of the verbatim of the informants:

> I speak Hokkien at home. We speak Tagalog sometimes, but most of the time, I speak in Hokkien. I speak to my parents in Chinese, Mandarin, and to my kids in Hokkien all the time.

> I think it is blood. Even though they can't speak Chinese, they are still Chinese because of blood. Of course, if you have blood, and you can speak (Chinese), it is better. That is why we have to maintain this cultural ability to speak Chinese. Blood plus speaking language should be maintained.

> Because language is unique to a particular culture. And the Chinese language is unique.

> There was one time I was speaking to my cousin in Tagalog, because he was not very good in Mandarin or Hokkien although he can speak it. One of my aunties said, "eh le pian huan na ah?" meaning "hey have you become indigenous?" So, you can see the dynamics within the family towards language use, it's almost like if you do not speak the correct language, you are seen as less Chinese, or you have become huan na.[10]

Cultural maintenance hinges on one's ability to speak Chinese. While many Chinese learn and speak Tagalog for pragmatic reasons, to communicate with the locals, the ability to speak Chinese is an important function (latent or otherwise) of Chinese identity.

> Yes, I speak min nan hua (Hokkien) to my parents and other relatives. We speak Hokkien in daily exchanges. Sometimes we speak Tagalog. My relatives can also speak English and Tagalog, so sometimes we switch back and forth. But usually, we speak Hokkien, especially to the elders. They love it when they hear a fellow Chinese speaking their home town language.

> One of the things that the Chinese still maintain strongly is language. Most Chinese Filipinos can speak Chinese, especially to their relatives and elders, because, according to some of my friends, they see speaking Chinese as a sign of one's own culture. So if they do not speak the language, you are seen by them as kind of un-Chinese.

For some informants, the inability to speak Chinese reflects, for them, a sign that there have been assimilated into Filipino society. Other respondents also shared this belief by asserting that "you must speak Chinese to be called a Chinese." Not speaking Chinese indicates that one (1) has not attended Chinese school, or (2) has parents who do not speak Chinese. For some informants, however, while the ability to speak Chinese is important, it is not considered the central marker of Chineseness.

> Yes, Chinese language is integral to Chinese identity. There are some Chinese Filipino who can't speak Chinese anymore. But they have the bloodline, so they are still Chinese. Because of the blood.

While this last comment is true, and there are many informants who voice the same sentiments, it should be noted that language, for the Chinese in the Philippines,

is really more discursive. Especially among the older generations, Chinese language is viewed as a core marker of ethnicity. However, among the younger Chinese, particularly those who attended Filipino schools, language is viewed as important but not a critical marker. As one of these informants say, "I cannot speak the language, but that does not make me any less Chinese. I am Chinese because my blood is Chinese, and I look Chinese." Another noted, "some cannot speak Chinese because they did not go to Chinese schools, it is not their fault. But based on blood, they are still Chinese." Based on the above comments, it can be suggested that the primary marker rests with bloodline and descent, essentializing ethnicity in racialized terms. The ascription to primordial characteristics has the same function as used by the Chinese in Singapore, that is, it allows for group differentiation and boundary maintenance. As group differentiation, it permits the Chinese in the Philippines, living in a multi-ethnic society, to separate themselves, because of their appearance, from the indigenous people, that is we are fair skinned, unlike the dark-skinned Filipinos. This contrastive effect, being in close contact with other ethnic groups in everyday life, constructs ethnic boundaries, controlling the entry into, and exit out of the group.

The issue of language, unlike bloodline, is more variable. It is viewed as extremely important for some Chinese, but not for others, and thus open to a degree of negotiation in identity construction. Here, various factors, including the degree of conservatism in the family, and generational differences, act on how different individuals define their own identity. At the same time, I think this stress on language capabilities also reflects stereotypical and essentialized assumptions about Chinese identity that have been renegotiated as invented traditions by the older generations for the purpose of boundary maintenance (generational differences in the construction of identity will be discussed later in this chapter). For example, one informant mentioned that his father had forced him to rote learn Chinese phrases and record them in a book when he was young. However, he mentioned that he can only speak Chinese at a conversational level now due to lack of practice, and stress that he will never force his children to learn Chinese as, he feels, cultural maintenance transcends language capabilities. Yet, for him, it is important to note that he does not deny his own Chineseness, only that language was not critical for his own identity construction. Also, among the Chinese who do not speak the language, many feel a sense of loss, as well as the mindset that is "unbecoming" of a Chinese not to be able to speak the language: "I think I feel embarrassed to mention that I am Chinese, because when you say you are Chinese, people tend to talk to you in that language. And if you can't, then it is a bit pai sei (embarrassing)."

For the older generation, the ability to speak Chinese is seen as a crucial marker of ethnicity. But most Chinese, particularly the younger generation, have developed multilingual abilities. They are able to converse and communicate in Chinese, Tagalog, and English. This is especially true for those who attended Filipino schools. For those who attended Chinese language schools, such as Chiang Kai Shek or Xavier, Chinese language ability is seen as being more important. However, in the Philippines, like the Chinese in Malaysia, a private/public discourse of language has developed. With family members and kin, and with other Chinese, it is more prevalent, even preferred, if they communicate in Chinese. However, in

public, when dealing with the Filipinos, it is common for the Chinese to converse in Tagalog.

Even though many Chinese may be fluent in Tagalog, in the interviews with Filipino informants, language ability is often used as a nuanced means of differentiating the Chinese. As one Filipino informant noted, "yes, the Chinese can speak Tagalog. But they have a strange accent. In fact, my friends and I often joke about the Chinese speaking Tagalog. They even make movies out of this, like Manapo 5. There is another movie in which they perform this dance, 'ochor ochor,' which means eight in Tagalog. It was making fun of the Chinese people."

In recent years there has been increased interest of learning Chinese partly due to the economic rise of China. Even among younger Chinese-Filipinos, there is greater desire to learn about Chinese culture and language. As I will argue in Chapter 9, this has also to do with the pragmatic consideration of leveraging on the economic networks of the Chinese to tap on business opportunities in a rapidly modernizing and economically powerful China.

8.3.2 Chinese Education

With the high degree of importance placed on the role of language, education becomes an extremely vital tool in the propagation and continuance of the Chinese culture via language. Chineseness is primary transmitted via two main routes: (1) through ones' parents or the family, and (2) formal education in Chinese schools located throughout the Philippines. Like their counterparts in Malaysia, and due to historical and environmental reasons, not so for Singapore and Indonesia, the Chinese in the Philippines places great emphasis on Chinese education, and a preference and desire to send their children to Chinese schools. For most of the informants, the view is that without attending Chinese schools, it is virtually impossible for one to be culturally Chinese, since Chinese language and Chinese culture are transmitted through the schools.

To understand the importance that the Chinese place on a Chinese education, it is vital to look at the history of the evolution and development of Chinese schools in the Philippines. Before the first Chinese school was established in the Philippines, traditional tutorial classes were carried out under the auspices of family and trade associations. The main priority of such an education was to equip the Chinese with book keeping and commercial skills, and not to propagate Chinese culture (See, 1985: 32). Increasingly, however, the Chinese were concerned that their stay in Philippines would lead to a dilution of their cultural heritage and cohesiveness of the Chinese community. The desire to preserve their culture led them to establish a school for the Chinese as they realized that besides the family, such an institution would be the most effective way of imparting the Chinese cultural values to the younger generation (Tan, 1972: 160). Weightman, (1998: 83) contends that the main function of the Chinese schools was not to teach the Chinese national language, but to keep the Chinese, especially the *mestizos* ethnically Chinese.

The Chinese community started their own school in 1899. In 1912, the Chinese Commercial School was established in Iloilo, while the Chung Hua School was started in Cebu. By the mid 1920s, there were six Chinese schools in Manila with an enrolment of more than 2000 Chinese students. In 1935, statistics indicated that there were 7214 Chinese students enrolled in 58 Chinese schools (Tan, 1972: 157). The popularity of Chinese schools also coincided with the 1911 revolutionary campaign in China which influenced many of the overseas Chinese communities in Southeast Asia. The proclamation of the People's Republic of China in 1912, gave rise to a surge of nationalistic pride among the Philippine Chinese and a desire to cultivate a "national consciousness" among the young Chinese (Ang See, 1985: 33). One key aspect of the Chinese school system was its endeavor to revive the traditional values of the Chinese community. The schools stressed Chinese culture, history, customs, language and outlook (Tan, 1972: 165).

The proliferation of Chinese schools and newspapers not only reflected the impact of the nationalist phenomena, but also helped spread the substance of Chinese culture across the community. Numerous Chinese schools set up during the American era imparted Chinese values among the younger generation of Philippine Chinese and the goal of such a Chinese education was said to have been to make them good Philippine residents and good Chinese citizens (Wong, 1999: 9–10). When the Philippines achieved its independence in 1946, the Philippine nationalist fervor put a great deal of pressure on the Chinese community. The Chinese schools which at that time had some 50,000 students were regarded by some nationalists as irreconcilable in Filipino society. Some Filipino congressmen wanted them closed because they supposedly retarded the assimilation of the Chinese. However, closing the Chinese schools lacked solid support among the Filipinos in general. Moreover any legislation to close Chinese schools would affect the entire education system because such laws would have to apply to schools run by Americans, Spaniards and other foreigners (Purcell, 1965: 563).

At their peak of their existence, there were 161 Chinese schools with a total of 67,800 students. In 1973 however, President Marcos issued a decree which prohibited the ownership and operation of alien schools which were to be phased out within 4 years. All schools would subscribe to a "national" education syllabus which was used as a tool to assimilate the Chinese. Since 1976, the schools in the Philippines have been "Filipinized" with the medium of instruction being the Philippine National language (based on Tagalog). Chinese was allowed to be taught but the time allocated for it was reduced from 18 to 10 periods a week. Schools however, had to be administered by Philippine citizens (Suryadinata, 1994: 73). However, the decree turned out to be less drastic than originally envisioned. With the mass naturalization granted to the Chinese community in 1974, the schools managed to meet the requirements of Filipino ownership, control and administration (See, 1985: 37–38).

In the fieldwork, it was found that most continue to place a high value on a Chinese education. Many see it as a means to instill and perpetuate Chinese culture in their children. Many informants indicate that Chinese schools still had an important role in the Chinese community as they nurture social, cultural and possibly

economic ties. The early associations among Chinese youth can be maintained and may prove useful for future business dealings. There is still a preference by many of the informants to send their children to Chinese schools. For example,

> Many Chinese parents want a more traditional kind of education. More Chinese. They see Filipino schools as more westernized. They are afraid that if they send their children to Filipino schools, they will lose their culture. Others sent their children to Xavier, where all the students are ethnically Chinese.

> My father sent me to Chinese school because he wants the children to learn the Chinese language. He feels that if we don't learn the language, we lose out. My parents often say, "first generation you are still Chinese. Second generation, less Chinese. And third generation, no longer Chinese". So they insist on sending all the children to Chinese schools. To learn the language and Chinese culture.

> The obvious reason is to maintain Chinese culture, and not be filipinized. I think my parents want a more conservative type of behavior from me and my siblings, more Chinese.

There is a strong link between learning the Chinese language and perpetuating Chinese culture and one's Chineseness in terms of group identification. Many respondents who attended Chinese schools highlighted their importance for educating the young in Chinese language and culture because they made the children "adaptable" in terms of a natural "tendency to perpetuate the culture for their survival", and thus this strong desire to perpetuate the culture "should be permeated". Most of the older (40–60 year olds), second generation respondents attended and were consequently strong advocates for Chinese schools. These respondents also practiced Chinese customs and spoke one or more Chinese languages. They also closely affiliated themselves with the Chinese group, while respondents who had never attended Chinese schools, mostly those of the later generations and who were considerably younger between the ages of 20–28, appeared less concerned with the issues of being traditionally Chinese even though they claimed that they were Chinese through ancestral lineage.

Both parents and schools are key players in this transmission of culture, and to neglect such a task was to risk the loss of the Chinese identity, as encapsulated in the following quote:

> We raised [our children] so that they have to speak Chinese to us on a daily basis . . . at first they would rebel against it, because they are asking why must we learn and speak Chinese when my classmates don't even speak it? So I tell them it's because you are Chinese, so you must speak. Then they say "no we are not Chinese, we are Americans". So it starts with the parents. They must say we have a deliberate effort to want our children to learn Chinese. Otherwise, there is no way they will learn.

This respondent was alarmed at this "loss of culture" for most of her grandchildren cannot speak Chinese nor follow Chinese customs, mostly due to the exposure to external, namely "western" or "American" influences of larger Filipino society. Apart from a Chinese education, many of the early generation Chinese also engage in a process of boundary maintenance and stereotype reinforcement in order to stem this loss of culture. This defines the distinct differences between the unique "Chineseness" of the Chinese community, and the "common" Filipino *massa*.

8.3.3 *Chinese Values and Cultural Content*

Chinese schools perform both pragmatic and symbolic functions. In practical terms, a Chinese education will ensure that a child knows the language, as well as facilitating networks with other Chinese. However, more than a pragmatic consideration, Chinese education has great symbolic value, seen as preserving Chinese cultural traditions. Traditions and practices are seen as essential in shaping Chinese identity, markers that differentiate Chinese culture from indigenous society. Thus, in the interviews, many informants mention the importance of culture as part of their ethnic identity.

> I would say traditions and values. Because that is what culture is all about. That is your heritage, and that is what gets passed down. I have friends who cannot speak Chinese, but they still practice traditions like Chinese new year, ancestor worship. Some actually practice without knowing the meaning of those things they practice. But it does not matter, because out of respect that they do these things for the ancestors and the Chinese race.

> It is important for parents to pass these values to their children. If not, your children will be culturally less Chinese. But racially, you are still Chinese, although perhaps culturally, you may be less than other traditional Chinese.

For many informants, when asked what these cultural values are, they mention things like respect for elders, being hardworking and frugal, honoring your words, and filial piety. These traditions and values are learnt and must be taught to "remind oneself that they are Chinese". In fact, one respondent argued that "there's no point saying that the blood is Chinese if one does not want to be recognized as a Chinese and if he doesn't want to perpetuate the Chinese culture". For many of the informants, these values differentiate the Chinese from the Filipino, who, as noted earlier, are viewed by many Chinese as laid back. Self identity is always seen in opposition to the other.

Chinese in the Philippines do celebrate a number of Chinese festivals. According to the informants, these celebrations are important for a variety of reasons. One, it strengthens the family ties. At another level, they provide a source of symbolic identity, a demonstration of the existence of a Chinese community in the Philippines.

> Yes, every year, we celebrate Chinese New Year. Many Chinese shops will close. Compared to Singapore, it is on a smaller scale, because it is not a public holiday. Still, we manage to find time for the entire extended family to get together. We have our own quiet big celebration amongst family members.

However, not all informants share the view on the importance of culture for identity formation. Some feel that one can be a Chinese, even if they do not practice the rituals or follow traditions.

> I do not practice all the Chinese customs and rituals. I know about the tea ceremony, but I do not practice it. I don't go to temple because I am not Buddhist. Maybe for the very very Chinese. I am more westernized. Thus, whether being Chinese is due to practices of these rituals which I hardly do, or whether being able to speak Chinese is Chinese, I think it depends.

The point I am making with regards to Chinese language, Chinese education and Chinese values is that these supposed attributes of Chinese identity is more negotiable, and not central for Chinese identity for all the Chinese in the Philippines. For some, these are seen as critical. For others, they may be important, but not necessary for ethnic identification. Even so, it is true, compared to Indonesia or Malaysia, there are more Chinese in the Philippines who place a high premium on these markers of identity. One reason may be that, compared to other countries in Southeast Asia, the Chinese in contemporary Philippines face a lesser degree of official discrimination. In such a situation, it is easier to promulgate what the Chinese consider to be important cultural values. However, it is also true that years of living in the Philippines have resulted in quite significant differentiation among the Chinese. At one level, as I will show later, there is a generation gap. Thus, other than the general agreement that Chinese ethnicity is based on blood and descent, one can argue that there are multiple Chinese identities in the Philippines.

8.3.4 Heterogeneous Chineseness

There is a tendency in previous studies to view the Chinese as a homogenous group, acting and reacting to the dominant Filipino as another homogenous group. Clearly, the Filipino, given the vast number of ethnic groups and even greater language differentiation, cannot be viewed as homogenous. Analytically, it is also important to deconstruct Chineseness. The Chinese in the Philippines, at one level, can be differentiated between the mestizo and the Chinese. Although the Chinese mestizos are, in a sense, Chinese (descendents of mixed Chinese-Filipino marriages), in the Philippines, there is a clear distinction between the two groups. Some Chinese mestizos identify and regard themselves as Chinese. But, the majority tended to dissociate themselves from the larger Chinese community:

> There are lots of mestizos, from mixed marriages. So Rizal was of Chinese blood, but these mestizos looked down on the Chinese, so they would rather not consider themselves as Chinese. Like Cory Aquino's grandfather was Chinese. But she never considered herself to be Chinese, until she became president, and for political reasons, then she proclaimed her Chinese roots.

> The Cojuankos are mestizos, although they look completely Chinese. There was once in high school when I met a Chinese mestizo. He was ranting and raving about us Chinese taking away their business. When I replied that he also has Chinese blood, he insisted that mestizos are different from the Chinese.

The majority of the Chinese are known as Tsinoy. This refers to the ethnic Chinese community in the Philippines who are already citizens or those whose roots are in the country. In recent years, there is a new wave of migrants from China into the Philippines. Among the Chinese, they are referred to as *xinqiao*, or new migrants, as compared to the *jiuqiao*, or old migrants.[11] The majority of studies on the Chinese in the Philippines have focused on the Chinese in Manila. While the difference between the Chinese in Manila and the outlying areas is not as marked as in Indonesia, the data suggest that there are still regional variations. As the majority

of the Chinese reside in Manila, their greater number results in a stronger sense of community and the maintenance of Chinese identity.

The same is not true for the Chinese on the other islands. For example, in areas such as Visayas, there are far fewer Chinese schools, and many of the Chinese would attend Filipino schools. Some informants mentioned that the Chinese in outer areas, such as on the island of Mindanao, or Cebu and Davao, are more integrated into Filipino society. In this sense, Manila Chinese is not representative of all Chinese in the Philippines. Amyot (1973) found that Chinese-Filipino relationships are much smoother and friendlier in the provinces than in Manila. Outside of the larger centers, there is relatively little of the emotional antagonism against the Chinese that the big city has bred. Being fewer, the Chinese are much less conspicuous and their economic power is less obvious, hence less offensive to sensitive nationalistic minds. Living in isolation from their fellow countrymen, they find themselves relating socially with Filipinos much more, not finding within their own group the kind of self sufficiency which characterizes larger communities.[12]

Finally, as suggested earlier, the data suggest that Chineseness in the Philippines operate at two levels. At one level of identification, in racial terms, it is primordial, based on blood. At another level, culturally, being Chinese is culturally multiple and hybrid. Like elsewhere in Southeast Asia, but more prevalent in Philippines, there is a notion of hyphenated identity. Most of the Chinese in the Philippines, particularly the younger generation, claim that they are both Chinese and Filipino; Chinese in terms of ethnic identity, and Filipino as nationality. The Chinese, although they call themselves Filipino, are quick to make a distinction between Filipino as nationality and Filipino as ethnic identity. As one informant said, "Chinese are Chinese, and Chinese are not Filipino, because Filipino are natives. The Chinese are different."

