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Migration as a factor in social transformation in East Asia

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Abstract

International migration is an important factor in social, cultural and political change in East Asian. The paper discusses both emigration and immigration countries, using the Philippines as an example for the former, and Japan and Malaysia for the latter. It is argued that population mobility is an important element of the cross-border flows and transnational networks that constitute globalization. Understanding of specific patterns in East Asia requires linking migration to experiences of colonialism, post-colonialism, nation-state formation, and economic change. The key question is where East Asia will follow the western experience of labour migration leading to unplanned settlement and multicultural societies, and in the long run to modification of models of national identity and citizenship. There are important historical and political differences between western and Asian experiences which make it hard to predict such developments. Nonetheless there is already considerable evidence that governments are losing control of migration and that unplanned settlement and community formation is occurring. This makes it important to intensify research on social, cultural and political aspects of mobility, to inform more realistic policies on migration and settlement.

Biographical Note

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Introduction

In the late 20th century, East Asian¹ countries experienced a rapid growth in international migration. Movements have included low-skilled workers, professionals, business people, permanent settlers, students, refugees, asylum-seekers and family members, but the majority have been economically motivated. Migration to western countries—particularly the USA, Canada and Australia—started after the repeal of discriminatory immigration rules in the 1960s. After the 1973 Oil Crisis, large numbers of Asian workers were recruited by the oil states of the Middle East and North Africa (Abella, 1995a). From the mid-1980s, intra-Asian movements also developed. By 1997, labour migration from countries with relatively slow economic growth but large labour surpluses to Japan and the Asian newly industrialising countries were roughly equal in volume to flows to the oil-producing countries. There were estimated to be some 3 million Asians employed outside their countries of birth within Asia, and about the same number employed in other countries (Martin et al., 1996). Other estimates are higher: the OECD put the number of migrant workers in Asia at 5 million in 1996 (OECD, 1998, 46). In addition to the migrant workers there were millions of family members and refugees.²

The Asian Financial Crisis of 1997-99 led to an interruption in labour recruitment. Indeed some immigration countries announced policies of large-scale repatriation. However, actual deportations were limited, and migrant populations did not fall sharply. In the meantime, economic growth and labour recruitment have resumed. Probably the results of the Crisis have been not an end to migration but rather a shift in its characteristics—perhaps somewhat similar to the changes that occurred in Western Europe after 1973 (Battistella and Assis, 1998; Böhning, 1998; Skeldon, 1998a; Supang, 1999).

Migration to East Asian countries with growing economies and rising incomes is perceived by Asian policy-makers as temporary labour migration, and is not expected to lead to permanent settlement. This understanding matches the wishes of most of the main actors: employers seek low-skilled workers to meet immediate labour needs; most migrant workers wish to work abroad for a limited period to improve the situation of their families at home; sending country governments do not want to lose nationals permanently; and—most importantly—receiving country governments are strongly opposed to settlement. The prospects of ethnic community formation, growing cultural diversity and emergence of multicultural societies are anathema in Asian labour-importing countries, while the notion of turning immigrants into citizens is unthinkable.

Yet all these things could have been said of the European ‘guestworker’ recruiting countries of the 1960s. Even new world countries open to permanent immigration did not envisage the development of multicultural societies. In the meantime, the dynamics which transformed temporary migrants into new ethnic communities and multicultural citizens are well known (see for instance Castles and Davidson, 2000; Castles and Miller, 1998; DeWind et al., 1997). This experience has been analysed by Asian scholars and policy-makers, particularly in Japan (Weiner and Hanami, 1998). They generally conclude that ‘Asia is different’ and that labour migration will not lead to major social and cultural changes in sending or receiving countries. There are two main reasons for this. First, the volume of migration relative to population is generally lower in East Asia than in western countries, which is thought to reduce social and cultural impacts. Second, legal frameworks and policy settings differ. Important factors in turning temporary migration into settlement in western countries included strong legal and human rights guarantees, which facilitated family reunion and hindered large-scale deportations in the 1970s and 1980s, even when migrant labour was no longer wanted. Moreover, strong welfare states encouraged further immigration and settlement, despite poor employment prospects. Such factors are generally seen as absent in East Asia.

¹ East Asia may be defined as the region bounded by Burma in the West and Japan in the East, and stretching from Mongolia and Korea in the North to Indonesia in the South. It thus includes the two main sub-regions Southeast and Northeast Asia.

² This paper does not provide a descriptive overview of migration from and in the East Asian region, since this will be covered in Philip Martin’s paper. See also: (Castles, 1998; Castles and Miller, 1998, Chapter 6; Huguet, 1995; Martin, Mason and Nagayama, 1996; Skeldon, 1998b; Stahl, 1999). Regular analyses are provided in the *Asian and Pacific Migration Journal* (Scalabrini Migration Center, Quezon City, Philippines). Up to date material is provided by *Asian Migration News*, available on the Scalabrini Migration Center Website: <http://www.scalabrini.org/~smc>

In this paper, I will present an alternative perspective. On a theoretical level, I will argue that current migration trends are closely linked to processes of globalization which make it increasingly difficult for governments to control migration, settlement and cultural change. This difficulty is compounded by the fact that post-colonial Asian countries are still involved in the complex task of nation-state construction, which may constrain policies on migration and minorities. I will go on to discuss evidence that social transformations linked to migration are indeed becoming apparent in both sending countries (using the example of the Philippines) and receiving countries (looking at Malaysia and Japan). Despite the relatively early stage of Asian migratory processes and the paucity of targeted research on settlement and community formation, there seems to be good reason to question the dominant belief in the 'controllability of difference'.

Migration and social transformation

Official views on the causes and characteristics of Asian migration are based mainly on economic viewpoints. The dominant approach is the methodological individualism of neo-classical economics, according to which mobility is driven by disparities in levels of income, employment and social well-being between migrant-sending and -receiving areas. The main cause of migration is individuals' efforts to maximize their income by moving from low-wage to high-wage economies (Borjas, 1990). Differences in demographic patterns with regard to fertility, mortality, age-structure and labour-force growth are also seen as crucial (Hugo, 1998). Obviously, such factors are important, but in themselves they are not adequate to explain the development and nature of specific migration systems. As guides to policy-making they lead to fairly simplistic measures for border control and labour market regulation, which often prove impossible to implement in practice, leading to undocumented migration, irregular employment and unplanned settlement.

