

survey is not really about finding generalizable axioms or theories, but about registering the import of distinctive sociohistorical “logics,” that is, the unfolding dynamic of agency and the structural arrangements that give it shape and direction. That this informative book owes more to the spirit of Max Weber than to Guy Swanson is, in my opinion, the key to its value.

God in Chinatown: Religion and Survival in New York's Evolving Immigrant Community. By Kenneth J. Guest. New York: New York University Press, 2003. Pp. xi+225. \$55.00 (cloth); \$19.00 (paper).

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New York's Chinatown has been the focus of many sociological and anthropological studies, but most of them have completely neglected religion. Such a scholarly negligence reflects theoretical biases that obstruct a full understanding of the social life in Chinatown. In today's Chinatown in lower Manhattan, there are at least 59 specifically Chinese temples and churches and a few more congregations with a substantial presence of the Chinese (p. 122). This number includes Buddhist, Daoist, Chinese popular religious temples, and Protestant and Catholic churches, and does not even count shrines and altars at many of the restaurants and shops. Some of the Chinese churches and temples are large, with hundreds of participants in religious worship services each week and thousands of participants in special holy day gatherings or processions. How this important aspect of social life in Chinatown could have been heretofore missed by researchers is indeed hard to understand. This conspicuous gap is finally filled by Kenneth J. Guest in this pathbreaking ethnographic study.

The most valuable contribution of this book is the rich descriptions of religious organizations and activities and the direct voices of Fuzhou immigrants in long quotes. Fuzhou immigrants constitute the latest wave of Chinese immigrants in New York's Chinatown, which has received earlier waves of Chinese immigrants from Guangdong (Canton) and other places. Like their predecessors, Fuzhou immigrants brought with them their own religious beliefs, practices, deities, and organizations. The book documents a total of 14 religious congregations of the Fuzhouese, detailing in various length a Buddhist temple, a Daoist temple, two Catholic churches, and two Protestant churches.

Moreover, Guest traces the transnational religious ties back to Fuzhou in Fujian Province in southwestern China. In fact, the book uses three of the seven chapters to provide a comprehensive overview of the religious history and present situation in Fuzhou. Other chapters are also interwoven with stories of people at both the original and Chinatown com-

munities, clearly established evidence of the transnational networks and of the two-way flows of money, ideas, and influences.

In terms of theoretical framework, Guest intends to apply a conflict perspective and promises to offer a class analysis of globalizing capitalism. He wants to challenge the “ethnic enclave” theory, which was initially articulated by Alejandro Portes and associates and epitomized in Min Zhou’s *Chinatown: The Socioeconomic Potential of an Urban Enclave* (Temple University Press, 1992). Ethnic enclave theory argues that ethnic solidarity at the ethnic enclave helps to mobilize needed social, cultural, and financial capital for successful incorporation of immigrants into American society. Guest believes that Chinatown’s enclave economy is not a system of mutual support but exploitation of the new immigrants, especially the newly arrived, illegal, and vulnerable Fuzhou immigrants.

However, religious congregations are not the best place for examining class conflicts. Guest’s rich ethnographic descriptions and the vivid voices of his interviewees actually attest against his own theoretical intention. For example, one of his many fascinating stories is a group of seven immigrants who established a Daoist temple in 1993. By 1997 most of them had become restaurant owners in the New York area (p. 136). He also tells many stories about the temples and churches providing many kinds of assistance to the new arrivals and other immigrants with emergency difficulties. To quote his own summary, “Ethnic solidarity exists and recent immigrants use it to mobilize the financial and social capital necessary for entering the United States and surviving in a highly stratified environment. . . . Fuzhounese religious communities are central as sites for constructing and reconstructing networks of ethnic solidarity and accessing available financial and social capital as immigrants make their way along an often precarious journey” (p. 43). He stretches to claim class hierarchies being replicated within the centrally focused church because the Board of Deacons is filled by more established immigrants—most are naturalized citizens and permanent residents who are professionals and restaurant owners or chefs. In fact, the board also seats four women deacons who are seamstresses in garment shops. Among the rest of the 19 church leaders, one is a housewife, one a construction worker, and one a postal worker. Their lives and jobs are relatively more stable than many of the ordinary congregants who have just arrived, but “class” has to be redefined in order to put these leaders against the congregants.

The exceptionally rich ethnography is very interesting to read. But the study is tainted by the misfit of its theoretical framework. A more fruitful exercise would be to situate this ethnographic study in the literature of new immigrant religion and transnationalism, which has been burgeoning with interesting theoretical constructions.

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