8.3.5 Generational Gap and Differentiation

The data suggest that there are generational differences in the conceptualization of Chineseness. The older Chinese are more secure in their self identity, and place greater emphasis on cultural markers such as language and education. As one older informant, a 69 year old Chinese noted,

> I believe the Chinese race is very unique, because there is a tendency to perpetuate their culture for survival. I believe Chinese schools are very important. Many young Chinese Filipinos are less interested in Chinese culture. That, for the older generation like me is very sad to see. It is very important for the younger generation to maintain their cultural heritage, especially since they are not living in China. What I mean is that there are people of different cultures around us, so we are exposed to different values, beliefs, and mindsets. And if parents do not instill our young certain important values, like respect for elders, hard work and saving money, then for sure, they will, over time, be absorbed into the ways of others in society.

Older informants also make a clear distinction between the Chinese and the Filipino, and hold more ethnic stereotypes of the indigenous population. In the interviews with younger Chinese, I observe a more open attitude towards the Filipinos. As one young, educated informant noted, "The older generations, they are more

ethnocentric. The younger generation, they are more integrated. In terms of mixing around, they have more Filipino friends. Among the younger Chinese, especially those not educated in Chinese schools, there is a greater unfamiliarity with traditional Chinese practices. Also, with greater exposure to Filipino culture and socializing with Filipinos, the cultural distinctions between Chineseness and locals become blurred, and ethnic identity is not as clear cut." Another said, "Chinese of my generation are more open to change, more embracing of other cultures, and less discriminatory of difference. Even intermarriage is now a possibility." While this may be true, it should be emphasized that for these informants, many of whom are third or fourth generation Chinese, they are almost unanimous in their view that they are Chinese in terms of bloodline. Thus, racially very Chinese, culturally less so, but essentially Chinese nonetheless. Of course, the sociological question is whether cultural content is critical to ethnic identity. It could be argued, in the case of the Chinese in the Philippines, the racialization of ethnicity allows for the diminished importance of cultural content. Once a Chinese, always a Chinese, with or without the cultural content.

Ethnicity is both fixed and fluid. Racialization fixes identity, making it unchangeable and non-negotiable. However, culture is not static, and inexorably adaptable, especially for a minority group seeking to survive in a foreign culture. Cultures reflect the needs and demands, the proclivities and pleas of a generation; they are not preordained. Cultures shape human behavior but are nonetheless incessantly modified by social actors; identities are moments, temporary identifications that resist categorization and hence are never entirely unyielding to external influences (Gupta and Ferguson, 1997). Chinese identity has increasingly albeit selectively exemplified this change.

According to See (1985: 37) the deculturation process is due to the deterioration of the Chinese education system. While the younger generations of Chinese-Filipinos can speak some Chinese, their first language learned is usually Filipino or the local dialect. The declining proficiency in the Hokkien dialect is due to the fact that parents do not use the dialect with the children as much, shifting the responsibility of teaching the language to the Chinese schools. However, since the teaching medium is Mandarin, there is little opportunity for the younger generation to use Hokkien. Moreover those who graduate from Chinese schools go on to local colleges or universities. These are western-oriented educational institutes in which the youth acquire more knowledge of western thoughts than of Filipino values (Ang See, 1985: 37).

In general, younger Chinese speak better Filipino than Chinese. Even if they converse in Chinese, many of them use twisted grammar or speak with a Filipino accent. Words borrowed from Filipino are often used in Chinese conversation (Ang See, 1983: 162). However, it is not simply a one way process. With many years of the two cultures co-existing together, there has been a degree of hybridization. For example, Arsenio found that three and a half percent of the most commonly used Tagalog words are of Chinese origin (quoted in Hunt *et al*, 1963: 132). Hunt et al. (1963: 132) attributes this to the business orientation of the Chinese. Since most of the Chinese were in business, they had to learn how to serve a predominantly

Filipino clientele to become successful. To do this, it was necessary to learn the local languages which have in turn have been infiltrated by words of Chinese origin to express concepts not adequately expressed in the indigenous tongue. I found that while it is true that among the younger Chinese, they tend to perform less of the cultural behaviors associated with Chinese culture, such as the celebration of Chinese festivals such as Chinese New Year, and are also more conversant in Tagalog, this is not to say that they do not consider themselves to be Chinese. Most prefer to call themselves Chinese-Filipino, rather than simply Chinese.

It can be suggested that the difference between the older and younger generations may portent a decline in Chinese ethnic identity in the future, with younger Chinese experiencing cultural erosion. But my point is that it is not an either/or phenomena, assimilated or not assimilated. Rather, there may be an emergent identity among younger Chinese, a different Chineseness from that of their parents or grandparents, but a form of Chineseness nonetheless.

8.3.6 Occupational Differentiation and Complementary Relationships

In the Philippines, there exists an ethnic stereotype that the Chinese are meant for different occupations as compared to the Filipino. Among the Chinese, it is not only "normal" but expected that Chinese people should venture into business. When informants were asked whether there were any specific occupations that the Chinese venture into, all of them replied, "business." In fact, according to one informant, ethnic Chinese males who do not venture into business are seen as incapable of "surviving" in society. For example, he mentioned that ethnic Chinese males, who become religious leaders (e.g. pastors or priests), teachers, etc, tend to be looked down by other Chinese.

In the interviews with the older generation Chinese, they view going into business as the easiest and quickest way of upward mobility. Many also mention that they go into business to avoid the ethnic discrimination they will face if they enter a profession or join the public sector. Even among the younger generation, there is a desire to go into business. Most of them mentioned that they would take over the family business after graduation from university. One informant said that he will apply for a job in the private sector because his family does not own a business. However, he hopes to go into some kind of business one day. Thus, whether there is pressure to conform to ethnic stereotypes or not, most ethnic Chinese in the Philippines tend to perpetuate and realize the belief that an ethnic Chinese is one who engages in business activities.

> Business among the Chinese is based on guanxi. If I know you and I know him, I will introduce you to this person, and that is how business is done. Just from interpersonal connections. This is especially so as the Chinese is a minority in the Philippines. In the Philippines, they have no choice but to rely on these networks if you want to have any chance of succeeding in a foreign country. They look for ways to bypass lots of officials, and sometimes take the laws into their own hands. This is why the central area of Binondo

in Chinatown became the central area for business. To do business, you have to trust the person, so you will not be cheated. The Chinese prefer to do business with other Chinese.

It is not simply the ethnic stereotype that the Chinese are good businessmen. I suggest that, in a sense, cultural attributes become racialized, that is, a Chinese is "born" a good businessmen, natural rather than simply learnt, and an essentialized trait, as opposed to the Filipino, who are inherently not. As one informant said, "Chinese are blessed with natural ability to be businessmen." At another level, it can be argued that being Chinese, remaining Chinese, and maintaining a Chinese community, are important from an economic perspective. It allows a person to tap into the network of Chinese businesses, establishing guanxi relations with other Chinese, with a greater likelihood to be successful in business.[13]

8.3.7 Ethnic Stereotypes

The degree of integration and assimilation of migrants into the host society can be assessed, at least partially, by the extent and types of ethnic stereotypes that exist, or continue to persist between members of the host society and the immigrant. In the Philippines, the most common stereotype revolves around the supposedly Filipino and Chinese culture. It was found that many Chinese, especially among the older generation, refer to native Filipino by the derogatory term, huan na. Often, huan na are seen as "laid back", "idle" and are quick to spend and slow to save money. As noted in the verbatim of several Chinese informants,[14]

> The Filipinos are really laid-back, with no sense of urgency about where their next meal will come from. They live each day as it comes, and worry about it the next day. That is their attitude. They don't save money. Their priorities are not properly thought out, and I think sometimes they don't even have priorities at all. We Chinese are very different. We are frugal, do not splurge money. For the Filipinos, they live beyond their means very often.

> Many Chinese have a bad impression of the Filipinos. Maybe because they are dealing with workers, who have a bad attitude by Chinese standards, in terms of dealing with life. It is a different mentality, they are a very happy going people. Say when they earn $1, they will spend it the next day. For a Chinese, you may spent some of the money, but you will try to use the money to make more money. To invest, and to take risk. But the Filipino, they just spend whatever they earn.

> Basic difference between the Chinese and Filipino is how we look at money. A typical Chinese values money long term. He would see long term. A Filipino is always living by the day. They do not look at it long term. Sometimes, the Filipino will think that the Chinese are stingy, because they are always saving money. They think the Chinese are too calculative.

> You would hear, especially from the older generation, speak about Filipino is a derogatory manner. Sometimes it is really demeaning, and I feel embarrassed being associated with a Chinese who makes these comments about a local, like calling them huan na. But, at the same time, there are Filipinos who talk about the Chinese which are not true. Things like all the Chinese are rich, and they are only here for the money. And after making money, they will return to China. You know it is not true.[15]

However, in the last verbatim, this same person, who decries ethnic stereotype, went on to say, "Filipinos are a very happy people. They live each day as it comes, and they don't worry about many things. Now, for the Chinese part, because the Chinese have proven themselves to be diligent in general, and are more likely to stick to their ethics, and being stubborn in a good way."

Some Chinese see themselves as diametrically opposite to the Filipino, as hardworking, frugal, and business oriented people. There is, in some of the interviews, almost a sense of cultural superiority, to the point of saying that the Philippines economy would be fine today if only the Filipino can learn to be more like the Chinese. This also explains why many of the older generation Chinese wish that their children will venture into business in the future. A lack of interest in business is akin to physical fragility, a common stereotype that the Chinese have of the Filipino as being "too soft." It also implies an eventual slide into ethnic decay of the community. They have the fear that if the parents are not careful, then the younger generation will adopt Filipino cultural values and general disposition. This helps, in my view, to explain why Chinese in the Philippines place such a high value on language and educational markers to define Chinese ethnicity, as losing these critical markers will gradually lead the younger generation not to have the urgency to maintain their own culture as compared to their forefathers.

However, the strong ethnic stereotype tended to come from the older informants. This is not to suggest that the younger Chinese Filipinos do not have ethnic stereotypes. They do. However, the degree to which they think they are different from the Filipino appears to be less stark compared to the older generations. Some of the younger Chinese Filipinos suggest that the longer that they stay in the host society, the more likely they will adopt the ways of the majority. While the perception of the difference between younger Chinese Filipino may be less strong compared to the older generation, many of the younger Chinese in the Philippines do share many of the ethnic stereotypes that the older Chinese hold. However, given that many of the younger Chinese have a greater degree of contact with the indigenous population, especially if they are attending Filipino schools, the degree of ethnic stereotyping is less, but clearly not absent. Rather, in the interviews with them, what comes across is that they tend to merge two separate categories, as Filipino, in the sense of a national identity, or more precisely, as citizens of the Philippines, and Chinese as a racial or cultural identity.

This ethnic stereotyping is clearly reinforced by the findings regarding the attitude of the Chinese towards intermarriage. Intermarriage seems to be seen as a taboo by the older generation Chinese. To intermarry, according to some informants, would be tantamount to cultural impurity. The oft cited reason is that the Filipino culturally is dissimilar to the Chinese:

> My parents will never allow me to marry a Filipino. Right down the line, no. flat out. It is quite funny actually. My father even gave degrees of acceptability for my spouse. Filipino, no. More acceptable, Chinese. Most acceptable, culturally very traditional Chinese.

> Of course, then the child will be half Chinese. Otherwise, what is the point of saying the blood is Chinese. If a Chinese marries a Filipino, then he is half Chinese, not pure Chinese.

If you marry a native Filipino, the children will not be 100% Chinese. He will be 50% Chinese. Also, many Chinese have a bad impression of Filipino. Their culture is different from ours. Chinese people view Filipinos with caution with regards to money issues. So they don't want a son-in-law or daughter-in-law to take advantage of the wealth within the family.

For some of the Chinese informants, it is culturally more acceptable, though not preferred, if a male Chinese marries a Filipina girl. However, a Chinese girl marries a Filipino man is very much less acceptable. According to informants, this has to do with Chinese customs. A female marries out of the family while the male takes in a wife. Thus, a Chinese girl marrying a Filipino signifies complete detachment from the extended family and it would be an embarrassment if a Chinese girl left her family for a Filipino husband. Even among the younger Chinese, there is some resistance to intermarriage. For one informant, a 19 year old undergraduate, "You can't be sure whether the Filipinos are marrying into the family for money." In addition, she noted that she would not marry a non Chinese, so as not to offend her parents and other extended family members. She cites her "strong family values," and "upbringing" and feels that she should not intermarry simply because it is culturally forbidden to do so.

Intermarriage is viewed by many Chinese as diluting the bloodline of the family. Informants noted that there would be only $\frac{1}{2}$ Chinese or even worse, after another generation $\frac{1}{4}$ Chinese. It is sociologically interesting for the Chinese in contemporary Philippines to hold such views, given the high degree of intermarriage between the Chinese and the indigenous population in the early history of Chinese migration to the Philippines, producing a whole generation of mestizos. Informants however, rationalized that that was in the past.

They had no choice. When the Chinese first came, the men came by themselves. Chinese girls did not want to migrate. So, they had to marry the indios, and thus, they became Chinese mestizos. Now, however, it is different. There are so many Chinese girls to marry. Why would you want to marry an indio.

Of course, just as the Chinese have stereotypical images of the Filipino, the reverse is just as true. As one informant noted,

Chinese are basically money-faced. In the Philippines, we have a word call massa. Massa massa means native Filipino, so massa refers to the vast majority of people in the Philippines. And the massa are anti-rich people. Chinese are seen as rich and upper class, so the massa despise the Chinese. They are only interested in money, and are very stingy. Many Filipinos will call the Chinese names like incik and chey gua. It is our way of making fun of the Chinese.

The continuous reproduction of these stereotypes by both Chinese and non-Chinese is, while seemingly frivolous, are in fact functionally important in maintaining the boundaries of what *is* Chinese and what is *not*. Boundaries are maintained to stem the perceived loss of culture to the larger "massa" or Filipino culture. Many of the respondents suggested that their parents are the main agents of socialization in this respect, imposing certain cultural rules through traditional values such as prohibition on inter-ethnic marriages, the speaking of Hokkien, and the continuous

emphasis on family-centered businesses. Other than ideological and philosophical differences between the decadence of *massa* values and the "unique" Chinese culture, parents physically police the boundaries of Chineseness. Particularly pertinent is the restriction on interethnic marriages. For instance, when asked if she would marry a person of non-ethnic Chinese descent, one respondent quipped:

> [If it were] just my personal decision, without any factors involved, yes I would for sure. But, if other factors involved such as parents' blessing – actually basically that's the main thing – then it's impossible.

Even the seemingly less traditional, middle-aged parents of fourth generation respondents still fell back on the preservation of Chineseness by controlling who their children could marry. In one case, the respondent's parents who had already rejected Chinese cultural practices as important and had never taught her "how to be Chinese" remained reserved about her marrying a non-Chinese. She mused,

> I would [have married a non-Chinese] but my parents kept on saying that they are glad that I didn't! [...] My mum would say that you can date and marry anyone you want, but she always tells me that my dad would prefer me to date and marry a Chinese.

Another respondent supported this claim:

> I am allowed [to marry a non-Chinese], although we were strongly discouraged from young. It's like our parents keep on harping into our heads that we should marry a Chinese person, or should I say, that we shouldn't marry a non-Chinese, and for obvious reasons that the culture is different from ours, so why complicate things by introducing another layer of problems into the marriage and the family [...]

This process of boundary maintenance and the insular nature of the traditional Chinese are encapsulated in one respondents' claim,

> [The] Chinese can become Filipino much more than a Filipino can become a Chinese because I think that if a Filipino becomes a Chinese it's more likely it's because you marry into a family that's very, very Chinese (sic). But a family that is very, very Chinese would never allow someone who's not Chinese to marry into their family.

Another way that the Chinese identity is maintained is through stereotype reinforcement. When the respondents were asked what it meant to be Chinese, several common characteristics were brought up such as Chinese ancestry or "blood", the keen eye and hard-working mentality suited for business and money-making, the practice of Chinese traditions, religious practices and familial values, one's education in a Chinese school, and the use of Chinese languages.

While many of these "characteristics" are Filipino stereotypes of the Chinese, respondents seem to suggest that the majority of the Chinese appear to conform and internalize these stereotypes to a certain extent. More importantly, the internalization of these stereotypes seems to add to their identity formation as a Filipino-Chinese – for example, to do well in business and manage money – through a "them versus us" dialectic of Filipino and Chinese stereotypes. For instance, while many Filipino respondents believe that Chinese people are "good in maths and numbers" and are "in control of the businesses and the economy", the Chinese stereotypes of the *massa* are that they are laid back and lack long-term frugality

when it comes to money. These stereotypes may even be explained in factual, rational terms, such as the result of historical and cultural trajectory, as seen in the quote below:

> The Chinese come from the Han race, and are therefore steeped in Confucian thinking, so things like piety, honesty, respect for elders, *Li yi nian chi*. [. . .] So these kinds of values are dominant in Japan, Korea, Vietnam, China, Singapore, Thailand. But the Malays are different culture – they are more easy-going, laissez-faire, and influenced by the Spanish regime. In Spain you know everyday they have the siesta, where they don't do any work and they rest all the time. So the Filipinos pick up on this culture. Whatever they have today they enjoy, and they don't worry about what happens tomorrow.

The Chinese are also said to be politically apathetic. Non-Chinese Filipino respondents argue that the Chinese being a minority race see no need to get involved in politics simply because they can make money elsewhere, and where they do get involved in politics "it would be for purposes that would ultimately serve some kind of economic or commercial gain for themselves". Several Filipino-Chinese respondents also reinforce this stereotype, but instead claim that their lack of interest in politics has more to do with their minority status than their desire for money. One respondent argued that for the Chinese, there is an "in-bred cultural instinct to survive as minorities" so the Chinese "don't take sides" but rather "just do business" and "educate their young to learn the language and culture". Many of the older, early generation Chinese respondents believed that there will not be total integration of the Chinese into the larger Filipino society because "Chinese and Filipino values, the more fundamental ones at least, are still different".

8.3.8 Religion and Culture

Unlike the case in Thailand, where religion acts as a critical marker of ethnicity, in the Philippines, religion is not regarded as such. Rather, the emphasis, as I noted earlier, is on language, education and culture. One reason for this is may be that many Chinese, especially the early migrants, have converted to Christianity, either Catholics or Protestants. As noted earlier, one of the reasons the Chinese converted to Christianity was because it gave them more rights in the Philippines during the Spanish era. For example, Chinese who were not Christians were not allowed to leave the parian, the Chinese ghetto, while Christianized Chinese were allowed to travel freely. They also pay reduced taxes. The Spanish authorities at that time encouraged the conversion to Christianity because they view it as a reliable reference to determine the degree of loyalty of the colonial subjects.