More effective approaches require an understanding of the complex dynamics of migratory processes. In economics, such insights are to be found in the 'new economics of labour migration' (Stark, 1991), which argues that migration cannot simply be explained by income differences between two countries, but also by such factors as chances of secure employment, availability of capital for entrepreneurial activity, and the need to manage risk over long periods. Migration decisions are made not just by individuals—they often represent family strategies to maximize income and survival chances (Hugo 1994). Use of remittances for consumption and investment can only be fully understood through a 'whole-household-economy' approach (Taylor, 1999, 64). Such analyses open the way to interdisciplinary collaboration with anthropologists studying the role of culture and community, and with sociologists studying migration networks and the emergence of the 'migration industry'—the labour brokers and agents who organize international migration outside of and often in opposition to state objectives and rules.

Migration systems theory seeks to integrate all these factors in overarching conceptual frameworks, which facilitate analysis of the interactions which shape each specific migratory process (see Kritiz et al., 1992; Massey et al., 1993; Stahl, 1995). Such approaches imply a notion of the embeddedness of migration in broader processes of economic, demographic, social, cultural and political change. Migration can thus be seen as an integral part of globalization and social transformation. Migration (both internal and international) is a way for individuals and groups to sustain or rebuild their livelihoods under conditions of rapid change. Globalization may be characterized as the *widening, deepening and speeding up of worldwide interconnectedness* in all aspects of contemporary social life (Held et al., 1999, 2). The key indicator of globalization is the rapid increase in *cross-border flows* of all sorts: finance, trade, ideas, pollution, media products and people. The key organising structure for all these flows is the *transnational network*, which can take the form of transnational corporations, global markets, international organizations, global criminal syndicates, or transnational cultural communities. (Castells, 1996). Flows of capital and commodities are generally welcomed by the holders of economic and political power, but immigration and cultural difference are seen as potential threats to national sovereignty and identity. Yet the reality is that population mobility is inextricably bound up with the other types of cross-border flows.

Economic development involves the linking of previously isolated areas into broader national and international markets. This encourages the modernization of agriculture, which often leads to increased social differentiation and displacement of labour. This precipitates rural-urban migration, even though industrialization is often too slow to provide sufficient urban employment opportunities. International migration grows as overseas employment opportunities become apparent, and as frameworks emerge to

initiate and organize migration. Such frameworks include recruitment by governments or employers, as well as informal networks organized by the migrants themselves, and the activities of agents and brokers. There is no simple relationship between migration and development. Departures from the very poorest areas may be rare, because people lack the economic capital needed to travel, the cultural capital needed to become aware of opportunities elsewhere, and the social capital (or networks) needed to successfully find work and to cope in a new environment. However, in the event of a catastrophe (such as war or environmental degradation) which destroys minimal subsistence levels, even the poorest may be forced to migrate, usually under very bad conditions. Generally, however, it is middle-income groups in developing areas that are most likely to depart, because they have the resources to organize migration successfully. In the long run, if incomes in the area of origin rise, emigration tends to decline. Migration is thus both a result and a cause of development (United Nations, 1998).

Migration leads to social and cultural change in both sending and receiving communities. In the former, the departure of young active workers may cause demographic imbalances and reduction of productive capacity. On the other hand, remittances may help to provide investment capital, while returning migrants may be agents of technology transfer and cultural change. In immigration countries, settlement and community formation may lead to new forms of social differentiation and conflict based on ethnicity or race, as well as to cultural diversity which questions the dominant culture and national identity. The politicization of immigration in western countries is linked to its role in bringing about social and cultural change in a period when certain social groups feel threatened by globalization and economic restructuring. Debates on assimilation and multiculturalism have become an important element in mainstream politics, while right-wing groups have used anti-immigrant campaigns to make unexpected political gains. In Asia, such tendencies are fairly new. However, during the 1997-99 Crisis anti-immigrant rhetoric became an effective form of political mobilization in countries like Thailand, Malaysia and Japan.

Since migration is intrinsically a transnational process, its effects are not likely to be confined within nation-state boundaries. Current improvements in travel and communication are encouraging the emergence of transnational communities, which may maintain the links between migrant community and area of origin may persist over generations. Such international communicative networks may affect economic relations, social and political institutions, and the culture and national identity of all the countries concerned (Basch et al., 1994; Cohen, 1997).

The historical and cultural context for migration and settlement in East Asia

This embeddedness of migration in processes of globalization is merely a conceptual starting point. It is important to analyze the dynamics of each migration system. For contemporary East Asia that means linking migration to specific experiences of colonization, decolonization, nation-state formation, and economic change. This raises the question of the appropriate *unit of analysis*. Should it be East Asia as a whole, sub-regions (such as Southeast Asia) or specific countries? There is no single answer to this. It is possible to generalize about East Asian migration as a whole, in the sense that certain trends—such as the recent increase in international labour flows in response to industrialization—are overarching phenomena. Moreover, the transnational (and even transcontinental) nature of migration flows cannot be adequately analyzed through nationally-bounded research. In understanding responses to immigration, it is possible to group countries according to certain criteria. Issues of settlement and inter-group relations, on the other hand, often require a national or even a local research focus. Analysis at all spatial levels as well as investigation of the way global processes are mediated at the regional, national and local levels is thus required for a full understanding of migratory processes.

One of the difficulties in generalization and comparative analysis is the high degree of societal and cultural diversity in Asia. Some countries have a wide range of ethnic groups and languages, and may be home to Muslims, Christians, Hindus and members of other religions. Social and political variations may also be great, with widely differing economic frameworks and forms of government in close proximity to each other. An important distinction is between those countries which were colonized and those which were not. In the first group we find Indochina, nearly all the states in the Malay peninsular and Indonesia. In the second we find China, Japan, Korea and Thailand. The distinction is not rigid—China was partially colonized, and all the non-colonized states were strongly influenced by the encounter with the West. Nonetheless, the non-colonized states have much greater historical continuity with regard to borders, culture and identity than do those that were colonized. This is linked to another distinction: that between relatively monocultural countries and those marked by considerable diversity. China, Japan and Korea are

each dominated by a single ethnic group, which sees unitary cultural identity as a major source of strength. Most countries of Southeast Asia have historical traditions of diversity, based on the incorporation of a range of ethnic groups, as well as on migration for purposes of trade, work, religion and social contact. This pre-existing diversity was complicated under colonial rule through the recruitment of new groups to serve as labourers and traders: Chinese and Indians in Malaya, Chinese in the Dutch East Indies and so on.

