

Book Review

Li Peilin and Laurence Rouklleau-Berger, *China's Internal and International Migration*, London and New York: Routledge, 2013, 277 pp. + xxxvi.

This book is the 27th book of the China Policy series of China Policy Institute, University of Nottingham, United Kingdom. It consists of four parts with 13 chapters focusing on inequality and migration, social exclusion and integration, international migrants in China and social capital, Chinese migrants outside China and transnational spaces. Most of the chapters in this book are based on the survey findings on the migrant workers at various places of China. Quite a number of the chapters in this book focus on the impact of global financial crisis in 2007 on the local migrant workers in China.

This book begins with the impact on work situation and social attitudes of migrant workers in China. Inequality in income, social security, types of works, and work unit occurred among non-migrant and migrant workers. Chapter 2 examines the effect of household registration system in China (*hukou*, 户口) on social mobility of migrants and non-migrants. Findings revealed that the existing institutional arrangements are important causes of economic stratification for non-migrants but have little effect on the migrants; these migrants have been tracking special paths and following informal rules to achieve upward mobility,

though the upward mobility rate of migrants is lower than that of non-migrants. These paths and rules have formed the non-institutional pattern of socioeconomic status attainment. The chapter on the impact of remittances on rural poverty reduction and on rural households' living expenditures revealed that remittances from rural migrant workers reduced the rural poverty rate and most of the remittances were spent on the current consumption living expenditures rather than for investment purposes.

Chapter 4 gives a detailed description on the institutional arrangements of the existing old-age insurance programs for migrant workers and the impact of the system on the livelihood of rural migrant workers. It also covers the effect of global financial crisis on the contributions towards old-age insurance program. The low participation rate of rural migrant workers in old-age insurance is due to the inability of the migrant workers to pay the high contribution rate. This chapter highlights that to promote employment and reduce old-age poverty and gender inequality in retirement income distribution, it is necessary for the central government (a) to set up public pensions funds with fiscal resources; (b) to entitle migrant workers to maternity insurance, childcare services, and facilities that target low-income groups; (c) to provide social assistance for old-age security; and (d) to reduce tax rates on small and medium-sized enterprises as it is necessary to continuously make contributions to the old-age insurance for migrant workers. Chapter 5 focuses on the temporary labor migration in Lhasa, Shigatze and Zetang of Tibet. The difficulties in terms of living costs, and getting a job and a place to live are the main concerns of the temporary labor migration. The issues of official work contract and health/work injury insurance among the temporary migrant labor were also brought up. The integration of the migrants' children into the urban society was examined in Chapter 6 through the life satisfaction of migrants' children, which

was found to be affected by income and experience of discrimination. Even if the children of migrant workers have higher incomes than their parents, structural relations in the city dampen their life satisfaction. Thus, the life satisfaction of the children is similar to that of their parents. The integration of migrants' children in the city is not much better than that of their parents.

On the international migrants in China, there are three chapters on African traders in Guangzhou. The African trading post emerging in Asia in mid-1980s began with the precious stones. The African tradesmen move from one marketplace to another, depending on the comparative advantages that they encounter here and there. Dubai was the first marketplace, followed by Bangkok. After the 1997 financial crisis, African tradesmen moved to Hong Kong and then came to Guangzhou by train from Hong Kong since Mainland China opened its door in December 2001. Due to different cultures and living habits, tension and conflicts occurred between the Africans and Chinese citizens. The mutual adaptation, adjustment, and cultural understanding are important to maintain harmonious social relations between the Africans and Chinese. Chapter 9 examines the internationalization of higher education in China. The increasing number of Chinese students studying abroad from 1993 onwards, mainly to the United States of America, Japan, Australia, the United Kingdom and Germany, and the change of policy since 1999 led to an increase in the number of international students studying in China, mainly from the Asian countries – Korea, Japan, Vietnam and Indonesia – as well as from the United States. Reasoning for studying in China and continuing to stay in China after completing the study were carefully examined through qualitative investigation.

The last part of this book focuses on the Chinese migrants outside China and transnational spaces. Chapter 11 touches on the Chinese and Brazilian entrepreneurs in the Portuguese labor market and the key

factors for Chinese entrepreneurs to be successful in Portugal: Chinese migrants had the highest rate of entrepreneurship in Portugal between 1981 and 2001. It acknowledges the arrival of the Chinese, and Asians in general, contributing to the diversification of both the nationalities and the occupations of immigrants in Portugal. It explains the Chinese entrepreneurial success in Portugal: access to labor, financial support, entrepreneurial advice, and links to suppliers. The theoretical and methodological challenges in mapping the new migrants between China and Africa is presented in Chapter 12. Since the 1980s, increasingly frequent flow of people between China and Africa has promoted deepening bilateral relations. The establishment of the Forum of China-African Cooperation in 2000 created new opportunities for both the Chinese and Africans in job creation in each other's territory. In the case of the new migrants in Europe, the Chinese community in Italy is considered to be the largest in Europe. They are more spatially concentrated and segregated with respect to settlement features than other immigrant groups in Italy. They maintain strong internal links across Italy and are employed in Chinese firms and businesses. While being poor in linguistic and communication skills, the Chinese immigrants are nevertheless the most successful in developing businesses and in buying workshops and firms sold by Italian entrepreneurs – they are not so specialized in ethnic businesses but in the mainstream of Italian business.

In the last chapter on the migration, plural economies and new stratifications in Europe and China, Roulleau-Berger concludes that international migrations in Europe and internal migrations in China reveal economic segmentations and fragmentations that seem to become ever more pronounced, giving rise to new societal narratives in the process. He rightly states that as contemporary societies are getting much complex, economies local and global are becoming more and

more multi-polar. International migrations in Europe and internal migrations in China have led to the consideration of inequalities in multiple contexts, and these inequalities are considered as non-static, multi-sited in different local and societal spaces, and thus complex and dynamic.

Nevertheless, the main focus of this book is on the migrants in China, with little coverage of the Chinese migrants outside China. Considering the huge number of Chinese migrants outside China, this book thus does not fulfill the interest of readers who want to know more about what has happened to Chinese migrants in other countries, such as Canada, the United States of America, the European countries and others.

Ng Sor Tho
Senior Lecturer
Department of Applied Statistics
Faculty of Economics and Administration
University of Malaya
Malaysia

Dr Ng Sor Tho (黄素桃) is a Senior Lecturer at the Department of Applied Statistics, Faculty of Economics and Administration, University of Malaya, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. She holds a PhD on social gerontology from the University Putra Malaysia, Serdang, Selangor, Malaysia (2010). <Email: ngst@um.edu.my>