What was observed in the Philippines, however, is that most Chinese practice a form of religious syncretism. The fieldwork seems to indicate that many of these are practicing Christians, such as attending mass or Sunday service. Yet, many of these same people tend to engage in traditional Chinese "customs", such as ancestor worship, burning of joss sticks, observing the Qing Ming Festival, and other forms of Chinese practices that have their roots in Buddhist and/or Taoist beliefs. For example, one informant mentioned that every weekend, his family will visit the

grandfather's grave and pay their traditional respect before attending Catholic Mass in the afternoon. In this informant's home, there is a traditional Chinese altar, with images of spirits and ancestors, and the requisite Chinese ritual paraphernalia, such as joss sticks and candles. At the same time, there are images of Mother Mary and other Christian images and photos in the home. Many Chinese informants also frequent a popular shrine in Binondo (Chinatown) where there is a syncretic altar, with a makeshift Christian cross. However, the people who pray at this altar use Chinese joss sticks.

While many Chinese are Christians, most of them still place great emphasis on traditional Chinese customary practices. For example, they celebrate many Chinese festivals, including Chinese New Year. As one informant noted,

> We celebrate Chinese New Year every year. Maybe, not on as large a scale as Singapore or Malaysia because it is not a public holiday. But we celebrate it anyway. We get the entire extended family together, including my uncles and cousins. Then we have a big reunion dinner. We give angpows to all the children. We do it because of the uniqueness and the value of Chinese cultural festivals.

In the Philippines, in relations to religion, there is a process of hybrization, practicing traditional rituals and festivals, but incorporating many indigenous and Christian elements. The syncretic nature of religious practices has been observed by others. For example, Weightman (1998: 81) noted that the Chinese practice some form of traditional Chinese religion but these may be syncretised with traditional Filipino/Christian observances. The Chinese observe ancestor veneration during the Catholic Filipino holiday of All Saints Day, as well as the Chinese *Qing Ming*. *Shen* or spirit cults have given the Catholic Virgin Mary the attributes of the Goddess of Mercy, *Guang Yin*, while Saint James or Santiago has become the city god of the Manila Chinese.

Similarly, Ang See and Go (1997: 72) found that when a Chinese house or building has been constructed, they may invite Catholic priests to perform the blessing rites. Many businesses and homes display the Taoist *Pa-kua* symbol and divinity papers on their doors but also display crucifixes and statues of the Virgin Mary. While these juxtapositions may seem paradoxical, there is an inherent cultural logic to it. For instance, when asked how they reconciled performing Chinese rituals of ancestor veneration and temple visits for instance, many other respondents classified these acts as a part of Chinese cultural rather than religious practices per se, as summed up by one respondent:

> I see it as respecting my father and pleasing him by being obedient and filial in these rituals that he believes are important to our identity as ethnic Chinese. So what if I'm Christian? To me, Christianity is a religion that is supposed to teach good things and to be positive, meaning forward looking and practical, telling its believers what one should do as opposed to what one should not do. So rituals are just going through the motions for me, because they don't hold any meaning for me. But I do understand where my father is coming from, to respect your ancestors and recognize what they've done for you in the past, and to perpetuate their cultural beliefs through these rituals.

Thus, although the following of Chinese religion is not central to the identity of a Chinese in the Philippines, ones' Chineseness is only valid if claimed; it is

not passively inherited without some form of action and participation in the cultural practices it entails. Clearly, the notion of "blood" remains central to this claim. Cultural practices such as participation in festivals and religious beliefs appear to be a secondary action that follows and reinforces this claim; it is not in itself the core determinant in establishing ones' Chineseness.

8.3.9 Community and Cultural Institutions

Compared to the other countries covered in this book, with the possible exception of the Chinese in Malaysia, the Chinese in the Philippines maintains a strong sense of community identity. This, in part, may be due to the existence of a large number of community organizations, such as Chinese schools and institutions such as Chinese Chambers of Commerce etc. Chinese schools, as noted earlier, provide the cultural ballast and function as a form of resistance to cultural erosion. In addition, the strong emphasis on language acquisition adds to the sense of community. This is particularly true of the Chinese in Manila, where the majority of the Chinese in the Philippines reside.

Many Chinese in the Philippines regard Chinatown as a representation of Chinese culture in Manila. While Chinatown in other places are regarded as "fake" or "constructed", Chinatown in Manila has important historical and contemporary significance for the ethnic Chinese as a community. Historically, Chinatown, which is located on the northern banks of the Pasig River in Manila, was the site of trading and commercial activities during Spanish colonial rule. The Spanish deemed the Chinese as "troublesome", and, according to one informant, the Chinese were forced across the river into a ghetto within the fortified area of Intramuros, and kept in check all the time. The Chinese were only allowed to cross the river into Binondo at certain times of the day.

In this sense, Chinatown, in contemporary Philippines, is not only a site for Chinese economic and cultural enterprises, but a symbol of the persecution faced by the Chinese in the Philippines. For example, the Bahay Tsinoy Museum is located in Intramuros. Its exhibits showcase the life and times of the ethnic Chinese in the Philippines, from the Spanish era till the present day. Similarly, the Kaisa Heritage Center, also located in Intramuros, has a vast collection of 10,000 materials on studies of the ethnic Chinese in the Philippines. Many informants regard Chinatown as an important landmark; providing Chinese immigrants a taste of home where they can feel a sense of belonging. Some informants also assert that Chinatown is very important in preserving Chinese tradition in the Philippines and beyond; it is a part of myth-making and symbol-shaping that Chinese-Filipinos engage in to promote and perpetuate Chinese identity. Another informant sounds off a similar sentiment, emphasizing that it is through Chinatown that the past is relived and resonated, where Chinese hegemony in terms of beliefs and values are maintained and solidified. Thus, Chinatown serves multiple purposes; it can provide nostalgia for some, a means of employment for others and a source of income for a notable few.

Having said this however, it is apparent that a shift is taking place in the nature of Chineseness in Philippines society. The younger generation Filipino-Chinese are successfully integrating into the *massa* culture, despite the efforts of their parents. Furthermore, there appears to be a lower level of resistance to this level of integration by the younger and middle-aged respondents. Many young Filipino-Chinese also have naturalized names which allow them to switch between their subjective realities as Filipinos and Chinese. As one respondent mused:

> Sometimes [Filipinos] think that I'm half-half, but actually I'm pure Chinese. But when they look at me, they might think I'm Chinese, but when they hear my name, then I'm Filipino. So they think I'm mixed, just by virtue of the fact that my appearance and my name are not really in sync.

Their ability to speak Tagalog fluently and conversely, very little Chinese, further enables the younger Filipino-Chinese to engage with the dominant Philippines society. As such, a higher level of cultural integration is taking place amongst the younger respondents, regardless of their status as second or fourth generation migrants. For the younger Filipino-Chinese, the importance of "Chineseness" has less to do with the practice of culture for culture's sake, but rather the accumulation of social capital in Filipino society. It is clear that many of the early generation Chinese are aware of this move toward cultural and social integration, summed succinctly by one respondent:

> Because it is fashionable, and you can make money by associating yourself with Chinese. That for the older generation like me is very sad to see, because I don't believe we should use our race for financial gains.

What it means to be "Chinese" at least culturally has become more fluid for many cosmopolitan younger Filipino-Chinese. For instance, while Chinese social networks were once bound by *guanxi* and its accompanying cultural rules and practices, the practices and views of the younger generation of Filipino-Chinese suggest the beginnings of the separation between Chinese social and cultural spheres. Chinese clan associations are also seen as relatively unimportant although they appeared to have been once. Some respondents showed that while their grandparents may have been members of these associations, their parents were not or had ceased regular participation because they had "lost their belief in its effectiveness". This would loosen the insular, clan mentality of the Chinese as a group, and ease future generations of Chinese-Filipinos into cultural and social integration with the non-Chinese Filipinos.

Even in terms of business, the rules have changed. The scattering of the Chinese all over the islands of the Philippines has led to a demand for new business networks to be formed, and often with non-Chinese counterparts. Under these conditions, one respondent notes that "you develop a new mindset about how to do business which don't rely so much on *guanxi* relations anymore and then slowly but surely, things will change". Another, 48 year old third generation respondent painted a bleaker view of these changes as the dissolution of Chinese social values. He argued that trust between the Chinese is

[. . .] happening less now compared to the olden days, because last time, a Chinese will give you his word. Not anymore. Very often you see people run away from their debts, debts they owe to their friends or the banks. So it's so difficult now compared to last time because when you wanna do something, you gotta sign contracts, get a lawyer, so today it's more and more like the locals, because they do run away from their debts. Even between and among the Chinese [. . .] Last time, no Chinese will cheat another Chinese. But now, it's happening all the time. The values have changed, because of the society.

This implies that there is also a difference in the level of integration that is dependent on the time of the respondent's migration and current developments in other external factors like state integration policies and globalization. External factors like the political climate and internal subjectivities also play a part in the maintenance and proclamation of one's Chinese identity. The degree of acceptance and the social climate of the times also affect ones identification as a Chinese. It is also quite common to see politicians like Cory Aquino declaring their ethnic identity to suit the circumstances. In both cases, affirmation of one's self-identification is also important in determining whether one is Chinese or not. Chineseness then is both subjective and objective realities and experiences, the result of internal and external relations at work on the individual as well as the imagined, collective notion of Chineseness as a whole.

Notes

1. By marrying a native woman in a Catholic wedding, taking on a Spanish name and having children baptized by the local priests, Chinese merchants in the Spanish era could transform their identity and that of their progeny under the auspices of the Spanish colonial state and the powerful Catholic hierarchy. In this way, *chinos* (as the Chinese migrants were called by the Spanish colonizers) were transformed into *mestizos*. This was an official Spanish category. Besides allowing greater mobility and lower tax rates compared to the *chinos*, those who were recognized as mestizo were given the right to own land, participate in native guilds, run for local offices of barrio captain and town mayor in the electoral contests overseen by the Spanish authorities (Hedman and Sidel, 2000: 71).
2. The *mestizos* did substantial inter-island trading, especially in the Visayas. They exported raw materials from Cebu, Molo and Jaro in the Visayas, to Manila where they were sold to Chinese or European merchants for export (Wickberg, 1964: 82). As Philippines was opened to foreign trade in the mid nineteenth century, and with the commercialization of agriculture in the hinterland port cities like Cebu, Iloilo and Manila, many mestizo offspring of *chino* merchants emerged as middlemen, moneylenders and in due course, became an elite landowning class. During the era of American colonial democracy, many mestizos entered politics which in turn, significantly facilitated their business dealings. This group of Chinese mestizo businessmen cum politicians had vast plantations and hence large blocks of captive voters which gave them an elected office and guaranteed access to state resources which transformed many of them into the country's early industrialists. There were also Chinese businessmen who instead of amassing social and political capital that transformed their mestizo relations into Filipino sugar barons or influential politicians, focused their ambitions on private capital accumulation and in some cases managed to build business dynasties (see Hedman and Sidel, 2000). Since the downfall of the Marcos regime, the advantages enjoyed by the mestizo landed capitalists and cronies have been significantly reduced and a broader path has been cleared for those Chinese Filipino businessmen who do not affiliate too closely with politics or political

parties. Instead their relationship with the state and politics is mediated through money. The prominence of the Chinese-Filipino capital in the Philippines today is often understood as the triumph of "new" Chinese-Filipino business "taipan" over the "old" mestizo land-owning/politico elite. However as Hedman and Sidel (2000) show in their paper, many of the Chinese Filipino taipans are the scions of Chinese family dynasties whose pre-eminence dates back many decades. There have been many important business and kinship (especially through marriage) links between the "taipans" and the Chinese mestizos which continue to exist till today.

3. Wickberg also attributes the influx to the lifting of restrictions on the Chinese immigration by the Spanish. For the first time, the Chinese could come to the Philippines without restrictions on their numbers and where they might reside in the archipelago (Wickberg, 1964: 90).

4. However, Purcell (1965: 496) argues that these population statistics were controversial as they differed significantly to the records of a prominent Chinese merchant and leader, Carlos Palanca who was the acting Chinese consul prior to the American Occupation. He claimed that in June 1899, there were 40,000 Chinese in the Philippines, of whom 23,000 were in Manila. These claims were quoted in the 1903 American census of the Philippines as probably accurate since every Chinese who arrived or left the islands were registered by the Chinese headman. Moreover, the 1903 census recorded the Chinese population to be 41,035, a figure close to the estimate by Carlos Palanca.

5. One example of this was the Book-keeping Act of 1921. This required all merchants to keep his accounts in English, Spanish and a local language (Eitzen, 1974: 112). The purpose of this was to enable Filipino officials to comprehend and check the accounts of the small Chinese shop-keepers and to end the defrauding of the public treasury of millions of pesos annually by them.

6. This was done by first eliminating the prominent Chinese leaders in order to reduce openly anti-Japanese sentiment and to destroy potential opposition (Blaker, 1970: 167).

7. Regardless of whether or not they were born in the Philippines, the Chinese could only become Filipino citizens through naturalization. Prior to the mass naturalization exercise, the process of naturalization was tedious, expensive and burdensome. Being a source of graft and corruption, many Chinese were discouraged from applying for citizenship (Tang, 1964: 402).

8. From primary data collected, stark differences between respondents of the first/second generations of Chinese and those of the "later" fourth generation onwards were noticed. Thus for analytical convenience, the conceptualization that follows will include comparisons of responses from interviewees belonging to the "early generation" of Chinese, namely the first and second generation respondents, and those of the "later generation", namely the fourth generation onwards. Third generation respondents displayed characteristics of both "early" and "later" generations; this variation will also be addressed in the chapter.

9. Goh (2008) has pointed out that during the American colonial era, the mestizo (both Hispanic as well as Chinese mestizos) nationalist discourse began to take shape. This group of mestizos, who were emerging as the nationalist elites used the concept of "racial blending" to claim hegemony over the "native" masses and at the same time distance themselves from the American colonialists. The mestizos saw the Filipino racial complex as consisting of Malay, Chinese, Spanish elements. By anchoring the "Filipino racial complex" in the Malay-Chinese stock, the elites claimed its identity with the Filipino masses it sought to dominate. However, by emphasizing their Spanish heritage, the mestizo elite claimed a superior difference from the masses and their relative difference from the American overlords. The perception of the ethnic Chinese in the Philippines as being racially different from fellow Filipinos can perhaps be attributed to the way in which Filipinos have also defined themselves – as stemming from different "racial stocks".

10. Huan na is a Hokkien term to refer to the indigenous people. It has a derogatory connotation.

11. Among the locals, xinqiao are also known as TDK, or Tai Diok, a pejorative term for mainlanders (see Ang See, 2007). Ang See suggests that, with the new immigrants making headlines for illegal activities so often, the image of the Tsinoy community in general is being damaged.

Though the mainstream media have started to be more discriminating in their reports, in general Filipinos still make little distinction between the local Tsinoys who have been in the country for generations and the newcomers.

12. One example given by Tan is the Chinese of Siasi, Sulu whose absorption in the local society and all its aspects of development demonstrates in a way that the basis of national integration cannot be patterned after the like of Manila and its kind (Tan, 1992: 84). In Siasi, there are no Chinese schools. With the exception of their names and occasional festivities, the Chinese elements are gradually diminishing. Tilman (1974), whose study was carried out on the provincial city of Cebu where the Chinese have greater contacts with the Filipinos found that most Chinese are not assimilated but are well integrated into Philippine life. Tilman claims that the Chinese share the values and beliefs of the Filipinos but they cannot be regarded as Filipinos because they still identify themselves as Chinese. Similarly, most Filipinos reciprocate by viewing them as Chinese. However, Tilman contends that the young Chinese are de-culturated from their Chinese traditions. They do not write or speak Chinese well, have little interest and knowledge of China and their ancestral home or clan associations. They have also adopted many Filipino attitudes towards family, friendships and marriage. He concludes by noting that the Chinese have been through a process of deculturation without assimilation, whereby group identity persists even though the original group cultures have been lost (Tilman, 1974: 48).

13. See Chapter 9 for a discussion of the impact of the rise of China on ethnic relations in the Philippines.

14. Again, these verbatim reflect the views of some, but not of *all* informants in the study. These are reported verbatim, and do not reflect the personal view of the author.

15. Again, the point must be made is that these are ethnic stereotypes held by the informants. The nature of stereotypes is that they persist, even in the face of overwhelming evidence to the contrary. An important point made in the book is that through ethnoracialization, the stereotypes are reinforced by the ideological beliefs that the ethnic differences are genetic, inherent, and natural.

Chapter 9
Conclusion: Whither Chineseness

9.1 Conclusion

Robert Parks and his collaborators at the University of Chicago predicted that through a process of assimilation into the host society, ethnic minority identities would gradually disappear because ethnicity was essentially a cultural phenomenon that was variable and contingent (Cornell and Hartmann, 1998: 43). Minority groups will necessarily assimilate; drop their previous notions of identity, in favor of the culture of the dominant group. What the book in the preceding chapters argues is that minority identities, even in the face of attempts at forced integration by the state and host societies, continue to persist among the Chinese in Southeast Asia. Most analysis of minority identities in Southeast Asia emphasizes social constructionist interpretations that often deny or ignore the more basic underlying identity. In the preceding chapters, I argue that a more comprehensive understanding of Chinese identity requires a reconceptualization of race and ethnicity. The book developed a model of ethnicity that synthesizes various approaches into a single framework that incorporates historical processes and local contexts. Empirically, it examined, from a comparative perspective, the various conceptions of ethnic identity in Southeast Asia, how the Chinese make sense of and negotiate their identity.

In the reconceptualization of Chineseness in Southeast Asia, several implications may be drawn. To begin with, the revisiting of the debate on ethnicity is an attempt at reconciling what has been generalized as an either/or argument to that of a resolvable conceptual framework for viewing ethnicity as both primordial and situational. This necessarily involves also a complication of the idea of race itself in relation to ethnicity that being the even broader conceptual dilemma that continues to plague scholarship today on race and ethnicity. And yet on an even broader level, this reconceptualization of Chineseness also involves an attempt at bringing together micro approaches of individual or group level cultural negotiation of identity with macro approaches that focus more structurally on the aspects of state policy and the influence of history.

The reconciliation of theoretical problems at each of these various levels of sociological analysis allow for the emergence of a complex conceptualization of Chinese ethnicity itself, one that is marked by multiple Chineseness, and a particular

fluidity in the development of different markers of Chinese identity across time and geography. Chineseness may also consequently be viewed as part of a two-way process rather than simply a one-sided one that assumes Chinese identity to be passively influenced and subsumed into the dominant cultures that envelop it – instead, it continues to be shaped by, and yet at the same time, to shape the ethnic and cultural landscapes they reside in by influencing the nature of the ethnic relations involved in the process.

The literature on ethnic identity and group identification has tended to pose a binary opposition between voluntary (choice) on one hand, and involuntary (birth) basis of identity on the other, between ascriptive identity and achieved identity, and between primordialism and situational identity. Using the concepts of core and peripheral identity, the book demonstrates the ways Chinese identity is managed and presented in contemporary Southeast Asia. Core identity, I argue, is deeply rooted, irreducible and ascribed. By using phenotypical and genotypical characteristics, ethnic identity is largely unchangeable. Moreover, ethnic identity takes on more expressive dimensions, rather than purely instrumental orientations. At the core, ethnicity meets personal and emotional needs and most often finds its expression in private places, such as in the home, clan associations and social gatherings. Core identity not only operates at the personal level, it is utilized for group cohesion.