Building nations on the basis of diversity has been a major challenge, which has been further complicated by new types of migration (Castles and Davidson, 2000, Chapter 8; Davidson and Weekley, 1999). The nation-state and citizenship are fairly recent creations in Asia. Colonialism often brought together previously separate and diverse cultural groups and imposed new boundaries on them. Absolutist or feudal rule was not overthrown by democratic struggles, but rather overlaid by colonial authority. Anti-colonial movements embraced Western ideas of nationalism and democracy, and the post-colonial political entities adopted the institutional forms of the nation-state: parliament, elections, separation of powers and a modern legal system. Yet these principles were often quite superficial. The process of change took place very quickly and under external influences, so there was no 'time to forget' past social and cultural differences.³ Western ideas of individualism and universalism gained some support in the new middle classes, but did not replace more traditional principles of consensus, hierarchy, group-solidarity and family-based authority.⁴

The post-colonial states of Asia have had to find ways of defining who belongs to the nation and building a national consciousness. This problem posed itself differently in the multi-ethnic states of Southeast Asia compared with the relatively homogeneous states of Northeast Asia, yet in both cases the trend has been to emphasize ethnic origins. Under European colonial rule, the *ius soli* principle had been established in British possessions, while a mixture of *ius soli* and *ius sanguinis* was the rule in French and Dutch colonies.⁵ This conferred citizenship (or subject status) in the colonising state, which facilitated migration to Britain, France and the Netherlands after independence. The new states generally changed their citizenship principle to *ius sanguinis*. Citizenship by descent seemed a way of integrating diverse groups into the nation and creating a common culture. Countries like Indonesia, the Philippines and Malaysia used their education systems and mass media to develop national languages and national consciousness (Castles and Davidson, 2000, Chapter 8).

However, nationalist ideologies on the common descent and traditions of the people were problematic in states with diverse cultures, often leading to differential policies towards minorities. In Malaysia, for example, special affirmative action policies were introduced to protect Malays, who feared economic marginalization at the hands of the large ethnic Chinese minority. In Indonesia, with its enormous cultural and religious diversity, official ideologies on national unity sometimes served as a cloak for domination by the largest group, the Javanese. Singapore, by contrast, maintained the *ius soli* principle as a way of integrating the different groups into its new multi-ethnic society. However, differential immigration and naturalization rules seem to favour immigrants of Chinese ethnicity.

Countries like China, Japan and the Republic of Korea faced different issues. The high degree of homogeneity made it possible to base new state structures on notions of unique national traditions, even if their continuity had been interrupted by war and occupation (in the case of Japan), colonization (Korea) and the Communist Revolution (China). Ethnic minorities had little weight. The Chinese Government did develop special policies to improve integration of 'national minorities', while Japan largely ignored the situation of indigenous and immigrant minorities for many years. The *ius sanguinis* principle is very strong in East Asian states. For instance, according to Yoshino, Japanese people tend to see themselves as a

³ A long process of assimilation which allows the various groups 'time to forget' past differences and conflicts was seen as the pre-condition for nation-building by the 19th century French historian, Ernest Renan (Renan, 1992).

⁴ For analyses of democratic movements and the role of the middle classes in Asia see: (Laothamatas, 1997; Rodan, 1996).

⁵ Two principles evolved historically for defining membership of the nation-state: *ius soli* (literally: law of the soil), according to which anyone born in a territory could belong; and *ius sanguinis* (literally, law of the blood), according to which belonging was based on descent from an existing citizen.

distinct 'racial' community with a unique and unchanging national character and culture. It is regarded as impossible for foreigners to ever share these qualities (Yoshino, 1992). In virtually all the countries of Southeast and East Asia, it is extremely difficult for immigrants to become citizens. In the relatively monocultural states, the principle of a closed national community with membership by descent makes naturalization very unusual. But even in multi-ethnic Southeast Asia, group loyalties based on ethno-religious belonging are seen as crucial, and the idea that foreigners could become nationals is quite alien. It will be very hard for the new waves of immigrants to settle and become citizens.

However, the logic of the nation-state model also points to a possibility of future change. The rule of law, democracy and citizenship are central aspects of the nation-state. Many Asian countries have adopted these principles, although actual implementation varies: Japan has all the characteristics of a modern democracy; the Republic of Korea, Taiwan, the Philippines and Thailand have made substantial steps in this direction; while other countries lag behind in important areas. Overall, the gradual development of democratic institutions and attitudes is a force for change. The growth of the middle classes as a result of industrialization and social change provides the basis for a wide range of civil society organizations, that demand reform and recognition of human rights. Moreover, Asian states put increasing weight on participation in international organizations and agreements, which lay down basic rights, such as fair legal process, prohibition of discrimination, and protection of refugees, indigenous peoples and minorities.

Finally, trends towards the introduction of social policies could influence immigration and settlement. The welfare state played an important part in encouraging immigration and settlement in Western countries (Bommes and Halfmann, 1998). In general, the welfare state is far less developed in Asian immigration countries. This is partly due to the recentness of industrialization and partly to the continuing emphasis on the role of the family in providing for social needs. However, public provision for education and health care has developed strongly in the last thirty years, and is considered as one of the major factors in social development in many countries (World Bank, 1998, 76). A widespread response to the Asian Crisis of 1997-99 was the call for social safety-nets to cushion the impact of economic change and unemployment. Such pressures may increase the role of public welfare provision in Asia. If so, incorporation of legal foreign workers into welfare system may in future help to confer a measure of social citizenship, which could help stabilize their residential rights.

Dilemmas for emigration countries: the Philippines

Just as the Mediterranean periphery fuelled Western European industrial expansion up to the 1970s, industrialising Asia has its own labour reserve areas: China, the South Asian countries, the Philippines and Indonesia have all become major labour providers for the region and indeed for the rest of the world. What does it mean for political legitimacy and national identity for a country to be unable to offer an acceptable livelihood to millions of its citizens? Export of labour is seen by governments of many less-developed countries as a strategy for reducing unemployment, reducing social tension, improving the balance of payments through worker remittances and encouraging development. However, such benefits may not be achieved in practice, or may only accrue to certain groups in the population. In such cases, strategies of labour export may in the long run lead to discontent and to protest movements. The Philippines presents an important example for such issues.

