Carol Chan, *In Sickness and in Wealth: Migration, Gendered Morality, and Central Java*. Bloomington, Indiana, Indiana University Press [Framing the global book series], 2018, xiv + 215 pp. ISBN: 9780253037060, price: USD 35.00 (paperback).

The recent decision of the Indonesian government to lift a COVID-19 ban on the recruitment and placement of Indonesian migrant workers was received with strong opposition from labor rights groups. They envisaged a haphazard process, which cannot guarantee migrants' health and safety in their destination country. The new decree aimed at supporting the recovery of the domestic economy during the transition to the so-called "COVID-19 new normal" (The Jakarta Post, August 4, 2020). Wahyu Susilo, director of the NGO Migrant Care, reminds us that placement of migrants is used again and again as a solution of the state's economic crises. The government is always actively involved in those situations. However, when there is a problem with overseas migrant workers, the issue is personalized and seen as an individual responsibility (Kompas, August 13, 2020). This debate highlights exactly the assumptions which Carol Chan tackles in her excellent book *In Sickness and in Wealth*. Transnational labor migration is first of all considered an economic advantage for the state (foreign exchange), simultaneously luring migrant workers with the opportunity of a successful job to support their family at home.

Chan's research offers us a refreshing new perspective, presenting a different reality that does not just focus on remittances and success, but includes sickness and failure, analyzing a transnational circulation not only of finance, but also of bodies and labor. Her rich and comprehensive ethnography is based on participant observation and interviews between 2012–2016 in three Central Java villages, including visits to relevant stakeholders higher up in the migration infrastructure. It unfolds Indonesian migrant women's lives, the largest group of migrant domestic workers globally, and gives us a new understanding of their village communities. Chan adds gendered morality to the transnational-migration discourse and explains why Indonesian migrant workers, despite the potential risks of migration (debts, sickness, and worse), still continue to try to get a job far away. She shows "how precarious labor migration is practically and financially sustained, tolerated, or encouraged, to various degrees, in migrant-origin villages through gendered and moral discourses of shame and faith, despite the high risks and costs to villagers in terms of finance, health, and mortality" (p. 5).

The book starts with contextualizing the historical, political, and religious forces that shaped present transnational Indonesian migration. It is estimated that at the time of the research some six million Indonesians, both documented and undocumented, worked overseas, with the majority being domestic work-

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ers. Women's mobility has changed since the rural industrialization of the 1970s and 1980s, when young, unmarried women started to work in factories. In contrast to the accepted internal migration of men, "factory daughters" were more controlled by their parents. Gendered morality of migration is linked to *kodrat*, the idea of fixed destinies and duties specific to men and women (p. 28). This is translated in gender roles with women as mothers and housewives and men as the main breadwinners. When the economic crisis loomed in the 1990s, the Indonesian state began to promote transnational female labor migration. The majority of Indonesia's contemporary migrants are women, working mostly as domestic or factory laborers: precarious work with long hours and harsh conditions.

The essence of Chan's work is her analysis of the framing of female transmigration. She uses gendered morality to interpret migration: its responsibilities and blame, promises, and ills. She also uses gendered morality to describe how wealth, debt, opportunity, and risk unequally apply to men and women. Common public notions of the migrant women in her native Singapore triggered Chan to do research on them: were they really the "seductresses" to be wary of, the "abused victims" to be rescued, or the "sacrificial mothers" supporting their own poor families and villages (p. 19)? Chan not only unpacked these stereotypes of foreign migrants, but decided to do research in their villages of origin: a new, original approach, during which she listened to migrant's families, kin, neighbors, friends, and community leaders. She found that common categories, such as migrant/non-migrant, are much messier in migrant-origin villages, where people are classified as prospective migrants, current migrants who are back for short visits, former transnational migrants who never came further than the airport, return migrants, missing migrants, or those who have never tried to migrate.

Her central three chapters are dedicated to the issues of migrant success and failure and the role of shame and faith, as seen from the perspective of the villagers. Each chapter offers extended cases, linking individual experiences with the abstract level of theoretical debates. The main argument of chapter 3 is that moral self-responsibility emerges as a fundamental and limiting condition for migrant success or failure. Villagers ultimately rate success and failure based on moral judgement of migrants' character and actions (like fulfilling gendered duties), and on their distribution of money and debt. Shame that comes with failure is discussed in chapter 4. Villagers distinguish short-lived shame (*malu*), like debt or not finishing their contract, from long-term shame (*aib*), or deep humiliation. *Aib* is typically linked to transgressing sexual norms, which are applied more severely to women than to men. Chan discusses various strategies of how villagers cope with *malu* or *aib*, keeping in mind that it

is not only the migrants who are blamed, but also migrants' families, coined as a "kinship of shame" (p. 15). Gendered shame plays a crucial role in deciding to take on the risks of migration and whether to move or stay. Chan argues in chapter 5 that villagers' fate and faith narratives help them to be pragmatic and strategic. *Nasib* 'fate' often implies human effort in relation to divine agency, while *takdir* 'destiny' emphasizes the ultimate authority of God in human life. Individuals' faith drives them to practice self-discipline, be pious, and express solidarity through collective prayer and mutual care.

Chapter 6 continues with "Views of/from Elsewhere" (p. 156). It is about belonging and identity, and includes experiences and alternative moralities from abroad. Migrants return with new insights, for example, from a stricter type of Islam as experienced in Saudi-Arabia, or a more liberal culture in Hong Kong, which is less heteronormative and patriarchal than in Central Java. This leads to questions of more gendered freedoms or sometimes constraints, such as more control over women's mobility, sexuality, and behavior. In her conclusion, Chan widens her scope to state and NGO relations with the villagers, who often stay invisible for policymakers and activists. Her questions can be important building blocks for policies to better represent and protect migrant workers, not only abroad, but also during the whole process of becoming an overseas migrant, until their (final) homecoming.

I do have some reservations. Firstly, the book, based on Chan's PhD thesis, is a very dense text, which requires slow-reading. The writing is nuanced and detailed, offering readers a wealth of academic and media publications besides her research findings. This might be a feast for the interested researcher, but will deter activists and other stakeholders, who want to move to action. Chan's focus on in-depth case-studies of individual villagers brings the reader to higher levels of understanding of what (non-)migration means for these women and men, but it also provokes questions about how individual experiences could be systematically linked to broader factors, such as life-cycle, family composition, marriage age, and livelihood. All in all, this book is an excellent addition to global transmigration discourses thanks to Chan's original angle on migrant-origin villagers and her use of gendered morality.

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