One's identity is intrinsically linked to being born a Chinese. Physical attributes continue to remain a prominent discourse of self and group identification. In the fieldwork, informants clearly and often use birth and bloodline as criteria for ethnic identification and membership, operationalized by characteristics such as black hair, fair-skin, and slanted eyes. Invoking primordial characteristics and sentiments allow the Chinese minority to ensure boundary maintenance between ethnic groups, controlling the inflow and outflow of ethnic membership, and as "givens" which cannot be negotiated or renounced. Chinese migrants, living in an alien land, in close contact and interacting with other ethnic groups, draw on contrastive identity to ensure group cohesion. This is clearly exemplified by the resistance to intermarriage, which is viewed by most Chinese as a form of dilution of the blood, pollution of the purity of Chineseness. The resistance to intermarriage, to marginalize mixedness, suggests that by racializing ethnicity, there is a degree of somatic determinism to form closed communities.

However, Chinese identity in Southeast Asia cannot solely be reduced to its primordial essence. The Chinese individual also has a secondary identity which is invoked depending on the social situation. This secondary or peripheral identity, as opposed to the core or center, is more instrumental rather than expressive. In contrast with the private nature of ethnicity at the core, in public places, and in transactions with other ethnic groups, there are plural conceptions of identity. Peripheral identity is plastic and contextual. In the various countries of Southeast Asia, we see manifestations of multiple Chineseness; identities which are negotiated and invoked depending on the social circumstances. Identity, at the fringe, is changeable, mediated and situationally sensitive, and becomes strategic choice. The analogy of face and masks is very apt. The core identity is the face, the master identity of an individual. However, depending on social situations, the Chinese in

Southeast Asia put on different masks, flaunted when beneficial and discarded when they become dangerous or inconvenient, to ensure survival in their everyday life in the host societies.

Peripheral identity operates at both the individual and ethnic group levels. It also varies depending on the historical and environmental circumstances that the Chinese find themselves in. As the chapter on Thailand shows, religion becomes one of the key modes differentiating the Chinese from the host population. In Malaysia, language and food become critical. Even within the same country, there are variations. For example, a poor Chinese in Indonesia manages his peripheral identity very differently from a rich Chinese. In Singapore, there are differences between how an English educated Chinese and a Chinese educated Chinese present his or her identity. In Burma, different markers are invoked by the northern Chinese as opposed to the southern Chinese. The point I am making is that the notion of Chineseness must be viewed as a dynamic rather than a static concept, and any understanding of the Chinese in Southeast Asia must embrace the, at the same time, homogeneity and heterogeneity of the Chinese.

A key distinction is also made between intra-ethnic and inter-ethnic markers of ethnicity. In inter-ethnic relations, blood and descent are the core markers of identity and community. Once the primary mode of identification is satisfied, cultural content becomes the secondary basis of differentiation and is part of the contested terrain. In intra-ethnic differentiation, however, blood and descent is assumed, except perhaps in cases of the children of intermarriage, and cultural attributes becomes the primary basis of separation. In fact, in many countries, but most clearly exemplified in Burma, there is a hierarchical construction of intra-ethnic boundaries based on a quantification of the perceived degree of Chineseness by the Chinese themselves. During the interviews, it is common to hear informants referring to a person as a "pure" Chinese, a "half" Chinese or a "three quarters" Chinese. Similarly in Singapore, Chinese educated Chinese often refer to their English educated counterparts as "less" Chinese or an "inferior" kind of Chinese.

In the various chapters, the book examined the nature and processes of ethnic relations and interactions between members of the host society and the Chinese population in these countries; especially the causes and consequences of inter-ethnic relations. Conceptually, it introduced the idea of layered identity. Following on the notion of multiple Chineseness, it argues that the Chinese begin to compartmentalize their ethnic identity into various levels. For example, in Indonesia, the Chinese claim to be simultaneously Indonesian and Chinese; as nationality, and ethnicity. This dual identification is also found in most Southeast Asian countries. Moreover, within each country, Chinese identity is layered differently, varying across different regions. From a regional perspective, Chinese identity cannot be isolated by any particular identity marker or ethnic boundary, but rather manifests itself through complex layering. For example, in Indonesia, a totok Chinese is very different from a peranakan Chinese, although they are both Chinese. Similarly, in the Philippines, a mestizo is layered differently from a Tsinoy, and in Burma, there are differences between a letse and a letso, although they are both fundamentally Chinese. As noted, there are also clearly regional differences. For example, as the chapter on Indonesia

demonstrated, a Chinese in Java is somewhat different from a Chinese living in Padang, or Kalimantan, or Sumatra. Similarly, in Burma, the ethnic identity of a northern Chinese who live in Mandalay is layered differently from a southern Chinese living in Yangon.

A central point made in the book is that we can no longer treat the Chinese as a homogenous group, nor can we, analytically, regard the indigenes, whether Tai, Burman, Indonesian, or Malay, as a homogenous entity. Rather, in the book, the discourse of identity and ethnicity, how individuals and groups of individuals, make sense of and negotiate their identities in multi-cultural societies, and how this discourse is mediated by historical conditions and the local context. Moreover, the cultural content of ethnic identity and layering does not remain constant or static. The same marker can, at one point of time, be consciously denied, but at other times, resurrect in importance due to changed circumstances. For example, in Burma, during the Ne Win and SLORC period, the Chinese language was suppressed, but after 1988, due to the "open door" policy, speaking Chinese became economically advantageous.

Given this, it is no longer conceptually useful to argue whether the Chinese are assimilated or acculturated, or talk about ethnic persistence. It is no longer an either/or phenomenon. There is a need to move away from the simple polarity of assimilation or persistence. The Chinese in Southeast Asia can be both assimilated and yet maintain a degree of ethnic persistence. It really depends on the levels or layers one is talking about, and can be both, simultaneously. As the chapter on Thailand clearly demonstrates, most Chinese in Thailand today can speak Thai, go to Thai schools, join Thai associations, celebrate Thai festivals and would consider themselves Thai citizens. At the same time, Chinese schools and associations persist, Chinese religious rituals are still practiced on a daily basis, and most Chinese would consider themselves Chinese.

After years of cultural contact, new identities, neither similar to those of their ancestors, nor the ones which the indigenous majority group adhere to, have emerged. It is not a one way unilineal process of the Chinese assimilating or integrating into the dominant host society. There is a significant degree of intermixing and mutual influence, exemplified by the Baba community in Malaysia, and the Peranakan in Indonesia. Intermarriage, especially in the early years of migration has contributed to the development of this layered identity. These Chinese retained many of the cultural attributes of Chineseness, but also draw on Malay culture, especially in language and dress. They also developed a new food culture, which draws on Malay cooking styles, but use pork as a key ingredient. Among the Chinese in the Philippines, the layering and fluidity of Chinese identity is seen in religious practices. Many of the Chinese have converted to Christianity but still engage and maintain traditional Chinese practices such as ancestor worship, burning of joss sticks and other forms of Chinese practices rooted in Buddhists and/or Taoist beliefs.

The book introduced the concept of disembedding. Drawing on Giddens (1991), I suggest that in Southeast Asia, there is a process of lifting out or separation of Chinese identity from mainland China, and the self from community. There is a disembedding of space, in that the idea of China as the homeland has become

unimportant in the Southeast Asian Chinese conception of identity. Moreover, dis-embedding is important as, at one level, it allows an individual or a group, to define a unique manifestation of identity. Thus a Chinese in Singapore is clearly different from a Chinese in China, or Taiwan, or Hong Kong, or Indonesia. At the same time, by racializing identity, through the ascription of blood and lineage, it allows the Chinese in Singapore to identify and affiliate with other Chinese worldwide. In using the idea of a layered identity, the concept of disembedding is critical in articulating a discourse of the unity and diversity of identity, of sameness and differentness. It allows an individual to say, "I am Chinese, they are also Chinese, but they are so different from me." Detailing the various and many layers of Chinese identity in the countries in Southeast Asia, it debunks the notion of a homogenous Chinese identity, and allows for a more nuanced understanding of what it means to be Chinese in the different regions and countries and the subtle inter-ethnic and intra-ethnic negotiations which many Chinese use in their daily interactions with other ethnic groups, and among themselves.

Each chapter of this book traced the historical developments of the Chinese in the host countries, particularly in relation to state policies towards the Chinese. The historical treatment is important as most sociological studies on the Chinese tended to be ahistorical. As the preceding chapters demonstrated, historical contexts condition the construction of Chinese identity and community in Southeast Asia. During different periods, there have been differential treatments of the Chinese, from attempts to assimilate and integrate them, to persecution and discrimination, deportation and even massacres. Thus, any discussion on the Chinese in Southeast Asia must consider the historical moment in question, and how these historical and environmental factors condition and impact the position and attitudes of the Chinese in contemporary Southeast Asia. For example, we cannot understand the treatment of the Chinese in contemporary Indonesia without considering the historical context of Dutch colonial rule, or the Chinese in Malaysia without consideration of the British colonial racial policies. Besides dealing with the policies of the various states, Chinese identity and community are affected by their interaction with members of the host societies as well. These adaptations, mediations and negotiations happen at both the macro (government policies and state politics) and micro (daily interactions) levels.

Depending on the situation, the Chinese choose to emphasize or downplay different aspects of their identity for economic and political survival, resulting in different constructions of the cultural content of ethnic identity and community. Often, in different countries, and factoring regional variations within each country, the Chinese draw on different markers to differentiate themselves from the host population. As noted earlier, in Thailand, for example, religion becomes a dominant marker. A Chinese is a Chinese because he practices Chinese religion, as opposed to the Thai who practices Thai Buddhism. In Malaysia, food becomes a critical marker. A Malay is a Malay because he does not eat pork, and a Chinese is a Chinese because he does.

In Indonesia, despite various attempts to eradicate Chineseness through forced assimilation, there is a persistence of ethnic identity. However, due to state policies,

cultural markers of ethnicity (language, name, education, community organizations) are less easily defined. Thus, in Indonesia, there is an emphasis on birth and descent as core markers of ethnicity. Moreover, there is a sense that their survival as a distinct group does not depend solely on traditional cultural markers, but also economic ones. This "economic ethnicity" strategically uses the economic networks among the Chinese in the community to maintain a common identity, as the source of a business network for economic and ethnic survival.

Regardless of which cultural markers are used, and which cultural traits are open to negotiation in identity constructions in Southeast Asia, there is almost universal agreement that the primary marker of Chinese ethnic identity rests with bloodline and descent. As the data clearly demonstrates, the Chinese use the discourse of race for ethnic differentiation, and they are defined as a "race" and discriminated against on that basis. This is exemplified by the high degree of ethnic prejudices and negative stereotyping uncovered, both by the host societies of the Chinese and by the Chinese of the indigenes. The Chinese are often viewed as only interested in money and parasites of the local economy, while many Chinese, in the verbatim, often see the indigenes as corrupt, laid back, with poor money management skills.

The book proposed the concept of ethno-racialization. Drawing from and amalgamating the insights of Cashmore (1988), Goldberg (1992) and Lian (2006), ethno-racialization refers to the process in which a population is identified as a supposed biological entity and individuals are distinguished and differentiated on an imagined phenotypical basis which is conceived as natural. Cultural attributes, which are social constructions, can be naturalized through the process of discursive racialization, that is, an essentialization of culturally constructed ethnicity. Race and ethnicity are thus not mutually exclusive. Rather, the process of in-group identification and out-group differentiation can rely on the rhetoric of cultural content (ethnicity) and the rhetoric of descent (race). Moreover, the strengthening of the rhetoric of descent is contingent on the naturalization or racialization of such constructions. Through ethno-racialization, cultural attributes take on a taken for grantedness and no longer seen as socially constructed. Conceptually, ethno-racialization suggests a deeper reflexivity and greater plasticity to the process of racialization.

The book detailed how, in most Southeast Asian countries, there is a conflation of race and ethnicity, and the objectifying of cultural values or attributes in racial terms. For example, ethnic stereotypes are perceived as natural categories, that is, the indigenes are inherently laid back, or the Chinese are inherently good businessmen. For some informants, they even suggest that a Chinese is a Chinese because he is a good businessman. It is in the genes. This is in fact one of the reasons given for the resistance towards intermarriage. It would not only dilute the purity of blood, but will result in offsprings that are cultural-genetically inferior. As one of the informants comment exemplifies, "If a Chinese man marries a local, then their children will not be good businessmen."

In the literature, much has been written about the role of the state. This is because state policies, especially ethnic based policies, have been one of the key factors in the transformation of Chinese ethnicity. Ethnicity has often been subjected, in

varying degrees across the region, to state control, management and engineering. For example, the policies of the communist government in Vietnam led to the mass exodus of numerous Chinese. They can also be a means of manipulating inter-ethnic relations with the resultant impact of negative perceptions of the Chinese by the dominant host population. In Indonesia, the policies of forced assimilation during the Suharto era have led to an erosion of traditional cultural markers of Chinese identity due to the banning of Chinese language, schools, and media, and the perception of the Chinese as a "problem," and often resulting in the incitement of anti-pathy against the Chinese.

Most of the countries in Southeast Asia are relatively new states, only gaining independence in the 1940s, 1950s, and in some cases, as late as the 1960s. After many years of colonization, these new states were often keen to forge new national identities. In a sense, the period of colonialism had sharpened the differences between the ethnic groups because colonial policies were often racially based and people classified along racial categories. For example, in Malaysia, the Chinese and the Malays were viewed by the British as having different "functions" in society. With the rise of nationalism in Southeast Asia, strong ethnic identities emerged as people began to see themselves as separate ethnic groups, and not just in relation to the colonial rulers. In Southeast Asia, the formation of new nation states was often based on attempts to revive the supposedly long and proud cultural traditions of the dominant group. For example, in Burma, despite the multi-ethnic composition of the country, the state embarked on a process of indigenization, using ethnic and cultural traits of the majority Burman ethnic group as a basis of the nation. In doing so, the basis of the state depended on the conceptualization of the foreign "other". In most of the new states, this "other" was, due partly to their economic dominance, essentially the Chinese. In Southeast Asia, the vocabulary of ethnic relations is always framed racially.

In Thailand, the formation of the new nation state and the rise of Thai nationalism led to ethnic chauvinism. While there was previously little differentiation among the various ethnic groups, Thai nationalism emphasized the differences between the Thai and the Chinese. The consciousness of such differences was indispensible to the state's ability to maintain a sense of Thai identity. The "othering" of the Chinese sometimes took on a formal structure through institutional discrimination, as in the Malaysian case of affirmative action of bumiputraism, or a cultural form where it is cast as an "other" culture in comparison to the dominant culture, as in the case of Indonesia, Burma, and Vietnam. The various chapters demonstrated how the Chinese are often essentialized and totalized by the state, subjected to discrimination and often targeted as a group, often used as scapegoats, especially during periods of crisis.

These policies often forced the Chinese to manage their own identity to cope with ethnic discrimination. As the various chapters have shown, these include moving the manifestation of Chinese identity from the public to the private sphere, the emphasis on personal and familial identity rather than community identity, layering and compartmentalization of identity, and in some cases, downplaying ethnicity to remain indistinguishable from the indigenous population. Regardless of the end

result, the general "othering" of the Chinese is key to understanding the position of the Chinese and the primordial and situational constructions of Chinese identity in Southeast Asia.

The various chapters in the book critically examined the composition and position of the Chinese communities in Southeast Asia. In a sense, the Chinese migrants replicated certain elements of Chinese society in their new locations. Houses, temples and graveyards were built in imitation of those in their homeland. Associations based on clans, dialect group, trades and places of origins were established. In many cases, schools were also set up to educate their children. However, after years of domicile, there has been a degree of acculturation and the nature of the Chinese community has altered to adapt to the new homelands. Of course, the historical experiences in each country, state policies, and the patterns of interaction with the host population have conditioned and resulted in different constructions of the community. In Malaysia and Indonesia, at least prior to the Suharto period, we see the setting up of many Chinese organizations to represent the interests of the Chinese minority, especially in relations to language and education policies, and during the period of independence, citizenship rights. In other countries, such as Burma during the Ne Win regime, Vietnam after the Communist takeover of the South, and Indonesia during the Suharto era, Chinese associations and other forms of expressions of Chineseness were vigorously suppressed. For example, in Indonesia, Chinese associations, schools, and the media were banned.

In practically all Southeast Asian countries, even those where Chinese associations were allowed to exist, however, the role of the associations were largely circumscribed. As such, what are traditionally regarded as markers of community, such as language, schools, and customary practices, such as religious practices and celebrations of traditional Chinese festivals, have become more amorphous and do not have the cohesive powers to bind the community together as they no longer serve that purpose for all Chinese. Because of their perceived powerlessness, the empirical evidence suggests that there has been a privatization of community, with a shift from community to the family. The self, for the Chinese in Southeast Asia, experience closer identification with the family, and identity becomes more individualized and private.

The book, finally, proposed an alternative model for studying ethnic relations in Southeast Asia that encompasses multidimensional forces on four different axes; the role of the state and nation building processes (in the form of state policies towards the citizens and its migrant populations); the individual's and communities responses towards state policies (which takes into consideration the primordial and situational nature of ethnic Chinese identity); the institutional and environmental factors that prevail in any particular country (including the size of the minority Chinese community, their occupations, historical variables that define identity, as well as regional differences) and global influences (such as the mass media, as well as increasing democratization in previously authoritarian regimes, and the influence of external factors, such as the rise of China). All these variables intertwine to influence the nature of cultural contact between the migrant Chinese and the host society. Thus, any attempt to understand Chinese ethnic identification and

ethnic relations requires the examination of how these forces act and interact in any particular country in Southeast Asia.

9.2 Whither Chineseness: The Rise of China

Since the 1970s, the world has witnessed the phenomenal rise of China. What is the impact of the rise of China on the Chinese overseas? Will there be any changes in the construction of ethnic identity and Chinese community in Southeast Asia? How does it affect inter-ethnic relations between the Chinese and the host societies? Will it change the state policies towards the Chinese minority?

Firstly, what is this thing called the rise of China? To give some indicators, the Gross Domestic product of China in 1978 was just US$45 billion. By 2004, it has increased to an amazing 1.7 trillion dollars, and by 2006 to almost 2 trillion dollars. By 2008, China was the world's third largest economy, having overtaken Germany, and presently only behind the United States of America and Japan. It is not just growth in the economy, but the very rapid growth. In 1978, the GDP per capita of China was less than US$50. By 2006, it has risen to US$1900, and by 2008, US$2520. If we measure using GDP per capita purchasing power parity (GDP PPP) it is an even more phenomenal 7200 US dollars in 2006.

Since the founding of Communist China in 1949, and up to the 1970s, for political reasons and the excesses of the Mao Tse Tung era, China remained an underdeveloped country. The "Great Leap Forward" in the late 1950s, and the "Great Proletariat Cultural Revolution" in the 1960s, devastated China's agricultural production, led to the death of millions, and caused disorder and chaos in Chinese society. However, by 1974, and with the death of Mao, the arrest of the Gang of Four, and the ascension of Deng Xiao Ping into power, China began to open up its economy, initially with the gradual growth of the economy, especially in agriculture, and later, in the 1980s, fueled by the first wave of foreign direct investments, China began to experience double digit real GDP growth. By the 1990s, especially after 1992, with Deng Xiao Ping's Southern tour to Guangdong and Shenzhen, there has been a massive boost in foreign direct investments. Although nothing short of spectacular in terms of economic developments, I suggest that the rise of China must be viewed from four different perspectives: economic, military, political and in one sense, most importantly in relation to the Chinese overseas, cultural rise.