The Philippines is the labour-exporter *par excellence* of the current period (rather like Italy a generation ago) with more than one tenth of its people living abroad. Export of labour is crucial to the Philippine economy. It has been estimated that unemployment levels would be 40 per cent higher without labour emigration. Official remittances from migrants in 1994 were US\$2.94 billion, which financed 50 per cent of the external trade deficit (Amjad, 1996). According to (Go, 1998), workers remitted a total of US\$23.4 billion between 1975 and 1995, with the largest source country being the USA. This includes only earnings remitted through the formal banking system. Transfers are also made through import of cash or consumer goods. By the early 1990s, 16 per cent of households in the Philippines were receiving remittances from abroad (Saith, 1997).

Filipinos are to be found all over in the world both as permanent settlers and as temporary labour migrants (Overseas Contract Workers or OCWs). Emigration has a long history linked to Spanish and US colonial rule. Permanent settlement in the USA, and to a lesser extent in Canada and Australia grew from the 1960s. Under the Marcos martial law regime of the 1970s, export of labour became a key element of economic policy (Gonzalez, 1998). Since then, ever-increasing numbers of OCWs have been sent

overseas: first to the oil-producing countries of the Middle East and then to Hong Kong, Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, Singapore and Malaysia. Apart from legal OCWs, large numbers of undocumented workers go overseas, often using the services of illegal agents. By 1998, intra-Asian movement was more or less equal in volume to movements to the Middle East (Stahl, 1999). Migrants from the Philippines have a visible presence in Europe too, particularly in Italy and Spain. Emigration has become part of the way of life for millions of Filipinos and their communities of origin. Absence of young people or of parents, dependence on remittances, links with relatives and friends overseas have all become part of daily life (Assis, 1995). Just like Italy in the 1950s, the contemporary Philippines has a strong culture of emigration. Filipinos overseas are seen as a diaspora or a transnational community (Aguilar, 1996b).⁶

In recent years, women have played an increasing part in emigration from the Philippines—at least half of OCWs are now women. Most are concentrated in jobs regarded as 'typically female': domestic workers, entertainers, restaurant and hotel staff, assembly-line workers in clothing and electronics. These jobs are low in pay, conditions and status, and are associated with patriarchal stereotypes of female characteristics, such as docility, obedience and willingness to give personal service. Domestic service leads to isolation and vulnerability for young women migrants, who often have little protection against the demands of their employers (Lim and Oishi, 1996).

It is hard to get precise data on the number of emigrants. *Flow* figures are available only for documented OCWs. The number of OCWs deployed increased from just 14,366 in 1972 to 241,590 in 1980 (Gonzalez, 1998, 32). Growth continued with a total of 446,095 deployments in 1990 and 747,696 in 1997. In the latter year, 559,227 were land-based workers, while 188,469 were seafarers on foreign ships (Battistella and Assis, 1998, 234). Official estimate for *stocks* of emigrants put the number of overseas Filipinos in 1993 at about 6 million, of which 2.45 million (or 41 per cent) were documented OCWs, 1.79 million (30 per cent) undocumented workers, and 1.76 million (29 per cent) permanent settlers (Gonzalez, 1998, 36). However, by 1996, the total number of documented OCWs overseas was put at 4-5 million, and it has increased further since. This indicates a total overseas Filipino population of possibly 8-9 million, compared with a total Philippine population of 76.4 million in 1999 (Far Eastern Economic Review, 2000). Many of those abroad at any one time are temporary migrants, who will return and be replaced by others.

According to an economic analysis by Saith, Philippine migration is caused by both supply-side and demand-side factors. Supply-side factors include rapid growth in population (2.3 per cent per year) and the labour-force (2.9 per cent per year). This contrasts with a long period of economic stagnation, exacerbated by political factors (especially during the Marcos era) leading to a very depressed labour market situation, low-quality employment and unsustainable forms of agriculture. One result was rural-urban migration, but job opportunities in the urban areas were also very limited. Such emigration pressures found an outlet because of strong overseas demand for Filipino labour based on such qualities as high levels of education and occupational training, familiarity with the English language and a high rate of female labour force participation. Filipino labour thus had a 'competitive edge'. This study also found that there was no sign of economic development which might reduce emigration pressures in the foreseeable future. Moreover, gains from migration were found to accrue disproportionately to richer regions and higher income groups, thus exacerbating existing imbalances (Saith, 1997). Abella comes to similar conclusions:

For most Filipino families, emigration is therefore a rational response to the inability of the state to generate growth and employment within the country. The Filipino family has become 'transnational' in an effort to protect itself from declining real incomes and standards of living, and to achieve family aims for investment in education and the acquisition of other productive assets including land and housing. The opening up of labour-markets overseas during the last two decades gave an international dimension to what would otherwise be an internal relocation of family labour to minimize risks (Abella, 1993), 253.

Overseas employment became an official program of the Philippine Government in 1974, when it was incorporated into the Labour Code. The Government has taken a very active role in managing recruitment of labour for work abroad. The main regulation agency is the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA), which is part of the Department of Employment and Labour (DOLE). People who wish to seek work abroad have to register with the POEA. Abella argues that this

⁶ There is an enormous literature on Philippine migration, which cannot be listed here. See for example: (Abella, 1993; Amjad, 1996; Battistella and Assis, 1998; Battistella and Paganoni, 1992; Go, 1998). For an annotated bibliography see: (Yukawa, 1996).

approach of allowing free movement of citizens, while working closely with the private sector in recruitment has been quite successful: only 10-15 per cent of emigrants are outside the official registration system (Abella, 1995b), 8-15). By contrast (Go, 1998) quotes 1995 estimates by the Overseas Workers' Welfare Administration that 43 per cent of Filipinos working abroad were undocumented.

Although policy-makers have claimed to follow the twin objectives of exporting labour to gain economic benefits for the country, while at the same time protecting the workers concerned, the emphasis during the Marcos period was clearly on economic interests. Under the Aquino and Ramos administrations measures were taken with the ostensible aim of redressing the balance, but their effectiveness was limited (Gonzalez, 1998, 119-24). The Overseas Workers' Welfare Administration (OWWA) was set up to assist workers in emergencies and to protect them from exploitation and abuse. Pre-departure orientation seminars are provided for entertainers, domestic workers and nurses. The Philippines has special officials at its consulates in labour-importing countries to help migrants who get into difficulties. Yet their number is relatively low: in 1993 there were 31 labour attachés, 20 welfare officers and 20 coordinators to respond to the needs of 4.2 million migrant workers in 120 countries (Lim and Oishi, 1996), 120). Philippine officials often find themselves powerless against unscrupulous agents and abusive employers, who may have the backing of the police and other authorities in receiving countries, especially in the Persian Gulf area.

It was this weakness of the Philippine Government in protecting vulnerable workers abroad that led to a major politicization of migration policy in 1995. On 17 March of that year, a Filipina domestic worker, Flor Contemplacion, was hanged in Singapore, after being found guilty of murder. The case strained relations between the two countries and led to a heated debate in the Philippines. At that time there were over 60,000 OCWs in Singapore, or whom the overwhelming majority were female domestic workers. Frequent cases of abuse had been reported, including non-payment of salaries, poor working conditions, ill treatment and sexual harassment (Gonzalez, 1998, 5; Wong, 1996). Contemplacion was accused of the murder of a fellow Filipino and her employer's child. Many observers had doubts about the evidence presented against her and the way the case was handled by both the Singaporean and Filipino authorities. The case appeared as the culmination of a long series of humiliations suffered by OCWs in Singapore and elsewhere, and highlighted the inadequacy of Philippine Governments measures to protect nationals abroad. A large-scale public mobilization by opposition parties, church associations, women's groups, labour unions and OCW organizations took place, with the free and vocal press of the Philippines playing a key role. A series of mass demonstrations took place, culminating in the presence of more than 25,000 people at Contemplacion's funeral. The situation was exacerbated for the Government by the proximity to national elections (Gonzalez, 1998, 6-7).

The Ramos Administration was forced to act quickly. One measure was a temporary ban on recruitment of domestic workers to Singapore (which simply led to increased undocumented migration). Ramos also set up a Presidential Commission (the Gancayco Commission), dismissed the ministers in charge of OCW policies, and down-graded relations with Singapore. The Gancayco Commission proposed a number of radical reforms (which would have virtually stopped female migration), as well as measures to improve welfare and legal protection for OCWs abroad. In June 1995, the Philippine Parliament passed the Migrant Workers and Overseas Filipinos Act—the 'OCWs Magna Carta'. This Act represented a shift in philosophy away from promotion of overseas employment as a way of sustaining economic growth and development. Rather than exporting Filipino labour, the government adopted a policy of managing labour outflows, while at the same time seeking to develop a comprehensive employment strategy at home to reduce the need to emigrate. Protecting the dignity and human rights of Filipinos was to be put above economic objectives. Specific measures to implement the new approach included a policy of selective deployment whereby certain occupations and destinations were preferred over others; measures to improve information for prospective migrants; and a 'country-team approach' to improve cooperation between POEA, OWWA, the Technical Skills and Development Authority and the Department of Foreign Affairs (Go, 1998).

It is difficult to assess the success of the new policy. Certainly, there is no evidence of dramatically reduced migration of female entertainers or domestic workers, nor of substantial improvement in conditions of Filipino OCWs. Nor does the Philippine Government seem any more effective in providing legal protection to workers who come in conflict with the law, as subsequent cases in Saudi Arabia demonstrated. A major difficulty was the unwillingness of labour-recruiting countries to cooperate by entering into bilateral agreements with the Philippines, or by adhering to multilateral instruments such as ILO Conventions. For example the UN Convention on the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families has only been signed by seven countries, and the Philippines is the only Asian country to

have done so (Gonzalez, 1998, 134). If the Philippines Government were to fully enforce the 1995 Act, it would effectively have to stop most labour emigration. Since labour force growth remains rapid, while economic development is too slow to provide sufficient jobs, the result might be mass unemployment and considerable discontent. Thus the Philippines cannot break its dependence on labour export, and the overwhelming market power remains with the labour-importing countries. However, public discontent with the state's inability to protect its most vulnerable citizens could boil over again at any time.

Finally, it is important to examine the effects of substantial emigration for Philippine national identity. For emigration countries, admitting to permanent loss of substantial groups of emigrants can be seen as a 'national shame' because it means admitting that the country of origin is incapable of providing an acceptable life to its people. This has become a major theme in the Philippines, especially with regard to settlement in the USA. Permanent emigrants may be seen as members of a diaspora, who retain links with the homeland (even after becoming US citizens), but also as people who betray the nation, by taking their energy and skills away from national development (Aguilar, 1996a). One way of dealing with the dilemma is by creating a special status for expatriates. In the Philippines, the category of *Balibayans* was established in the 1970s by the Marcos regime. *Balibayans* are literally 'people coming back home to the Philippines'. Programs have been set up to facilitate their return, including special travel documentation, tax privileges and import concessions. *Balibayans* may be overseas contract workers, US permanent residents or even US citizens of Filipino origin. The aim of the *Balibayan* concept seems to be to retain a feeling of national belonging for Filipino emigrants. By retaining an emotional claim on emigrants, they can be encouraged to continue to contribute to the nation through remittances, investments and provision of skills. Politically, treating *Balibayans* as part of the nation helps to legitimate policies of labour emigration (Blanc, 1996).

The *Balibayan* approach has important implications for the notion of citizenship. Effectively it creates a type of quasi-citizenship which separates between formal belonging (in this case to another nation) and emotional belonging to the national community. The emotional bond becomes an issue of essence that does not even require cultural bonds: as Aguilar points out, daughters of Filipino emigrants taking part in the Miss Centennial Philippines competition in 1998 were not even required to be able to speak the national language (Aguilar, 1999, 329). Recognition of diasporas in this way creates the potential for a deterritorialization of the nation: people who live abroad and may even have taken another citizenship are treated as a part of the national community (Blanc, 1996). Formal citizenship takes on an instrumental character: becoming a citizen of another nation is permissible to achieve economic or social benefits, and does not mean loss of a deeper form of belonging (Aguilar, 1999). Such instrumental citizenship is an increasingly common phenomenon in Asia (and indeed elsewhere): Hong Kong 'astronauts' took up Australian or Canadian citizenship to achieve security prior to Hong Kong's re-integration into China in 1997, but remained part of Hong Kong's economy and society (Skeldon, 1994). Cambodia permits dual citizenship to attract back emigrant professionals (Aguilar, 1999, 328). In the Philippines the new type of citizenship is documented by the existence of special immigration booths for *Balibayans* at Manila Airport.

Dilemmas for immigration countries: Malaysia

Asian immigration country governments treat labour migrants as temporary workers, with very limited rights. Most states have rigid rules to prevent unwanted migration and to restrict length of stay. There are strict visa requirements and often severe punishments for illegal migrants or people who employ them. Despite this, illegal migration is very frequent. This often takes the form of tourist visa-holders who overstay their permits, but there is also a great deal of smuggling of undocumented workers over borders. The strict immigration rules are often not enforced, either because the state lacks the ability to do so, or because there are powerful interests (such as employers or migration agents) opposing restrictions on labour mobility. The key question is this poorly-regulated labour migration will remain purely temporary, or whether conversely the dynamics of the migratory process are likely to lead to unplanned settlement and community formation?