Economic Rise: As noted earlier, China's economy, in the 1980s, grew at a rate of between 10 and 15% a year. Even with Zhu Rongji (Prime Minister from 1998 to 2003) trying to rein in the over heating economy in the early 1990s, China continued to experience dramatic growth of between 7 and 14%. At this present rate, China will overtake Japan as the second largest economy in the world within 30 years. In fact, if we use GDP per capita PPP and not total GDP, China is already the second largest economy in the world. It is projected that by 2050, China will be the largest economy in the world, by GDP PPP. Also, more importantly, China has become the top destination for foreign direct investments, and as will be shown later, one of the sources of foreign direct investments for China come from the Chinese overseas.

The economic growth, especially given China's large population, is significant. For example, China now has the highest reserves in the world, presently estimated at nearly 2 trillion dollars. With a yearly trade surplus estimated to be over 200 billion dollars a year, the rate of reserve accumulation will continue to grow. This has resulted in China becoming one of the major players in the world economy and whose actions have impact across the world. For example, a significant amount of China's reserves are held in US bonds. If China decides to sell the bonds, it will deeply impact the US economy. Or if China decides to sell US dollars and buy Japanese yen, it will lead to a rise in the value of yen, and affect the Japanese economy.

Political Rise: This economic muscle has resulted in growing political influence on the world stage. For example, in 2006, China hosted a Sino-African summit with over 48 African states and in which practically every major leader from African nations attended, is an important case in point. Similarly, China is fast developing "superpower" relations with smaller countries in Asia, including Southeast Asia. For example, China signed a strategic partnership agreement with Indonesia in 2005 to boost bilateral trade. In 2006, an agreement was also signed with Vietnam. China has also moved swiftly to conclude a free trade agreement with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) as well as bilateral free trade agreements with countries such as Singapore. This political rise can be seen in China's influence in the six party talks with North Korea on the nuclear issue, with China being the only player with some influence over North Korea over this issue. Increasingly, China is using Official Development Assistance (ODA) for its political agenda, especially with South Asian and African countries, as a kind of "soft power". The ODA is partly driven by "merchantilistic" motivations as well as sourcing for raw materials.

Military Rise: China is also moving in terms of "hard" power. For example, China has dramatically increased its military spending and the acquisition of high technology weapons to fight a modern war. There is some debate as to how much China is spending on the military and over the size of its armed forces. Whatever the actual figure (US$20 billion as claimed by the Chinese or US$80 to 100 billion, as claimed by some military analysts) China is fast becoming the dominant military power in Asia including, in recent years, the attempts to develop a "blue water" navy.

China's growing military might is a cause for concern for many East and Southeast Asian countries. However, other than with Taiwan if it claims independence, the likelihood of war is low, as the economic and political cost will be very high. In fact, China is aware of these concerns and has couched its military rise by publicly committing to what it calls a "peaceful rise." Even so, China's military rise has led to new geo-political realities in Asia.

Cultural Rise: It is in the area of cultural rise that may pose the greatest challenge for the countries in Southeast Asia. China and the Chinese have become increasingly affluent with an increasing sense of confidence. Tu (1991) argues that because of its economic backwardness, the Chinese overseas are in fact the center of Chinese culture and China, despite being the "home" of the Chinese, is in fact in the periphery. However, with its new economic prowess China is increasingly being seen as the center, at the level of the state as well as by its citizens. There is, in a sense, the rise

of a cultural China, more assertive and more confident. There is also rising nationalism among Chinese youths, exemplified in the demonstrations and riots against the Japanese in many Chinese cities in 2005. What is the impact of the rise of China for Southeast Asian countries and on the Chinese overseas? Will their conceptions of identity and community be altered?

From a purely economic perspective, nations in Southeast Asia have had to adjust and adapt their economic and social policies with a giant behemoth to the north. For example, most Southeast Asian countries, with the possible exception of Burma, are largely dependent on foreign direct investments to grow the economy. China, with its cheap labor, is a direct competitor and has been very successful in attracting FDIs, often at the expense of Southeast Asian states. In fact, in 2007, China attracted over US 53 billion dollars in FDI. Many Southeast Asian states have had to, out of sheer necessity, engage China, economically, politically, and culturally. This will have an impact on their dealings with their own ethnic Chinese minority at home.

Of course, the impact of relations between the host countries and China on the Chinese minority is not a contemporary phenomenon. As various chapters in the book have demonstrated, historically, states in Southeast Asia have often had to adjust their policies towards the Chinese migrants because of their relations with China. For example, in Vietnam, the souring of relations between Vietnam and China in the late 1970s led to the mass exodus of Chinese from Vietnam, and created a refugee crisis, and eventually led to armed conflicts between China and Vietnam in 1979. In the Philippines, Marcos's policy of mass naturalization of the Chinese community in the mid 1970s stemmed from a desire to maintain good relations with China. Similarly, events in China have affected the position and attitudes of the overseas Chinese. For example, the founding of the Republic of China under Sun Yat Sen led to a resurgence of Chineseness, with a proliferation of Chinese schools and community organizations in Southeast Asia.

Both at the level of state policies, and in daily life, the rise of China have led to a reorientation of the Chinese in Southeast Asia. One particularly symbolic image, which was widely covered in all the newspapers in Malaysia, was of the then Deputy Prime Minister, Anwar Ibrahim, penning a Chinese calligraphy at an event. He supposedly wrote in Chinese, "Within the four seas, all men are brothers." According to him, it is to stress the need for all races in the country to work together and to understand one another. In a country where the Chinese have been, due to the bumiputra policy, systematically discriminated against, this represents a significant departure, at a time when Malaysia was keen to expand economic relations with China.

As noted earlier in the chapter on Indonesia, with the rise of China, there have been significant changes in the way the state conducts itself and its attitude towards the ethnic Chinese. These included the public celebration of Chinese New Year, which were, in the past, banned, as well as other forms of support for the Chinese community. In fact, another President, Abdurrahman Wahid (Gus Dur), even called himself a Chinese at one point. Thousands of indigenous pribumis gathered in the streets for the public lion dance displays, and waited enthusiastically for ang pows (red packets) to be given out by the various Chinese businessmen and organizations during the public Chinese New Year celebrations.

There were even indigenous Indonesians who were reported to have played and sang Chinese songs on their guitars. The point is that Chineseness in Indonesia seemed to have become a fad amongst the Indonesians, and Chineseness in Indonesia has now become a fashion statement, people want to be associated with and known as Chinese. While some Chinese have been caught up by the changes, others are more circumscribed and wary. As Budiman (2005: 100) noted, "The Chinese have now become somewhat confused. They have welcomed a changed situation in which they are able to express their cultural identity without fear. They also feel that it is important to keep revealing this identity in order to 're-educate' society to accept that being Chinese does not necessarily mean being less 'Indonesian'. They can be both good Chinese and good Indonesian citizens who love their motherland. Many feel however, that if they step over an (invisible) line, there is a possibility that negative feeling against the Chinese could be rekindled, and that it could spark renewed anti-Chinese riots."

Despite these reservations, there appears, for the moment, to be a re-sinification in Indonesia that puts the Chinese in a strong economic and social position. This is exemplified by the lifting of the ban on Chinese publications. During the fieldwork, it was even observed, when attending a dinner of a Chinese community organization, that there was a delegation from China, led by a mayor, to promote development projects in China, and to get the Chinese in Indonesia to invest. Significantly, there is also the reemergence of Chinese language publications. Thus, the events after 1998 has led, according to Purdey (2003: 427) a renewed awareness in Chinese Indonesians of their ethnicity and for many younger Chinese, an entirely "new" awareness of their heritage and identity.

The same resurgence of Chinese culture and identity, in parallel with the economic rise of China, is also observed in Thailand. In Bangkok Chinese language and culture has been increasingly celebrated in various forms in Thailand (Jory, 1999: 342). As noted in Chapter 2, more Chinese people are also beginning to flaunt their ethnic backgrounds, Thai business magazines openly hail the achievements of the *lukchin* businessmen, and many see China as a rapidly emerging market and an opportunity for entrepreneurs and professionals, especially those who speak the Chinese language and understand its culture. The Thai state has also lifted its restrictions on the teaching of Chinese language in schools.

Many Chinese-made movies are being dubbed into Thai, while in clothing fashion, cuisine and popular literature are showing greater Chinese influence. A famous *lukchin* girl group "China Dolls" have successfully capitalized on their ethnicity and sing in Thai, English and Mandarin. Popular in Malaysia, Japan, China and Vietnam, their song lyrics sometimes flaunt their Chinese ethnicity. Their first album was entitled "I'm a Chinese Girl!!! (*Muay Ni Kha*)" and one of their songs is "Slant-Eyed Girl", based on the stereotype that Chinese have unattractive "slanted eyes". In addition, the number of books and magazines targeting the ethnic Chinese has also increased.

There has also been renewed interest in the public singing of Mandarin songs, especially among the Chinese urban middle class in Thailand. In his research on Chinese singing clubs, Lau (2005: 160) found that singing Mandarin songs has

been an effective means of articulating the Chinese diasporic identity. Many of those who joined such clubs preferred to sing Mandarin popular songs because it enabled them to express their "inner feeling" of being Chinese. Considering the prejudice experienced by the Chinese in Thailand for many years since the early part of the twentieth century, being able to sing Chinese songs publicly and express one's Chinese identity through song is significant. Even though the social climate has changed in Thailand in the recent years singing such songs, especially those which are patriotic and well known in China, is considered a much needed public acknowledgement of being Chinese and represents an audible, visible and sensual aspect of the yearning of the Thai Chinese to construct their ethnic identity within Thai society (Lau, 2005: 161–162).

Thousands of middle class Chinese parents are sending their children to the best universities throughout China to study Mandarin and other subjects. The movement of tourists between China and Thailand has also grown rapidly, providing greater opportunities for social contact and economic benefits for both countries. Large numbers of Chinese in Thailand are visiting China for the first time. Many mainland Chinese are also heading for Thailand. In 1997, Thailand received 439,795 mainland Chinese visitors. The figure increased to 763,708 in 2003. Most of the tour guides who cater to the Chinese tourists are bilingual Chinese Thais (Bao, 2007: 97).

The use of the Chinese language has also been boosted by the pro-Chinese domestic political and economic situation, as well as increased linkages with China, Hong Kong and Singapore through expanded business contacts. Domestic tolerance and external economic linkages have facilitated this re-sinicization as many ethnic Chinese in Thailand have come to appreciate that enhancing their Chinese characteristics is not only possible at home, but even profitable (Lim and Gosling, 1997: 308). In the past, the ethnic Chinese in Thailand used to stress the need for language to maintain their cultural identity; now they emphasize both the cultural advantages and the economic benefits of learning the language.

Bao (2007: 97) suggests that Chinese Thai are in a favorable position to capitalize on their ethnicity, especially in business. Suppressed during the Cold War, Chinese cultural identity is being revived, celebrated and commercialized. However, this is not to suggest that the renewed interest in Chineseness will lead to Chinese cultural nationalism. As noted earlier, the Chinese in Thailand, after many years of migration, consider themselves as Thai citizens, rather than Chinese nationals. Most Chinese I interviewed, for example, regard Thailand as their home, and it is where their family and social networks are. Unlike the earlier generation, China is viewed primarily in economic terms, instrumental rather than emotional, useful in exploiting ethnic networks. However, after years of discrimination, the rise of China have allowed them display their ethnic identity, whether in the learning of the Chinese language, or consuming Chinese popular culture.

The resurgence in culture and celebrating ethnic identity is not simply a function of language acquisition or cultural transmission, but also, importantly, due to pragmatic considerations. For example, many informants in the Philippines stressed that being Chinese today is a privilege. Many said that they should seize the opportunity of being associated with one's own race and learn the language for practical reasons,

especially given the belief that ethnic Chinese people are generally, in the words of one informant, "cut out to be successful business people." One reason for why Chinese language remains popular and important is the perception that language abilities allow the Chinese to tap into the economic networks of the Chinese community, both within the Philippines, and especially so in recent years, for trade and business links with China. As one informant succinctly noted, "I rather be a Chinese than any other race. You know how China is progressing, I guess it is the best time to be a Chinese. Furthermore, I am a businessman, so China now is like boomtown for me." There has also been some amount of "reverse integration" whereby non-Chinese Filipinos try to increase their contacts with the ethnic Chinese. Such Filipinos do so in the hope of benefiting from their business connections (Baviera, 1994: 8).

There is a revival of interest in Chinese culture and language, even among younger, and supposedly more "filipinized" Chinese. One informant noted, "Now with China growing so rapidly, everyone saying that they are Chinese. Oh, I have Chinese blood because my great grandfather was Chinese, and so on." Being Chinese has become a form of ethnic networking, exploiting ties with co-ethnics, in the Philippines, as well as Chinese in China, to do business. It has become advantageous to emphasize shared notions of Chinese culture and language, strategizing ethnicity and ethnic solidarity (of being Chinese) for economic advantage.

Similarly in Burma the state government's "open door" policy to take advantage of the growing economic affluence of China has also had an impact on the ethnic Chinese. It has strongly promoted foreign direct investment, placing ethnic Chinese at the forefront of Burma's economy as they monopolize the majority of retail, wholesale and import trade, including cross-border trade and big restaurants in Northern Burma. Much of the foreign direct investment entering the country is channeled through ethnic Chinese networks throughout Southeast Asia. As such, speaking the Chinese language has become economically advantageous.

I have written elsewhere that in business, the Chinese value personalism, especially guanxi relations, and interpersonal trust or xinyong. Personalism suggests an inclination to incorporate personal relationships in decision making. Guanxi refers to interpersonal relationships, which, for the Chinese, is seen as crucial for facilitating smooth business transactions. Good guanxi fosters the development of reliable xinyong, or trust. Chinese businessmen believe that interpersonal trust minimize fraud to ensure certainty and order. It is often used as a compensatory mechanism for the lack of confidence in the legal system. Because of guanxi and xinyong, the Chinese businessmen in Southeast Asia tend to have a distrust of outsiders, preferring to do business with other Chinese, on the assumption that co-ethnics are more trustworthy (Tong and Yong, 1998: 75–96).

One effect of the rise of China is the increased investments in the Chinese economy by Southeast Asian Chinese. For example, in 1994 alone, Singapore companies invested US$3.78 billion dollars. In 1995, it totaled US$8.67 billion worth of new direct investments. In addition, several projects, such as the Singapore-Suzhou Township and the Wuxi Industrial Park, are rather long term commitments and will cost over US$20 billion. The bulk of the investments were in the provinces

of Guangdong and Fujian, where most Chinese Singaporeans originated from. It can be suggested that this may be due to the guanxi networks that the Singapore Chinese have with their counterparts in China, drawing on some aspects of shared ethnicity and heritage for economic purposes. Chinese overseas businessmen doing business in China enjoys, in a sense, a degree of ethnic advantage (see Chan and Tong, 2000).

There may thus be a resurgence in the manifestation of Chinese communities in Southeast Asian countries, as these communities provide a network of linkages and contacts for economic success. As Singapore's Senior Minister Lee Kuan Yew declared at the Second World Chinese Entrepreneurs Convention, "We would be foolish not to use the ethnic Chinese network to increase our reach and our grasp of these opportunities" (quoted in Liu, 1998: 597). While many ethnic Chinese entrepreneurs' foremost consideration in deciding on investments is profitability and economic opportunities, nevertheless, (sub)cultural affinities can facilitate effective personal and business relationships. Thus Chinese ethnicity has become a form of social capital.

However, the proposal by political analysts and pundits for the formation of a new "bamboo curtain" or "greater China" that encompasses Southeast Asian Chinese is unwarranted and possibly dangerous. In many countries, the Chinese were able to succeed, and live peacefully in the new homelands, precisely because they kept a low profile, avoided political representations, and focused on economics and the business of earning a living. Historically, the ethnic Chinese minority were often perceived as a threat and a potential "fifth column" through which Communist China could extend their political power. States such as Indonesia, Philippines and Malaysia made it difficult for the ethnic Chinese minority to become citizens of the newly independent countries. Given the geo-political realities of Southeast Asia, ethnic identity and ethnic relations must be managed carefully. Even as the rise of China has led to renewed interest in things Chinese, and a resurgence of ethnic identification as Chinese in Southeast Asian countries, the longer term position of the Chinese migrant and the nature of ethnic relations between the Chinese and the host communities remains uncertain. As one informant, commenting on the renewed interest in Chineseness in Indonesia, but could just as aptly apply to many Southeast Asian countries, noted, "Yes, for now, Chineseness is the new fashion. But history seems to repeat itself. Come back 10 years later, and I might tell you a different story."

Bibliography

Abraham, C.E.R. (1983) Racial and Ethnic Manipulation in Colonial Malaya. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 6(1), 18–32.

Abraham, C.E.R. (2004) *The Naked Social Order: The Roots of Racial Polarisation in Malaysia*, Selangor Darul Ehsan, Malaysia: Pelanduk Publications (M) Sdn Bhd.

Aguilar, F.V. (2001) Citizenship, Inheritance and the Indigenizing of "Orang Chinese" in Indonesia. *Positions: East Asia Cultures Critique,* 9(3), Winter, 501–533.

Alatas, S.H. (1977) Problem of Defining Religion. *International Social Science Journal*, 29(2), 213–234.

Alba, R. and Nee, V. (1999) Rethinking Assimilation Theory for a New Era of Immigration. In C. Hirschman, P. Kasinitz and J. De Wing (eds.), *The Handbook of International Migration: The American Experience*, New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

Alexander, G. (1973) *The Invisible China: The Overseas Chinese and the Politics of Southeast Asia,* New York: Macmillan.

Alip, E.M. (1974) *The Chinese in Manila*, Manila: National Historical Commission.

Alonso, A.M. (1994) The Politics of Space, Time and Substance: State Formation, Nationalism and Ethnicity. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 23, 379–405.

Amer, R. (1991) *The Ethnic Chinese in Vietnam and Sino-Vietnamese Relations*, Forum: Kuala Lumpur.

Amyot, J. (1972) *The Chinese and National Integration in Southeast Asia*, Institute of Asian Studies Monograph, Bangkok: Chulalongkorn University.

Amyot, J. (1973) *The Manila Chinese*, Quezon City, Philippines: Institute of Philippine Culture, Ateneo de Manila University, IPC Monographs No. 2.

Anderson, B. (1972a) The Idea of Power in Javanese Culture. In C. Holt (ed.) (with B. Anderson and J. Siegel), *Culture and Politics in Indonesia*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, pp. 1–69.

Anderson, B. (1972b) *Java in a Time of Revolution, Occupation and Resistance, 1944–1946*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Anderson, B. (1978) Studies of the Thai State: The State of Thai Studies. In E. Ayal (ed.), *The Study of Thailand: Analyses of Knowledge, Approaches and Prospects in Anthropology, Art History, Economics, History, and Political Science*, Athens: Ohio University Center for International Studies, Southeast Asia Program.

Anderson, B. (1990) *Language and Power: Exploring Political Cultures in Indonesia*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Anderson, B. (ed.). (2001) *Violence and the State in Suharto's Indonesia*, Southeast Asia Program Publications, Southeast Asia Program, Ithaca: Cornell University.

Ang See, T. (1997) The Ethnic Chinese as Filipinos. In *The Chinese in the Philippines: Problems and Perspectives*, Vol. 2, Manila: Kaisa Para Sa Kaunlaran, Inc.

Ang See, T. (2004) *Chinese in the Philippines: Problems and Perspectives*, Vol. 3, Manila: Kaisa Para Sa Kaunlaran Inc.

Ang See, T. (2007) Influx of New Chinese Immigrants to the Philippines: Problems and Challenges. In M. ThunØ (ed.), *Beyond Chinatown: New Chinese Migration and the Global Expansion of China*, Copenhagen, Denmark: NIAS Press.

Ang See, T. and Juan, G.B. (1997) Religious Syncretism among the Chinese in the Philippines. In T.A. See (ed.), *Chinese in the Philippines: Problems and Perspectives,* Vol. 1, Manila: Kaisa Para Sa Kaunlaran Inc.

Arasaratnam, S. (1976) *Ethnic Integration in South Vietnam*. Unpublished Thesis, Department of Political Science, University of Singapore.

Asia Times (2007) *China, Vietnam churn Diplomatic Waters*, 20 December.

Aung-Thwin, M. (2008) Mranma Pran: When Context Encounters Notion. *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, 39(2), 193–217.

Back, L. and Solomos, J. (eds.). (2000) *Theories of Race and Racism: A Reader*, London: Routledge.

Banks, M. (1996) *Ethnicity: Anthropological Constructions*. London: Routledge.

Banton, M.P. (1987) *Racial Theories*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Bao, J. (2007) *Lukchin*: Chinese Thai Transnational Bridge Builders. In T. Chee-Beng (ed.), *Chinese Transnational Networks*, London, New York: Routledge, pp. 92–106.

Barth, F. (1969) *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organization of Cultural Difference*. London: Allen and Unwin.

Bauman, Z. (1990) Modernity and Ambivalence. *Theory, Culture and Society*, 7, June, 143–169.

Bauman, Z. (2000) A Sociological Theory of Postmodernity. In K. Nash (ed.), *Readings in Contemporary Political Sociology,* Oxford: Blackwell.

Baviera, A.S.P. (1994) *Contemporary Political Attitudes and Behaviour of the Chinese in Metro Manila*, Quezon City: Philippine-China Development Resource Center.

BBC News (2007) *Vietnam Looks Forward to UN Role*, 31 December, 2007.

Bell, D. (1975) Ethnicity and Social Change. In N. Glazer and D.P. Moynihan (eds.), *Ethnicity: Theory & Experience,* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, pp. 141–176.

Benjamin, G. (1976) The Cultural Logic of Singapore's Multiculturalism. In R. Hassan (ed.), *Singapore: Society in Transition*, Kuala Lumpur: Oxford UP, pp. 115–133.

Berger, P.L. and Luckmann, T. (1966) *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge*, Garden City, NY: Doubleday.

Bhabha, H.K. (1990) *Nation and Narration*, London: Routledge.

Blaker, J.R. (1970) *The Chinese in the Philippines: A Study of Power and Change*, Ph.D. thesis, The Ohio State University, Ann Arbor, MI: University Microfilms International.

Boeke, J. (1961) *Indonesian Economics: The Concept of Dualism in Theory and Policy,* The Hague: Van Hoeve.

Bonacich, E. (1973) A Theory of Middleman Minorities. *American Sociological Review*, 38(5), 583–594.

Botan (1977) *Letters from Thailand*, translated by S.F. Morell, Bangkok: D.K. Books.

Brass, P.R. (1991) *Ethnicity and Nationalism: Theory and Comparison*, London: Sage Publications.

Brown, D. (1994) *The State and Ethnic Politics in Southeast Asia*, London, NY: Routledge.

Brubaker, R. (2001) Cognitive Perspectives. *Ethnicities*, 1 [1] April, 15–17.

Budiman, A. (2005) Portrait of the Chinese in Post-Soeharto Indonesia. In T. Lindsey and H. Pausacker (eds.), *Chinese Indonesians: Remembering, Distorting, Forgetting*, Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies.

Burusratanaphand, W. (2001) Chinese Identity in Thailand. In C.K. Tong and C.K. Bun (eds.), *Alternate Identities: The Chinese of Contemporary Thailand*, Singapore: Times Academic Press.

Cariño, T.C. (1994) State Ideology, Policies and the Ethnic Identity: The Case of the Chinese in the Philippines. In T.A. See and G.B. Juan (eds.), *The Ethnic Chinese: Proceedings of the International Conference on Changing Identities and the Relations in Southeast Asia*, Manila: Kaisa Para Sa Kaunlaran Inc, pp. 149–155.

Cariño, T.C. (1998) *Chinese Big Business in the Philippines: Political Leadership and Change*, Singapore: Times Academic Press.

Cartier, C. (2003) Diaspora and Social Restructuring in Post-Colonial Malaysia. In L. Ma and C. Cartier (eds.), *The Chinese Diaspora: Space, Place. Mobility and Identity*, Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, pp. 69–96.

Cashmore, E. (1988) *Dictionary of Race and Ethnic Relations* (2nd Edition), London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Castillo, A.V. (1964) The Chinese Role in Philippine Economic Progress. In S.S.C. Liao (ed.), *Chinese Participation in Philippine Culture and Economy*, Manila: Bookman Inc, pp. 172–177.

Cham B.N. (1975) Class and Communal Conflict in Malaysia. *Journal of Contemporary Asia*, 5(4), 446–461.

Chan, S.C. (2003) From Dispersed to Localised: Family in Singapore. In K.B. Chan and C.K. Tong (eds.), *Past Times: A Social History of Singapore,* Singapore: Times Editions.

Chan, K.B. (2005) *Chinese Identities, Ethnicity and Cosmopolitanism*, London, NY: Routledge.

Chan, K.B. and Ong, J.H. (1995) *Crossing Borders: Transmigration in the Asia Pacific*, Singapore: Prentice-Hall.

Chan, K.B. and Tong, C.K. (2000) Singaporean Chinese Doing Business in China. In K.B. Chan (ed.), *Chinese Business Networks*, Singapore: Prentice Hall.

Chan, K.B. and Tong, C.K. (2001) Positionality and Alternation: Identity of the Chinese of Thailand. In C.K. Tong and K.B. Chan (eds.), *Alternate Identities: The Chinese of Contemporary Thailand*, Leiden and Singapore: Brill Publishers and Times Academic Press.

Chandra, S. (2002) Race, Inequality, and Anti-Chinese Violence in the Netherlands Indies. *Explorations in Economic History*, 39(1), 88–112.

Chang, P.-M. (1982) *Beijing, Hanoi, and the Overseas Chinese*, Berkeley: Institute of East Asian Studies, University of California, Berkeley.

Chantavanich, S. and Sikharaksakul, S. (1995) Preservation of Ethnic Identity and Acculturation: A Case Study of a Hainanese School in Bangkok. *Southeast Asian Journal of Social Sciences,* 23(1), 78–87.

Chantavanich, S. and Somkiat, S. (1995) Preservation of Ethnic Identity and Acculturation: The Case Study of a Hainanese School in Bangkok. *Southeast Asian Journal of Social Science*, 23(1), 78–87.

Cheah, B.K. (2002) *Malaysia: The Making of a Nation*, Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies.

Cheah, B.K. (2003) *Red Star over Malaya: Resistance and Social Conflict during and after the Japanese Occupation, 1941–1946*, Singapore: Singapore University Press.

Chen, Y.S. (1976) The Chinese in Rangoon during the 18th and 19th Centuries. In *Papers on Asian History, Religion, Languages, Literature, Music Folklore, and Anthropology*, Ascona, Leiden: Artibus Asia.

Chen, P.S.J. and Evers, H.-D. (1978) *Studies in ASEAN Sociology: Urban Society and Social Change*, Singapore: Chopmen Enterprises.

Chiew, S.K. (1983) Ethnicity and National Integration: The Evolution of a Multi-Ethnic Society. In P. Chen (ed.), *Singapore: Development Policies and Trends*, Singapore: Oxford UP, pp. 29–64.

Christian, J.L. (1942) *Modern Myanmar: A Survey of its Political and Economic Development*, Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.

Chua, C. (2004) Defining Indonesian Chineseness under the New Order. *Journal of Contemporary Asia*, 34(4), 465–479.

Chun, A. (1996) Discourses of Identity in the Changing Spaces of Public Culture in Taiwan, Hong Kong and Singapore. *Theory, Culture & Society*, 13(1), 51–75.

Clammer, J. (1981a) Chinese Ethnicity and Political Culture in Singapore. In L.A. Gosling and L. Lim (eds.), *The Chinese in Southeast Asia*, Singapore: Maruzen Asia, pp. 266–284.

Clammer, J. (1981b) The Institutionalization of Ethnicity: The Culture of Ethnicity in Singapore. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 5(2), 127–139.

Cohen, A.P. (1985) *The Symbolic Construction of Community*, London: Tavistock Publications.

Collins, A. (2006) Chinese Educationalists in Malaysia: Defenders of Chinese Identity. *Asian Survey*, 46(2), 298–318.

Coppel, C. (1976) Patterns of Political Activity in Indonesia. In J.A.C. Mackie (ed.), *The Chinese in Indonesia: Five Essays*, Melbourne: Nelson, pp. 19–76.

Coppel, C.A. (1983) *Indonesian Chinese in Crisis*, Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press.

Coppel, C. (2002a) The Indonesian Chinese: "Foreign Orientals", Netherlands subjects, and Indonesian citizens. In M.B. Hooker (ed.), *Law and the Chinese in Southeast Asia*, ISEAS, Singapore, pp. 131–149.

Coppel, C. (2002b) *Studying Ethnic Chinese in Indonesia*, Singapore: Singapore Society of Asian Studies.

Coppel, C.A. (2004) Historical Impediments to the Acceptance of Ethnic Chinese in a Multicultural Indonesia. In L. Suryadinata (ed.), *Chinese Indonesians: State Policy, Monoculture and Multiculture*, Singapore: Eastern Universities Press.

Cornell, S. and Hartmann, D. (1998) *Ethnicity and Race: Making Identities in a Changing World*, London: Pine Forge Press.

Coughlin, R.J. (1960) *Double Identity: The Chinese in Modern Thailand*, Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press.

Cribb, R. and Brown, C. (1995) *Modern Indonesia: A History since 1945*, London: Longman.

Crouch, H. (1975) Generals and Business in Indonesia. *Pacific Affairs*, 48(4), 519–540.

De Vos, G. and Romannuci-Ross, L. (1982) *Ethnic Identity: Cultural Continuities and Change*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Dibble, C.R. (1979) *The Chinese in Thailand against the Background of Chinese-Thai Relations*, Ann Arbor: Michigan: University Microfilms.

Dobbin, C.E. (1996) *Asian Entrepreneurial Minorities: Conjoint Communities in the Making of the World Economy, 1570–1940*, Surrey: Curzon Press.

Douglas, S.A. (1997) Political Dynamics of the Diaspora: The Chinese in Southeast Asia. *Asian Journal of Political Science*, 5(2), 37–48.

Duiker, W.J. (1986) *China and Vietnam: The Roots of Conflict*, Berkeley, California: Institute of East Asian Studies, University of California.

Ebry, P. (1993) *Chinese Civilization and Society: A Sourcebook*, New York: Free Press.

Eitzen, D.S. (1974) Two Minorities: The Jews of Poland and the Chinese of the Philippines. In C.J. McCarthy (ed.), *Philippine Chinese Profile: Essays and Studies*, Manila: Pagkakaisa Sa Pag-unlad, pp. 107–128.

Eller, J.D. (1999) *From Culture to Ethnicity to Conflict*, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Eller, J.D. and Coughlan, R.M. (1993) The Poverty of Primordialism: The Demystification of Ethnic Attachments. *Ethnic and Racial Studies,* 16, 181–202.

Epstein, A.L. (1978) *Ethos and Identity: Three Studies in Ethnicity*, London: Tavistock Publications.

Erb, M. (2003) Moulding a Nation: Education in Early Singapore. In K.B. Chan and C.K. Tong (eds.), *Past Times: A Social History of Singapore*, Singapore: Times Editions.

Eriksen, T.H. (1993) *Ethnicity and Nationalism: Anthropological Perspectives*, London: Pluto Press.

Fernando, M.R. (1992) Introduction. In M.R. Fernando and D. Bulbeck (eds.), *Chinese Economic Activity in Netherlands India: Selected Translations from the Dutch*, Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies.

Fforde, A. and de Vylder, S. (1996) *From Plan to Market: The Economic Transition in Vietnam*, Boulder, CO: Westview Press Inc.

Foulcher, K. (2000) Sumpah Pemuda: The Making and Meaning of a Symbol of Indonesian Nationhood. *Asian Studies Review*, 24(3), 377–410.

Franke, W. (1965) Problems of Chinese Education in Singapore and Malaya. *Malaysian Journal of Education*, 2(2), 182–193.

Freeman, D.B. (1996) Doi Moi Policy and the Small Enterprise Boom in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. *Geographical Review,* 86(2), 178–197.

Freedman, A.L. (2000) Chinese Overseas Acculturation in Malaysia and the Effect of Government Policy and Institutions. In T.A. See (ed.), *Intercultural Relations, Cultural Transformation, and Identity: The Ethnic Chinese: Selected Papers Presented at the 1998 ISSCO Conference*, Manila: Kaisa-Angelo King Heritage Center.

Furnivall, J. (1948) *Colonial Policy and Practice: A Comparative Study of Burma and Netherlands India*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Furnivall, J. (1956) *Colonial Policy and Practice: A Comparative Study of Burma and Netherlands India*, New York: New York University Press.

Gambe, A. (2000) *Overseas Chinese Entrepreneurship and Capitalist Development in Southeast Asia*, New York: St. Martin's Press.

Gans, H. (1979) Symbolic Ethnicity: The Future of Ethnic Groups and Cultures in America. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 2(1), 1–20.

Garver, J.W. (2001) *Protracted Contest: Sino-Indian Rivalry in the Twentieth Century*, Seattle: University of Washington Press.

Geertz, C. (1963) *Old Societies and New States*, Glencoe: The Free Press.

Geertz, C. (1973) *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays by Clifford Geertz*, New York: Basic Books Inc.

Giddens, A. (1991) *Modernity and Self Identity*, Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Glazer, N. and Moynihan, D. (1975) Introduction. In N. Glazer and D. Moynihan (eds.), *Ethnicity: Theory and Experience*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, pp. 1–26.

Gluckman, M. (1958) The Analysis of a Social Situation in Modern Zululand. *African Studies*, 14, 1–30.

Go, G.T. (1968) The Assimilation Problem of the Chinese in Indonesia. *Cultures et Developpement*, 1(1), 41–59.

Goh, P.W. (1961) *A Study of Kinship Relations of Some Teochew (Chaochow) Nuclear Families in Singapore*. Unpublished manuscript, National University of Singapore.

Goh, D.P.S. (2008) Post-colonial Disorientations: Colonial Ethnography and the Vectors of the Philippine Nation in the Imperial Frontier. *Post Colonial Studies*, 11(3), 257–276.

Goldberg, D. (1992) The Semantics of Race. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 15(4), 544–569.

Golomb, L. (1978) *Brokers of Morality: Thai Ethnic Adaptation in a Rural Malaysian Setting*, Hawaii: University of Hawaii Press.

Gomez, E.T. (2000) In Search of Patrons: Chinese Business Networking and Malay Political Patronage in Malaysia. In K.B. Chan (ed.), *Chinese Business Networks*, Singapore: Prentice Hall, pp. 207–233.

Goodman, D.S.G. (1997) *The Ethnic Chinese in East and Southeast Asia: Local Insecurities and Regional Concerns*. CAPS Papers 17, R. Yang (ed.), Chinese Council of Advanced Policy Studies.

Gopinathan, S. (1980) Language Policy in Education. In E.A. Afendras and E.C.Y. Kuo (eds.), *Language and Society in Singapore*, Singapore: Singapore University Press, pp. 175–202.

Gordon, M. (1964) *Assimilation in American Life*, New York: Oxford University Press.

Gray, C.E. (1986) *Thailand: The Soteriological State in the 1970s*. Ph.D. dissertation, University of Chicago.

Greif, S.W. (1988) *Indonesians of Chinese Origin: Assimilation and the Goal of "One Nation-One People"*, New York: Professors World Peace Academy.

Guillaumin, C. (1995) *Racism, Sexism, Power, and Ideology*, London: Routledge.

Gupta, A. and Ferguson, J. (1997) *Culture, Power, Place: Explorations in Critical Anthropology,* Chapel Hill: Duke University Press.

Guskin, A.E. (1969) *Changing Identity: The Assimilation of Chinese in Thailand*, Ann Arbor, MI: University Microfilms.

Hamilton, G.G. and Waters, T. (1997) Ethnicity and Capitalist Development: The Changing Role of the Chinese in Thailand. In D. Chirot and A. Reid (eds.), *Essential Outsiders: Chinese and Jews in the Modern Transformation of Southeast Asia and Central Europe,* Seattle: University of Washington.

Hara, F. (1991) Malaysia's New Economic Policy and the Chinese Business Community. *The Developing Economies*, 24(4), 350–370.

Hassan, R. and Benjamin, G. (1976) Ethnic Outmarriage and Sociocultural Organization. In R. Hassan (ed.), *Singapore: Society in Transition*, Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, pp. 205–220.

Hedman, E.-L.E. and Sidel, J.T. (2000) Forget it, Jake, it's Chinatown. In E.-L.E. Hedman and J.T. Sidel (eds.), *Philippine Politics and Society in the Twentieth Century: Colonial Legacies, Post-colonial Trajectories*, London: Routledge, pp. 65–87.

Heng, P.K. (1988) *Chinese Politics in Malaysia: A History of the Malaysian Chinese Association*, Singapore: Oxford University Press.

Heng, P.K. and Sieh Lee, M.L. (1999) The Chinese Business Community in Peninsula Malaysia, 1957–1999. In L.K. Hing and T. Chee-Beng (eds.), *The Chinese in Malaysia*, US: Oxford University Press, pp. 123–168.

Hill, A.M. (1998a) The Chinese in Northern Thailand: A Preliminary Perspective on Kinship and Ethnicity. In F.L.K. Hsu and H. Serrie (eds.), *The Overseas Chinese: Ethnicity in National Context*, Lanham: University Press of America Inc.

Hill, A.M. (1998b), *Merchants and Migrants: Ethnicity and Trade among Yunnanese Chinese in Southeast Asia*, New Haven, CT: Yale University Southeast Asia Studies.

Hill, M. and Lian, K.F. (1995) *The Politics of Nation Building and Citizenship in Singapore*, London, New York: Routledge.

Hing, L.K. and Koon, H.P. (2000) The Chinese in the Malaysian Political System. In L.K. Hing and T.C. Beng (eds.), *The Chinese in Malaysia*, New York: Oxford University Press, pp. 194–227.

Hirschman, C. (1988) Changing Identities in Southeast Asia: Alternative Perspectives. In J. Cushman and Wang G. (eds.), *Changing Identities of the Southeast Asian Chinese Since World War Two*, Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, pp. 23–31.