Malaysia is an important example for studying such issues, since it has probably the largest number of immigrants relative to total population of any Asian labour-importing country. Unfortunately, estimates of the number of foreign workers vary widely. However, there seems to be a consensus that there are at least 1 million foreign workers in Malaysia, with some estimates going up to 2.2 million (Stahl, 1999). This compares with a total population of 22 million in 1998 (Far Eastern Economic Review, 2000, 161), indicating an immigrant share of somewhere between 5 and 10 per cent. Even on the lower estimates of immigrant workers, they make up about 12 per cent of the workforce.

Malaysia is a multi-ethnic, middle-income country. Its complex ethnic balance is a result of colonial labour import for the tin mines and rubber plantations. Today the citizen population is made up of 61.9 per cent Bumiputra (mainly Malays), 29.5 per cent Chinese and 8.6 per cent Indians (Far Eastern Economic Review, 2000, 161). Ethnicity became politicised after independence, with Bumiputra (literally 'sons of the soil' or indigenous people) feeling they were losing out to the economically dominant Chinese. Following anti-Chinese riots in 1969, a New Economic Policy was introduced in 1971 to encourage Bumiputra education and business. Successful economic management has led to rapid economic growth and industrialization since the 1980s, making Malaysia into a 'second-wave tiger economy' with severe sectoral labour shortages. The GNP annual growth rate from 1975-95 averaged 7.1 per cent, (UNDP, 1999, Table 11), while GNP per capita in 1998 was US\$ 3600 (World Bank, 1999, Table 1). In the period 1989-93, paid employment in the mining, manufacturing and construction sectors increased by an annual average of 13.7 per cent, while the total labour force was growing at only 2.75 per annum (Stahl, 1999). Labour shortages were also pronounced in the plantation sector, due to transfer of local workers to urban employment in manufacturing and the services.

In this situation, Malaysia made the 'migration transition' from labour export to labour import relatively early in its economic development process, when the GDP was still below US\$2000 in the mid-1980s.⁷ Lim attributes this two special features of Malaysia: the multi-ethnic population, which facilitated rapid re-activation of historical migration networks; and the open export-oriented economy, with high rates of foreign investment (Lim, 1996). By 1995, there were 533,000 registered foreign workers in Malaysia, of whom 253,000 were from Indonesia and the rest mainly from Bangladesh, the Philippines and Thailand (Huguët, 1995, 525). There were also thought to be over 1 million undocumented workers, particularly in the East Malaysian island states of Sabah and Sarawak, where the plantation labour force consisted mainly of Indonesians and Filipinos. Undocumented migrants often experience severe exploitation and human rights abuses, and have no recourse to legal protection (Jones, 2000). Government policies consisted of a frequently changing mixture of attempts at regulation of foreign labour, legalization campaigns and border control measures (such as the attempt to build a 500 kilometre long wall along the northern border with Thailand). Foreign workers were blamed for crime, disease and immorality.

In 1998, in response to the Asian Crisis, the government announced plans for mass deportations of irregular workers, now claimed to be as numerous as 2 million. The foreign labour force was to be reduced by up to 1 million through deportation of undocumented workers and non-renewal of contracts of legal workers (Pillai, 1999). Apprehensions of illegal entrants increased, but it soon became clear that the authorities were unable to completely prevent illegal entry, since the coast-line is long and hard to control. The costs and logistical problems involved were considerable, and it became clear that it would be impossible to expel all undocumented workers (Kassim, 1998). The Indonesian Government appears to have made representations to its Malaysian counterpart, pointing out that large-scale repatriation would exacerbate the severe social tensions in Indonesia. In fact poor economic conditions in Indonesia led to increased migration pressures, while Malaysian employers sought to retain workers in industrial and plantation jobs which were not attractive to local workers. Various estimates put actual repatriations at around 200,000 in 1998. As Stahl points out, despite concerns about rising unemployment, severe labour shortages persisted in the agricultural and plantation sectors, and the Government authorized recruitment of the hiring of an additional 100,000 foreign workers in 1998. He concludes:

The fact that the financial crisis led to what could be described as only a marginal reduction in the use of foreign labour underscores the fact that dependence on it has deep-seated structural sources. That is, the need for foreign labour is not a transitory phenomenon that will be eliminated with further structural changes in the economy. Indeed, Malaysia's dependence on foreign labour is structural in nature (Stahl, 1999).

⁷ The notion of the 'migration transition' is used to explain shifts in population flows linked to economic development. At the beginning of the industrialization process, there is frequently an increase in emigration, due to population growth, a decline in rural employment and low wage levels. This was the case in early 19th century Britain, just as it was in late 19th century Japan, or Korea in the 1970s. As industrialization proceeds, labour supply declines and domestic wage levels rise; as a result emigration falls and labour immigration begins to take its place. Thus industrializing countries tend to move through an initial stage of emigration, followed by a stage of both in- and outflows, until finally there is a transition to being predominantly a country of immigration (Martin, Mason and Nagayama, 1996, 171-2).

Does this structural dependence imply that long-term settlement is likely to take place, and if so, what will that mean for ethnic relations and citizenship? So far, relatively little research has been done on these topics, probably because the very idea of formation of new minorities is a political taboo. However, research by Azizah Kassim does indicate trends to long-term settlement by immigrants in Malaysia. Her fieldwork over a long period in squatter settlements around Kuala Lumpur has documented processes of community formation and examined their economic and social causes. Kassim shows that basing policies on the assumption that the use of migrant workers is temporary, when they in fact meet long-term structural needs, leads to non-compliance with official policies on the part of both employers and immigrant workers. The result is that regulations are often ignored and become unenforceable. For instance, regulation of wages for legal contract workers gives them protection, but prevents job-changing to gain better conditions. It may actually be more beneficial to work illegally. Similarly, the failure to plan for the housing needs of immigrants has led to squatter settlements, which have encouraged ethnic concentration and community formation. Recent official policies of preventing illegal entry and deporting illegal workers cannot be adequately enforced. This leads to an expectation of future changes in rules, which may encourage illegal entry and residence (Kassim, 1998).

Another indicator of the likelihood of settlement is the fact that family migration is becoming more common in Sabah, while a feminization of migration is evident in Peninsular Malaysia, with Indonesian and Filipina women entering services such as cleaning and hotels (Pillai, 1999, 181-2). Increased female migration is conducive to family formation and long-term stay. In this context, Pillai points to a shift in public policy discourses on migration: in the 1970s and 1980s there was no stated policy, indicating a laissez-faire attitude towards labour entry; in the early 1990s economic needs predominated; by 1995 social costs became a key issue; while during the Crisis security considerations became the main theme. Until 1995, immigration was not an important topic of public debate, but since then it has become a key issue, with much press debate and frequent statements by political leaders (Pillai, 1999, 182-6). This politicization of migration issues (which is paralleled in the Philippines and Japan—and indeed at a global level) is linked to the realization that migration is not a temporary and easily controllable phenomenon, and may have unpredictable social and cultural consequences.

A recent study on Indonesian migrants in Malaysia confirms this growing politicization, indicating that by 1999: 'The presence of so many immigrants had become a major domestic political issue with Malaysia, a sensitive foreign policy question in Indonesian-Malaysian relations and a growing human rights concern' (Jones, 2000, 3). The Malaysian Government was under pressure from the Malaysian Agricultural Producers Association, the construction industry and some state governments (such as Johor) to bring in more workers. The Malaysian Trade Unions Congress opposed labour recruitment due to its effects on jobs and wages for local workers, while Chinese political groupings feared that Indonesian immigration would alter the ethnic balance to their disadvantage. The government party, UMNO, and the main Islamic opposition party, PAS, both supported Indonesian entries as a potential boost to Malay and Islamic interests. It had become common practice to give illegal workers permanent residents cards during elections to increase the Malay vote. On the other hand, there were frequent polemics against illegal immigrants as threat to public order and health (Jones, 2000, 4). These were countered to some extent by NGOs which exposed abuses of migrants' rights and did their best to support them. The trial of Irene Fernandez, leader of the women's rights organization *Tenaganita*, for exposing abuses in migrant detention centres became a major public issue. The trial has dragged on since 1996, and has done much to focus the efforts of civil society organizations on the human rights of migrants (Jones, 2000, 106-26).

By contrast, Aguilar argues that growing xenophobia against immigrants is a way of redefining and stabilising Malaysian national identity. By labelling immigrants (particularly illegals) as 'the new outsiders', historical divisions between Bumiputra, Chinese and Indian Malaysians can be overcome. In this way, 'the so-called host society refurbishes its own sense of nationhood...The presence of labour migrants reinforces the legitimacy of state elites and their brand of nationalist ideology' (Aguilar, 1999, 321). Such analyses help explain why polemics against foreign workers became so pronounced at the time of the Asian Crisis. Prime Minister Mahathir simultaneously called for a reduction of dependence on foreign labour (Pillai, 1999, 185) and denounced the role of foreign speculators in undermining the Malaysian economy. Such populist campaigns against transnational forces are clearly a way of asserting national solidarity in a crisis, yet the reality is that the remarkable Malaysian economic take off was based on openness to both foreign capital and labour. Following the crisis, foreign capital and labour are needed once again. The question is whether the greater public attention now devoted to immigration will lead to understanding of its long-term role in the Malaysian economy as well as to recognition of the inevitability of some degree of settlement. The answer is probably no: most likely undocumented migration and

unplanned settlement and community formation will continue, leading to all sorts of social tensions. Despite its democratic institutions, Malaysia is still subject to authoritarian rule by the dominant party. However, the willingness of NGOs to fight for the rights of migrants indicates that issues of human rights and rule of law may prove powerful forces for change in the future.

Dilemmas for immigration countries: Japan

Japan is a high-income country with a national identity based on principles of ethnic homogeneity and monoculturalism. Although immigration is low relative to population size, Japan is beginning to have to come to terms with labour migration and trends to settlement and ethnocultural diversity. In 1998, the stock of registered foreign nationals in Japan was 1.5 million (Kondo, 2000, 4). In addition there were about 300,000 irregular workers (OECD, 1998, 129). Most of the 639,000 Koreans and 272,000 Chinese are 'old comers': descendants of workers recruited (sometimes forcibly) from Korea and Japan up to and during the second World War. Recent labour migration to Japan started in the late 1980s with legal entry of women from countries like Thailand and the Philippines to work as 'entertainers'. They were followed by men entering irregularly to take up unskilled jobs in construction and manufacturing, due to high labour demand during the 'bubble economy' period. In 1990, following a policy debate involving employers, trade unions and various ministries, it was decided not to allow legal entry of unskilled workers through the so-called 'front door'. However, 'side-door' schemes were introduced to recruit trainees (some 45,000 by 1996) and *Nikkeijin* (workers of Japanese ancestry from Brazil and Peru—211,000 in 1996) (OECD, 1998, 130).⁸ Illegal immigration (the 'back door') continues in response to demand for low-skilled labour for '3-D jobs'.

Immigrants make up only 1.2 per cent of Japan's population of 126 million. However, the low birth-rates, ageing population and high education levels of the Japanese population make it likely that labour immigration will grow in future, despite current economic stagnation. The official policy is to move labour-intensive workplaces overseas through foreign direct investment, but there are limits to this: jobs in construction, health services and similar areas cannot be exported. A topical issue is the need for aged-care workers to look after Japan's growing elderly population: a recent discussion paper of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs called for a special visa category to facilitate admission of nursing care providers (Kondo, 2000, 19-20). Since the Japanese state clearly has the institutional capacity to control entries, it is hard to escape the impression that a certain level of irregular labour migration is tacitly accepted. In response to increased unemployment since 1997, the authorities have organized regular control campaigns and crackdowns on illegal foreigners, but the numbers arrested during any one campaign average only 200 to 300—less than 1 per cent of illegal migrants (Komai 1998).

The key question in Japan is whether settlement is in fact taking place, and what effects such trends might have on public perceptions and official policies. Relatively little information is available on this topic. The Japanese government does not expect or want settlement to occur, and therefore tends to ignore the phenomenon—a very similar situation to some western countries 30 years ago. Until recently academic researchers have also paid little attention to this topic, showing how social scientists are often influenced by national preconceptions on immigration and cultural diversity. However, the situation is changing, and a new generation of researchers is beginning to present evidence of family reunion and settlement. Several papers presented at the Asia Pacific Migration Research Network (APMRN) International Symposium on New Trends in Migration in the Asia Pacific and Consequences for Japan, 24-26 September, Waseda University, Tokyo, provided micro-studies of community formation and ethnic relations issues in Japan.⁹

For example, a longitudinal study of Asian newcomers in Shinjuku and Ikebukuro districts from 1988-98 by Michihiro Okuda found considerable long-term settlement, as well as frequent intermarriage with Japanese. Those of the 1988 cohort still present in 1998 acted as intermediaries between more recent

⁸ The difference should be noted between the German policy of immediate citizenship for returning 'ethnic Germans' and the Japanese policy of giving labour market rights but not citizenship to *Nikkeijin*.