Hodder, B.W. (1953) Racial Groupings in Singapore. *Singapore Journal of Tropical Geography*, 1, 25–36.

Hoon, C.-Y. (2006a) A Hundred Flowers Bloom': The Re-emergence of the Chinese Press in post-Suharto Indonesia. In S. Wanning (ed.), *Media and the Chinese Diaspora: Community, Communications and Commerce*, Oxon: Routledge.

Hoon, C.-Y. (2006b) Assimilation, Multiculturalism, Hybridity: The Dilemmas of the Ethnic Chinese in Post-Suharto Indonesia. *Asian Ethnicity*, 7(2), 149–166.

Hsieh, J. (1978) The Chinese Community in Singapore: The Internal Structure and its Basic Constituents. In *Studies in ASEAN* Sociology, Singapore: Chopmen Enterprises.

Huang, S.-M. (2007) A Chinese Diasporic Community in Northern Thailand: Contested Political Loyalty and Shifting Ethnicity. In C.B. Tan (ed.), *Chinese Transnational Networks*, London, NY: Routledge, pp. 172–190.

Hunt, C.L., et al. (1963) *Sociology in the Philippine Setting*, Quezon City: Phoenix Publishing House.

Hutchinson, J. and Smith, A.D. (1996) Introduction. In J. Hutchinson and A.D. Smith (eds.), *Ethnicity*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Isaacs, H.R. (1975) Basic Group Identity: The Idols of the Tribe. In N. Glazer and D.P. Moynihan (eds.), *Ethnicity: Theory and Experience*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, pp. 29–52.

Jenkins, R. (1997) *Rethinking Ethnicity: Arguments and Explorations*, London: Sage.

Jiang, J.P.L. (1966) *The Chinese in Thailand*, Singapore: Unpublished Thesis, Department of History, University of Singapore.

Jory, P. (1999) Political Decentralisation and the Resurgence of Regional Identities in Thailand. *Australian Journal of Social Issues*, 34(4), 337–352.

Juan, G.B. (1996) *Myths about the Ethnic Chinese Economic Miracle*, translated by J. Sy, Manila: Kaisa Para Sa Kaunlaran Inc.

Kahn, J.S. (1982) Ideology and Social Structure in Indonesia. In B. Anderson and A. Kahin (eds.), *Interpreting Indonesian Politics: Thirteen Contributions to the Debate*, Ithaca: Cornell Modern Indonesia Project, Southeast Asia Program, Cornell University, pp. 92–103.

Khanh, T. (1993) *The Ethnic Chinese and Economic Development in Vietnam*, Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies.

Koon, H.P. and Ling, S.L.M. (2000) The Chinese Business Community in Peninsula Malaysia, 1957–1999. In L.K. Hing and T. Chee-Beng (eds.), *The Chinese in Malaysia*, New York: Oxford University Press, pp. 123–168.

Kukreja, S. (2002) Political Hegemony, Popular Legitimacy and the Reconstruction of the Ethnic Divide in Malaysia: Some Observations. *Crossroads: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, 16, 19–48.

Kuo, E. and R. Hassan (1979) Ethnic Intermarriage in a Multiethnic Society. In E. Kuo and A.K. Wong (eds.), *The Contemporary Family in Singapore*, Singapore: Singapore University Press, pp. 168–188.

Ky, L.N. (1963) *The Chinese in Vietnam: A Study of Vietnamese-Chinese Relations with Special Attention to the Period 1862–1961*. PhD. Dissertation, University of Michigan.

Landon, K.P. (1941) *The Chinese in Thailand*, New York: International Secretariat and Publication Office.

Landon, K.P. (1939) *Thailand in Transition: A Brief Survey of Cultural Trends in the Five Years since the Revolution of 1932*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Lane, M. (2007) Pramoedya, Racialism and Socialism in Toer. In *The Chinese in Indonesia: An English Translation of Hoakiau di Indonesia,* translated into English by M. Lane; M. Redway, T.D. Feng (eds.); with contributed essays from K.S. Jomo et al., Singapore: Select Pub.

Lau, A. (1991) *The Malayan Union Controversy 1942–1948*, Singapore: Oxford University Press.

Lau, F. (2005) Entertaining "Chineseness": Chinese Singing Clubs in Contemporary Bangkok. *Visual Anthropology*, 18(2), 143–166.

Le, M.H. (2004) *The Impact of World War II on the Economy of Vietnam 1939–1945*, Singapore: Marshall Cavendish International.

Leach, E.R. (1954) *Political Systems of Highland Burma: A Study of Kachin Social Structure,* Cambridge, Harvard Univ. Press.

Lee, K.Y. (1978) "Mandarin: Lingua Franca for Chinese Singaporeans", *Speeches*, Singapore: The Publicity Division, Ministry of Culture, pp. 1–8.

Lee, S.M. (1988) Intermarriage and Ethnic Relations in Singapore. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 50, 255–265.

Lee, K.H. (1997) Malaysian Chinese: Seeking Identity in Wawasan 2020. In L. Suryadinata (ed.), *Ethnic Chinese as Southeast Asians*, Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies.

Lee, K.H. (1998) The Political Position of the Chinese in Post-independence Malaysia. In L.-C. Wang and G. Wang (eds.), *The Chinese Diaspora: Selected Essays*, Vol. 2, Singapore: Times Academic Press, pp. 28–49.

Lee, K.H. and Heng, P.K. (1999) The Chinese in the Malaysian Political System. In K.H. Lee and T.C. Beng (eds.), *The Chinese in Malaysia*, New York: Oxford University Press, pp. 194–227.

Leong H.L. (2003) Ethnicity & Class in Malaysia. In C. Mackerras (eds.), *Ethnicity in Asia: A Comparative Introduction*, New York: Routledge, pp. 88–100.

Levi-Strauss, C. (1966) *The Savage Mind*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Lian, K.F. (1997a) Between Kingdom and Nation: The Metamorphosis of Malay Identity in Malaysia. *Southeast Asian Journal of Social Science,* 25(2), 59–78.

Lian, K.F. (1997b) Introduction: Ethnic Identity in Malaysia and Singapore. *Southeast Asian Journal of Social Science*, 25(2), 1–6.

Lian, K.F. (1995) Migration and the Formation of Malaysia and Singapore. In R. Cohen (ed.), *The Cambridge Survey of World Migration*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Lian, K.F. (2001) The Construction of Malay Identity Across Nations: Malaysia, Singapore and Indonesia. *Bijdragen*, 157(4), 861–879.

Lian, K.F. (2006) Race and Racialization in Malaysia and Singapore. In K.F. Lian (ed.), *Race, Ethnicity, and the State in Malaysia and Singapore*, Leiden: Brill Academic Publishers, pp. 219–233.

Lian, K.F. and Ananda, R. (1993) The Ethnic Mosaic. In G. Evans (ed.), *Asia's Cultural Mosaic: An Anthropological Introduction*, New York: Prentice Hall.

Lian, K.F. and Ananda, R. (2002) Race and Ethnic Relations in Singapore. In C.K. Tong and K.F. Lian (eds.), *The Making of Singapore Sociology*, Singapore: Oxford University Press.

Liang, C.-S. (1997) Burma's Relations with China. In P. Carey (ed.), *Burma: The Challenge of Change in a Divided Society*, Great Britain: Macmillan Press Ltd.

Liao, S.S.C. (1964) *Chinese Participation in Philippine Culture and Economy*, Manila: Bookman Inc.

Lieberman, V. (2003) *Strange Parallels: Southeast Asia in Global Context c800–1830*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Light, I. (1994) Ethnic Enterprise in America: Japanese, Chinese, and Blacks. In R. Takaki (ed.), *From Different Shores: Perspectives on Race and Ethnicity in America*, New York: Oxford University Press.

Light, I. (1999) Immigrant and Ethnic Enterprise in North America. In S. Vertovec (ed.), *Migration and Social Cohesion*, Cheltenham, UK: Elgar, Edward.

Light, I.H. (1988) *Immigrant Entrepreneurs: Koreans in Los Angeles, 1965–1982*, Berkeley: University of California Press.

Lim, L.Y.C. and Gosling, P.L.A. (1997) Strengths and Weaknesses of Minority Status for Southeast Asian Chinese at a Time of Economic Growth and Liberalization. In D. Chirot and A. Reid (eds.), *Essential Outsiders: Chinese and Jews in the Modern Transformation of Southeast Asia and Central Europe*, Seattle: University of Washington.

Lindsey, T. (2005) Reconstituting the Ethnic Chinese in Post-Soeharto Indonesia: Law, Racial Discrimination and Reform. In T. Lindsey and H. Pausacker (eds.), *Chinese Indonesians: Remembering, Distorting, Forgetting*, Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies.

Lintner, B. (1998) Drugs and Economic Growth: Ethnicity and Exports. In R.I. Rotberg (ed.), *Burma: Prospects for a Democratic Future*, Cambridge, MA: The World Peace Foundation and Harvard Institute for International Development.

Liu, H. (1998) Old Linkages, New Networks: The Globalization of Overseas Chinese Voluntary Associations and Its Implications, *The China Quarterly*, 155 (September): 582–609.

Loh, S.C. (1988/1989) *The Singapore Chinese Community: From Sojourners to Citizens 1900–1957.* Unpublished thesis, National University of Singapore.

Loh, F.K.W. (1999) Chinese New Villages: Ethnic Identity and Politics. In L.K. Hing and T. Chee-Beng (eds.), *The Chinese in Malaysia*, US: Oxford University Press, pp. 255–281.

Loh, F.K.W. (2000) Chinese New Villages: Ethnic Identity and Politics. In L.K. Hing and T. Chee-Beng (eds.), *The Chinese in Malaysia*, New York: Oxford University Press, pp. 255–281.

Lohanda, M. (2002) *Growing Pains: The Chinese and the Dutch in Colonial Java, 1890–1942*, Jakarta: Yayasan Cipta Loka Caraka.

Lubis, M. (1952) The Press in Indonesia. *Far Eastern Survey*, 21(9), 90–94.

Mackie, J.A.C. (ed.). (1976) *The Chinese in Indonesia: Five Essays*, Singapore: Heinemann Educational Books.

Mackie, J.A.C. (1982) Indonesia since 1945 – Problems of Interpretation. In B. Anderson and A. Kahin (eds.), *Interpreting Indonesian Politics: Thirteen Contributions to the Debate*, Ithaca: Cornell Modern Indonesia Project, Southeast Asia Program, Cornell University, pp. 117–130.

Mackie, J.A.C. (1996) Introduction. In A. Reid with the assistance of K.A. Rodgers (eds.), *Sojourners and Settlers: Histories of Southeast Asia and the Chinese: In Honour of Jennifer Cushman*, St. Leonards, New South Wales: Asian Studies Association of Australia in association with Allen and Unwin, pp. xii–xxix.

Maier, H.M.J. (1993) From Heteroglossia to Polyglossia: The Creation of Malay and Dutch in the Indiies. *Indonesia*, 56, 37–65.

Marsot, A.G. (1993) *The Chinese Community in Vietnam Under the French*, New York: The Edwin Mellen Press.

Maung, M. (1964) Cultural Value and Economic Change in Burma. *Asian Survey*, 4(3), 757–764.

Maung, M. (1990) The Burma Road from the Union of Burma to Myanmar. *Asian Survey*, 30(6), 602–623.

Maung, M. (1994) On the Road to Mandalay: A Case Study of the Sinocization of Upper Burma. *Asian Survey*, 34(5), 447–459.

Morawska, E. (1994) In Defense of the Assimilation Model. *Journal of American Ethnic History*, 13, Winter, 75–87.

Nagata, J. (1995) Chinese Custom and Christian Culture: Implications for Chinese Identity in Malaysia. In L. Suryadinata (ed.), *Southeast Asian Chinese: The Socio-Cultural Dimension*, Singapore: Times Academic Press, pp. 166–201.

Niew, S.T. (2006) Brunei. In L. Pan (ed.), *The Encyclopaedia of the Chinese Overseas*, Singapore: Editions Didier Millet, pp. 138–139.

Ng, S.M. (2006) Laos. In L. Pan (ed.), *The Encyclopaedia of the Chinese Overseas*, Singapore: Editions Didier Millet, pp. 169–171.

Nhi, K.L. (1962) The Chinese in Vietnam: A Study of Vietnamese-Chinese relations with special attention to the period 1862–1961, PhD. Dissertation, University of Michigan.

Okamura, J.Y. (1981) Situational Ethnicity. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 4(4), 452–465.

Ong, Y.H. (1974) *The Politics of Chinese Education in Singapore During the Colonial Period*. M.A. thesis, Department of Political Science, National University of Singapore.

Ong, J.H., Chan, K.B. and Chew, S.B. (eds.). (1995) *Crossing Borders: Transmigration in Asia Pacific*, Singapore: Prentice Hall.

Onozawa, M. (1990) Continuity and Change in a Local Chinese Community in Thailand. In *Continuity and Change in Overseas Chinese Communities in the Pan-Pacific Area*, Ibaraki, Japan: Research Group for Overseas Chinese Studies, University of Tsukuba, pp. 26–27.

Osman-Rani, H. (1990) Economic Development and Ethnic Integration: The Malaysian Experience. *Sojourn*, 5(1), 1–34.

Ossapan, P. (1979) The Chinese in Thailand. In L. Dhiravegin (ed.), *Reader on Minorities in Thailand*, Bangkok: Phraephittaya.

Park, R.E. (1950) *Race and Culture*, Chicago: The Free Press.

Park, R. (2000) The Nature of Race Relations. In L. Back and J. Solomos (eds.), *Theories of Race and Racism: A Reader*. London and New York: Routledge, pp. 105–112.

Park, R.E. and Burgess, E.W. (1924) *Introduction to the Science of Sociology*, Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press.

Pakir, A. (1993) Two Tongues Tied: Bilingualism in Singapore. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development,* 14, 73–90.

Phang, H.E. (2000) The Economic Role of the Chinese in Malaysia. In L.K. Hing and T. Chee-Beng (eds.), *The Chinese in Malaysia*, US: Oxford University Press, pp. 94–122.

Pongsapich, A. (2001) Chinese Settlers and their Role in Modern Thailand. In C.K. Tong and C.K. Bun (eds.), *Alternate Identities: The Chinese of Contemporary Thailand*, Singapore: Times Academic Press.

Punyodyana, B. (1971) *Chinese-Thai Differential Assimilation in Bangkok: An Exploratory Study*, Data Paper 79, Ithaca: Southeast Asian Program, Cornell University.

Punyodyana, B. (1976) The Chinese in Thailand: A Synopsis of Research Approaches. *The Philippines Sociological Review*, 24, 57–61.

Purcell, V. (1965) *The Chinese in Southeast Asia*, London: Oxford University Press.

Purcell, V. (1967) *The Chinese in Malaya*, Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press.

Purdey, J. (2002) Problematizing the Place of Victims in Reformasi Indonesia: A Contested Truth about the May 1998 Violence. *Asian Survey,* 42(4), 605–622.

Purdey, J. (2003) Reopening the Asimilasi *vs* Integrasi Debate: Ethnic Chinese Identity in Post-Suharto Indonesia. *Asian Ethnicity*, 4(3), 421–437.

Purdey, J. (2006) *Anti-Chinese Violence in Indonesia, 1996–1999,* Singapore: Singapore University Press.

Rajah, A. (1998) Ethnicity and Civil War in Burma: Where is the Rationality? In R. Rothberg (ed.), *Burma: Prospects for a Democratic Future*. Washington, DC: Brookings Institute Press.

Ratcliffe, P. (2004) *Race, Ethnicity and Difference: Imagining the Inclusive Society,* Buckingham: McGraw Hill.

Reid, A. (1997) Entrepreneurial Minorities, Nationalism and the State. In D. Chirot and A. Reid (eds.), *Essential Outsiders: Chinese and Jews in the Modern Transformation of Southeast Asia and Central Europe,* Seattle: University of Washington.

Reynolds, V. (1980) *The Biology of Human Action*, San Francisco: W.H. Freeman and Company.

Ricklefs, M.C. (1981) *A History of Modern Indonesia: c. 1300 to the Present*, Macmillan: London.

Robison, R. (1997) Politics and Markets in Indonesia's Post-oil Era. In G. Rodan, K. Hewison and R. Robison (eds.), *The Political Economy of South-East Asia*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 29–63.

Rossetti, F. (1997) The Chinese in Laos: Rebirth of the Laotian Chinese Community as Peace Returns to Indochina. *China Perspectives*, No. 13, Hong Kong: French Centre for Research on Contemporary China.

Rush, J. (1991) Placing the Chinese in Java on the Eve of the Twentieth Century. *Indonesia* (Special Issue), pp. 13–24.

Rushdie, S. and Grass, G. (1987) Writing for a Future. In B. Bourne et al. (eds.), *Writers and Politics*, Nottingham: Spokesman Hobo Press, pp. 52–64.

Salmon, C. (1996) Ancestral Halls, Funeral Associations and Attempts at Resinicization in Nineteenth-century Netherlands India. In A. Reid with the assistance of K.A. Rodgers (eds.), *Sojourners and Settlers: Histories of Southeast Asia and the Chinese: In Honour of Jennifer Cushman*, St. Leonards, New South Wales: Asian Studies Association of Australia in association with Allen and Unwin, pp. 183–214.

SarDesai, D.R. (1988) *Vietnam: Trials and Tribulations of a Nation*, Long Beach, CA: Long Beach Publications.

Saw, S.H. (1970) *Singapore Population in Transition,* Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Scott, G. (1990) A Resynthesis of the Primordial and Circumstantial Approaches to Ethnic Group Solidarity: Towards an Exploratory Model. *Ethnic and Racial Studies,* 13(2), 147–171.

Scott, P. (1985) The United States and the Overthrow of Sukarno, 1965–1967. *Pacific Affairs*, 58(2), 239–264.

See, C. (1983) *Cultural Adaptation and Integration of the Chinese-Filipinos*, unpublished work.

See, C. (1985) Chinese Education and Ethnic Identity. In T. Cariño (ed.), *Chinese in the Philippines*, Manila: De La Salle University Press.

See, C. (1992) The Chinese Immigrants: Selected Writings of Professor C. See, T.A. See (ed.), Manila: Kaisa Para Sa Kaunlaran: Chinese Studies Program, De La Salle University.

Selth, A. (1996) Burma and the Strategic Competition between China and India. *The Journal of Strategic Studies*, 19(2), 213–230.

Shamsul, A.B. (1998) Debating about Identity in Malaysia: A Discourse Analysis. In Z. Ibrahim (ed.), *Cultural Contestations: Mediating Identities in a Changing Malaysian Society*, London: ASEAN Academic Press.

Shils, E. (1957) Primordial, Personal, Sacred and Civil Ties: Some Particular Observations on the Relationships of Sociological Research and Theory. *British Journal of Sociology*, 8(2), 130–145.

Shiraishi, T. (1990) *An Age in Motion: Popular Radicalism in Java, 1912–1926*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Shiraishi, T. (1997) Anti-Sinicism in Java's New Order. In D. Chirot and A. Reid (eds.), *Essential Outsiders: Chinese and Jews in the Modern Transformation of Southeast Asia and Central Europe*, Seattle & London: University of Washington Press.

Siddique, S. (1981) Some Aspects of Malay-Muslim Ethnicity in Peninsular Malaysia. *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, 3(1), 76–87.

Siddique, S. (1990) The Phenomenology of Ethnicity: A Singapore Case Study. *Sojourn*, 5(1), 35–62.

Silverstein, J. (1980) *Burmese Politics: The Dilemma of National Unity*, New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.

Skinner, G.W. (1957a) Chinese Assimilation and Thai Politics. *Journal of Asian Studies,* 16(2), 237–250.

Skinner, G.W. (1957b) *Chinese Society in Thailand: An Analytical History*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Skinner, G.W. (1958) *Leadership and Power in the Chinese Community of Thailand*, Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press.

Skinner, G.W. (1963) *The Thailand Chinese: Assimilation in a Changing Society,* Lecture presented at the Thai Council of Asia Society.

Skinner, G.W. (1973) Change and Persistence in Chinese Cultures Overseas: A Comparison of Thailand and Java. In J.T. McAlister (ed.), *Southeast Asia: The Politics of National Integration*, New York: Random House, pp. 399–415.

Smith, M. (1997) Burma's Ethnic Minorities: A Central or Peripheral Problem in the Regional Context. In P. Carey (ed.), *Burma: The Challenge of Change in a Divided Society*. New York: St. Martin's Press, pp. 97–129.

Smith, A.D. (2000) *The Nation in History: Historiographical Debate about Ethnicity and Nationalism*, MA: University Press of New England and Polity Press.

Somers, M.F. (1964) *Peranakan Chinese Politics in Indonesia*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Somers, M.F. (1968) *Peranakan Chinese Politics in Indonesia*, Ithaca: Cornell Modern Indonesia Project Interim Report Series.

Spicer, E.H. (1971) Persistent Cultural Systems. *Science* 174(4011), 795–800.

Steinberg, D.I. (1982) *Burma, a Socialist Nation of Southeast Asia*, Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

Steinberg, D.I. (1991) Democracy, Power and the Economy in Myanmar: Donor Dilemmas. *Asian Survey,* 31(8), 729–742.

Stern, L.M. (1985) The Overseas Chinese in the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, 1979–1982. *Asian Survey*, 25(5), 521–536.

Stern, L.M. (1987a) The Vietnamese Expulsion of the Overseas Chinese. *Issues & Studies: A Journal of China Studies and International Affairs*, 3(7), 102–135.

Stern, L.M. (1987b) The Hoa Kieu Under the Socialist Republic of Vietnam. *Issues and Studies: A Journal of China Studies and International Affairs*, 23(3), 111–143.

Stockwell, A.J. (1982) The White Man's Burden and Brown Humanity: Colonialism and Ethnicity in British Malaya. *Southeast Asian Journal of Social Science*, 10(1), 44–68.

Suryadinata, L. (1992) *Pribumi Indonesians, the Chinese Minority and China*, Singapore: Heinemann Asia.

Suryadinata, L. (1994) Government Policies towards the Ethnic Chinese in the ASEAN States: Comparative Analysis. In T.A. See and G.B. Juan (eds.), *The Ethnic Chinese: Proceedings of the International Conference on Changing Identities and the Relations in Southeast Asia*, Manila: Kaisa Para Sa Kaunlaran Inc, pp. 67–80.

Suryadinata, L. (1997) *Political Thinking of the Indonesian Chinese, 1900–1995: A Sourcebook*, Singapore: Singapore University Press.

Suryadinata, L. (2000) Ethnic Chinese and the Nation-state in Southeast Asia. In T.A. See (ed.), *Intercultural Relations, Cultural Transformations and Identity*, Manila: Kaisa-Angelo King Heritage Center, pp. 308–327.

Suryadinata, L. (2001) Chinese Politics in post-Suharto's Indonesia. *Asian Survey*, 41(3), 502–524.

Suryadinata, L. (2004) Indonesian State Policy towards Ethnic Chinese: From Assimilation to Multi-culturalism? In L. Suryadinata (ed.), *Chinese Indonesians: State Policy, Monoculture and Multiculture*, Singapore: Eastern Universities Press.

Suryadinata, L. (ed.). (2007) *Understanding the Ethnic Chinese in Southeast Asia*, Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies.

Suryadinata, L., Arifin, E.N., Ananta, A. (2003) *Indonesia's Population: Ethnicity and Religion in a Changing Political Landscape*, Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies.

Szanton-Blanc, C. (1983) Thai and Sino-Thai in Small Town Thailand: Changing Patterns of Interethnic Relations. In L.A. Gosling and L.Y.C. Lim (eds.), *The Chinese in Southeast Asia*, Vol. 2, Singapore: Maruzen Asia, pp. 99–125.

Szanton-Blanc, C. (1997) The Thoroughly Modern "Asian": Capital, Culture and Nation in Thailand and the Philippines. In A. Ong and D.M. Nonini (eds.), *Ungrounded Empires: The Cultural Politics of Modern Chinese Transformation,* New York: Routledge.

Tan, A.S. (1972) *The Chinese in the Philippines, 1898–1935: A Study of their National Awakening*, Quezon City, Philippines: R.P. Garcia Publishing Co.

Tan, A.S. (1985) Chinese *Mestizos* and the Formation of Filipino Nationality. In T. Cariño (ed.), *Chinese in the Philippines*, Manila: De La Salle University Press.

Tan, C.B. (1982) Ethnic Relations in Malaysia. In D. Wu, (ed.), *Ethnic Relations and Ethnicity in a City State: Singapore*, Hong Kong: Maruzen Asia.

Tan, C.B. (1988) Nation-building and Being Chinese in a Southeast Asian State: Malaysia. In J. Cushman and G. Wang (eds.), *Changing Identities of the Southeast Asian Chinese since World War Two*, Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, pp. 139–163.

Tan, C.B. (1997) Chinese Identities in Malaysia. *Southeast Asian Journal of Social Science*, 25(2), 103–116.

Tan, C.B. (1999) Socio-cultural Diversities and Identities. In L.K. Hing and T.C. Beng (eds.), *The Chinese in Malaysia*, New York: Oxford University Press, pp. 37–70.

Tan, C.B. (2000) Ethnic Identities and National Identities: Some Examples from Malaysia. *Identities*, 6(4), 441–480.

Tan, C.B. (2004) *Chinese Overseas: Comparative Cultural Issues*, Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press

Tan, K.B.E. (2000) "Ghettoization of Citizen-Chinese"? State Management of Ethnic Chinese Minority in Indonesia and Malaysia. In T.A. See (ed.), *Intercultural Relations, Cultural Transformation, and Identity*, Manila: Kaisa-Angelo King Heritage Center, pp. 371–412.

Tan, K.B.E. (2001) From Sojourners to Citizens: Managing the Ethnic Chinese Minority in Indonesia & Malaysia. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 24(6), pp. 949–978.

Tan, K.B.E. (2003) Re-engaging Chineseness: Political, Economic and Cultural Imperatives of Nation-Building in Singapore. *The China Quarterly*, 175, 751–774.

Tan, L.E. (1988) Chinese Independent Schools in West Malaysia: Varying Responses to Changing Demands. In J.W. Cushman and W. Gungwu (eds.), *Changing Identities of the Southeast Asian Chinese Since World War II*, Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press.

Tan, M. (1991) *The Social and Cultural Dimensions of the Role of Ethnic Chinese in Indonesian Society*, *Indonesia* (Special Issue), pp. 113–125.

Tan, M.G. (2004) The Social and Cultural Dimension of Gender-Based Violence in Indonesia: From Labelling to Discrimination to Violence. In L. Suryadinata (ed.), *Chinese Indonesians: State Policy, Monoculture and Multiculture*, Singapore: Eastern Universities Press.

Tan, P.B. (1969) *Education in Singapore*, Singapore: Educational Publications Bureau, Ministry of Education.

Tan, S.K. (1992) The Chinese of Siasi: A Case of Successful Integration. In A.S.P. Baviera and T.A. See (eds.), *China, Across the Seas: The Chinese as Filipinos*, New Manila, Quezon City, Philippines: Philippine Association for Chinese Studies.

Tang, T. (1964) The Chinese in the Philippines- A Synthesis. In S.S.C. Liao (ed.), *Chinese Participation in Philippine Culture and Economy*, Manila: Bookman Inc.

Taylor, R.H. (1987) *The State in Burma*, London: C. Hurst & Co. (Publishers) Ltd.

Taylor, R. (1993) The Legal Status of Indians in Contemporary Burma. In K.S. Sandhu and A. Mani (eds.), *Indian Communities in Southeast Asia*, Singapore: Times Academic Press.

Tejapira, K. (1997) Imagined Uncommunity: The *Lookjin* Middle Class and Thai Official Nationalism. In D. Chirot and A. Reid (eds.), *Essential Outsiders: Chinese and Jews in the Modern Transformation of Southeast Asia and Central Europe,* Seattle: University of Washington.

Tejapira, K. (2001) Pigtail: A PreHistory of Chineseness in Siam. In C.K. Tong and C.K. Bun (eds.), *Alternate Identities: The Chinese of Contemporary Thailand*, Singapore: Times Academic Press.

Teske, Jr., R.H.C. and Nelson, B.H. (1974) Acculturation and Assimilation: A Clarification. *American Ethnologist*, 1(2), 351–367.

Tey, N.P. (2002) The Changing Demographic Situation of Malaysian Chinese. In L. Suryadinata (ed.), *Ethnic Chinese in Singapore and Malaysia: A Dialogue between Tradition and Modernity*, Singapore: Times Academic Press.

Than, M. (1996) *The Golden Quadrangle of Mainland Southeast Asia: A Myanmar Perspective*, Economics and Finance No. 5, Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies.

Than, M. (1997) The Ethnic Chinese in Myanmar and their Identity. In L. Suryadinata (ed.), *Ethnic Chinese as Southeast Asians*, Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies.

The, S.G. (1966) Group Conflict in a Plural Society. *Revue du Sud-est Asiatique*, 1.

The, S.G. (1993) Islam and Chinese Assimilation in Indonesia and Malaysia. In H.T. Cheu (ed.), *Studies on the Chinese Religion in Malaysia, Singapore and Indonesia*, Selangor: Pelanduk Publications, pp. 59–100.

Thee, K.W. (1994) *Reflections on Indonesia's Emerging Industrial Nationalism*. Working Paper No. 41, Asia Research Centre, Murdoch University, Perth.

Thomson, C.N. (1993) Political Identity among Chinese in Thailand. *Geographical Review*, 83(4), 397–409.

Thompson, V. and Adloff, R. (1955) *Minority Problems in Southeast Asia*, Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Tilman, R.O. (1974) Philippine Chinese Youth Today and Tomorrow. In C.J. McCarthy (ed.), *Philippines Chinese Profile: Essays and Studies*, Manila: Pagkakaisa Sa Pag-unlad Inc.

Tinker, H. (1967) *The Union of Burma: A Study of the First Years of Independence*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Toer, P.A. (2007) *The Chinese in Indonesia: An English translation of Hoakiau di Indonesia,* translated into English by M. Lane; M. Redway, T.D. Feng (eds.); with contributed essays from K.S. Jomo et al., Singapore: Select Pub.

Tong, C.K. (1988) *Trends in Traditional Chinese Religion in Singapore*, Singapore: Ministry of Community Development.

Tong, C.K. (2006) The Chinese in Contemporary Malaysia. In K.F. Lian (ed.), *Race, Ethnicity, and the State in Malaysia and Singapore*, Leiden: Brill Academic Publishers, pp. 61–93.

Tong, C.K. (2007) *Rationalizing Religion: Religious Conversion, Revivalism and Competition in Singapore Society*, Leiden: Brill.

Tong, C.K. and Yong, P.K. (1998) Guanxi Bases, Xinyong and Chinese Business Networks. *The British Journal of Sociology*, 49(1), 75–96.

Tong, C.K. and Chan, K.B. (2001a) Rethinking Assimilation and Ethnicity: The Chinese of Thailand. In C.K. Tong and C.K. Bun (eds.), *Alternate Identities: The Chinese of Contemporary Thailand*, Singapore: Times Academic Press.

Tong, C.K. and Chan, K.B. (2001b) One Face, Many Masks: The Singularity and Plurality of Chinese Identity. *Diaspora,* 10(3), 361–390.

Topley, M. (1956) Chinese Religion and Religious Institutions in Singapore. *Journal of the Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 29(1), 70–118.

Topley, M. (1960/1961) The Emergence and Social Functions of Chinese Religious Associations in Singapore. *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 3, 289–314.

Toyota, M. (2002) Changing Chinese Identities and Migration in the Borderlands of China, Burma and Thailand. In P. Nyíri and I. Saveliev (eds.), *Globalizing Chinese Migration: Trends in Europe and Asia*, Burlington: Ashgate.

Toyota, M. (2003) Contested Chinese Identities among Ethnic Minorities in the China, Burma and Thai Borderlands. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 26(2), 301–320.

Trager, F.N. (1966) *Burma from Kingdom to Republic: A Historical and Political Analysis*, Westport, CT: Greenwood Press Publishers.

Trocki, C.A. (1992) Political Structures in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries. In N. Tarling (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Southeast Asia*, Vol. 2, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 79–130.

Tu, W.M. (1991) Cultural China: The Periphery as the Center. *Daedalus*, 120(2), 1–32.

Twang, P.Y. (1998) *The Chinese Business Elite in Indonesia and the Transition to Independence, 1940–1950*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Ungar, E. (1987) The Struggle over the Chinese Community in Vietnam, 1946–1984. *Pacific Affairs*, 60(4), 596–614.

Van den Berghe, P.L. (1978) Race and Ethnicity: A Sociobiological Perspective. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 1(4), 401–411.

Van den Berghe, P.L. (1993) *Race and Racism: A Comparative Perspective*, New York: Harper Collins.

Van den Berghe, P.L. (1995) Does Race Matter? *Nations and Nationalism*, 1(3), 357–368.

Van der Kroef, J. (1950) Social Conflict and Minority Aspirations in Indonesia. *American Journal of Sociology*, 55(5), 450–463.

Vatikiotis, M. (1996) Sino Chic: Suddenly it's Cool to be Chinese. *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 11 January 1996, 22–25.

Voon, P.K. (2006) Spatial Division and Ethnic Exclusion: A Study of Ethnic Relations in Malaysia. In *Demarcating Ethnicity in New Nations: Cases of the Chinese in Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia*, Singapore: Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung and Singapore Society of Asian Studies.

Wallman, S. (1979) *Ethnicity at Work*, London: Macmillan.

Wang, G. (1988) The Study of Chinese Identities in Southeast Asia. In J. Cushman and W. Gungwu (eds.), *Changing Identities of the Southeast Asian Chinese since World War II*, Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press.

Wang, G.W. (1999) Chineseness: The Dilemmas of Place and Practice. In G. Hamilton (ed.), *Cosmopolitan Capitalists: Hong Kong and the Chinese Diaspora at the End of the 20th Century*, Seattle: University of Washington Press.

Wee, V., Jacobsen, M. and Tiong, C.W. (2006) Positioning Strategies of Southeast Asian Chinese Entrepreneurs. *Journal of Contemporary Asia*, 36(3), 364–384.

Weightman, G.H. (1998) The Chinese in the Philippines: From Aliens to Cultural Minority. In F.L.K. Hsu and H. Serrie (eds.), *The Overseas Chinese: Ethnicity in National Context,* Lanham: University Press of America.

Whitten, N.E. and Whitten, D.S. (1972) Social Strategies and Social Relationships. In B.J. Siegel (ed.), *Annual Review of Anthropology*, Vol. 1, Palo Alto, CA: Annual Review Inc., pp. 247–270.

Wickberg, E. (1964) The Chinese *Mestizo* in Philippine History. *Journal of Southeast Asian History*, 5(1), 62–100.

Wickberg, E. (1997) Anti-Sinicism and Chinese Identity Options in the Philippines. In D. Chirot and A. Reid (eds.), *Essential Outsiders? Chinese and Jews in the Modern Transformation of Southeast Asia and Central Europe*, Seattle: University of Washington Press, pp. 153–186.

Williams, L.E. (1960) *Overseas Chinese Nationalism: The Genesis of the Pan-Chinese Movement in Indonesia, 1900–1916*, IL: Free Press.

Williams, L. (1966) *The Future of the Overseas Chinese in Southeast Asia*, New York: McGraw-Hill.

Williams, B.F. (1980) A Class Act: Anthropology and the Race to Nation Across Ethnic Terrain. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 18, 401–444.

Williams, B.F (1989) A Class Act: Anthropology and the Race to Nation Across Ethnic Terrain. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 18, 401–444.

Willmott, D. (1961) *The National Status of the Chinese in Indonesia 1900–1958*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Womack, B. (2006) *China and Vietnam: The Politics of Asymmetry*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Wong, L.K. (1964) Western Enterprise and the Development of the Malayan Tin Industry to 1914. In C.D. Cowan (ed.), *The Economic Development of Southeast Asia: Studies in Economic History and Political Economy*, London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd.

Wong, K.C. (1999) *The Chinese in the Philippine Economy 1989–1941*, Manila: Ateneo De Manila University Press.

Wongswadiwat, J. (1973) *The Psychological Assimilation of Chinese University Students in Thailand.* Unpublished Thesis, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign.

Woodside, A. (1979) Nationalism and Poverty in the Breakdown of Sino-Vietnamese Relations, *Pacific* Affairs, 52(3), 381–409.

Yamklinfung, P. (1990) Maintaining Ethnic Identity: Roles of Chinese Associations in a Provincial town of Thailand. In *Continuity and Change in Overseas Chinese Communities in the Pan-Pacific Area*, Ibaraki, Japan: Research Group for Overseas Chinese Studies, University of Tsukuba, pp. 19–25.

Yancey, W.L., Ericksen, E.P. and Juliani, R.N. (1976) Emergent Ethnicity: A Review and Reformulation. *American Sociological Review*, 41(3), 391–403.

Yang, C.K. (1970) *Religion in Chinese Society*, Berkeley: University of California Press.

Yen, C.-H. (1986) *A Social History of the Chinese in Singapore and Malaya: 1800–1911*, Singapore: Oxford University Press.

Yen, C.-H. (1999) Historical Background. In L.K. Hing and T. Chee-Beng (eds.), *The Chinese in Malaysia*, US: Oxford University Press, pp. 1–36.

Yen, C.-H. (2000) Ethnic Chinese Culture in Southeast Asia: Continuity and Change. In Y. Chunghsun (ed.), *Ethnic Chinese: Their Economy, Politics and Culture,* Tokyo: The Japan Times, pp. 221–247.

Yuesin, S. (1984) *Communication Behavior and Thai Cultural Assimilation: A Study of Chinese in the Chiang Mai Municipal Area*. Master's Thesis, Department of Public Relations, Chulalongkorn University.

Yung, S.S. and Chan, K.B. (2003) Leisure, Pleasure and Consumption: Ways of Entertaining Oneself. In K.B. Chan and C.K. Tong (eds.), *Past Times: A Social History of Singapore,* Singapore: Times Editions.

Zenner, W. (1991) *Minorities in the Middle: A Cross-Cultural Analysis*, Albany: State University of New York Press.

Zhou, M. (1999) Coming of Age: The Current Situation of Asian American Children. *Amerasia Journal*, 25, 1–27.

Index

Note: The locators followed by 'n' refers to note numbers.