⁹ The UNESCO-MOST Asia Pacific Migration Research Network (APMRN) carries out research in 13 countries, and is dedicated to examining long-term social and political consequences of migration. Contact: apmrn@uow.edu.au

arrivals and Japanese society. A study of Japanese-Brazilians (*Nikkeijin*) in Toyota City found high levels of concentration (up to 38 per cent of residents) in certain apartment blocks, and frequent isolation from the Japanese population. Conflicts had arisen about issues of daily life such as rubbish disposal, noise, traffic offences and deterioration of law and order. Calls had been made for quotas to limit the number of *Nikkeijin* to at most 30 per cent. However, the city authorities were seeking to provide Japanese language courses for the immigrants.¹⁰

Research by Komai (Komai, 1995; Komai, 1998) finds tendencies to international marriages, family formation, residential concentration and the building of ethnic communities. (One form of international marriages concerns Japanese farmers, who seek Thai or Filipina brides since Japanese women are reluctant to take on the hard life of a farmer's wife. The increasing presence of foreign women on the land goes to the heart of myths of rural authenticity). Ethnic places of worship, businesses, associations and media are beginning to emerge. There is evidence of socio-economic marginalization and differentiation linked to recession and economic restructuring. Differing employment patterns are linked to varying legal status: legal workers (especially *Nikkeijin*) find jobs in large enterprises, while undocumented workers are displaced to small enterprises or informal-sector jobs. Another significant trend is the weak but gradually improving situation of immigrants with regard to various civil, political and social rights (Kondo, 1998). About half the foreign residents are long-standing residents, mainly of Korean origins. Many were born in Japan—some are even third or fourth generation Japanese residents who remain non-citizens due to the strict application of *ius sanguinis*. However, legal changes in 1992 led to a gradual rise in naturalizations: from 6794 in 1990 to 14,495 in 1996 (OECD, 1998, 261).

Mori (Mori, 1997, 155) argues that immigrant workers have become heavily concentrated in certain sectors or occupation, causing structural dependence on irregular workers. This could encourage employer pressure for regularizing such workers, which could in turn reinforce trends to settlement. Mori (Mori, 1997, 189-206) also finds strong tendencies to long-term settlement, and show how public authorities are gradually including foreign residents—even irregular workers—in health, education and welfare services. Most recently, a range of social integration programs for foreign workers and their families have been introduced. These include the establishment of Employment Service Centres for foreign workers as well as the provision of education for children of foreign nationals on equal terms with native Japanese (OECD, 1998, 131). There are clear parallels here with the way the welfare state helped stabilize immigrant populations in Western Europe. Komai also reports that some 10,000 Japanese have come forward as volunteer teachers of Japanese courses. This corresponds with the very large number of NGOs set up in Japan to work for welfare and improved rights for immigrants. One study indicates that there are 132 such NGOs in Japan (Center, 1994).

However, as Komai (Komai, 1998) shows, the differences between Japan and Western European countries are also marked. Labour migration to Japan started in a short-term boom, which soon gave way to recession; there is no parallel to the long 1945-73 boom which provided the conditions for structural incorporation of immigrants in the economies of Western European countries. Moreover, the immigrant share in the population is very low compared to other industrialized countries. Komai points out the Japanese people have generally accepted immigrants with little hostility. There are no campaigns of racist violence against them. Yet this may well be because of the small numbers, for ethnocentrism is strong in Japanese society. Although there are NGOs working to support immigrants and there has been some discussion of improved naturalization rules and political rights, it seems unlikely that immigrants will become a significant political factor in the foreseeable future (see also Weiner and Hanami, 1998).

Despite the official myth of an ethnically homogeneous population, Japan has long-standing national minorities: the indigenous Ainu and Okinawans, and the outcaste Burakumin. These have a marginalized position, and have been generally ignored in discussions of national identity until recently. However, international pressure together with political activities by the Ainu led to a Promotion of Ainu Culture Law in 1997. Although this only gives limited cultural rights, and does not provide for land rights or self-determination, it is an important first step (Kondo, 1998, 6-12). Similarly, many members of the Korean-origin minority are in the third or fourth generations of settlement. Yet they find it hard to obtain Japanese citizenship, and remain a segregated and disadvantaged minority (Esman, 1994). Recently there have been legal challenges to laws which exclude such long-term residents from the right to vote. The Japanese

¹⁰ These and other papers will be published later this year in a special issue of the *Asian and Pacific Migration Journal*.

Supreme Court decided in 1995 that the Constitution does not give local voting rights to foreign residents, but also that the Constitution does not preclude this, so that such rights could be granted through a legislative act. Kondo sees this decision as 'epoch-making' because it opens the door for change, although this would require changes in attitudes and political mobilization (Kondo, 1998, 16). If rights of 'old comers' do get expanded through legal and legislative processes, this would have follow-on effects for more recent immigrant groups.

Thus Japanese developments indicate the potential for increased immigration and settlement in the future, and show how strong legal frameworks and human rights guarantees may lead to improved rights and even improved access to citizenship for immigrants. The strength of Japanese civil society—as demonstrated in the activities of NGOs working for immigrants—is also a factor favouring settlement and community formation.

Perspectives and research issues

On current trends there is little prospect of a reduction in economic and demographic disparities between labour-exporting and labour importing countries. There will be strong motivations for workers to move from areas with large labour surpluses but slow employment growth (such as the Philippines, Indonesia, Indo-China, South Asia and China) to fast-growing economies with slow or negative labour force growth (Japan, the tiger economies, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, Brunei etc.). Governments of labour-surplus countries will probably continue to see labour export as economically and socially beneficial, and may build it into development plans. Employers and governments in labour-deficit countries may see labour import as an easy solution to bottle-necks that might otherwise slow economic growth. Economic logic would therefore lead us to expect a continuation and expansion of temporary labour migration. The smaller than predicted fall in migrant worker employment during the 1997-99 Asian Crisis, and the rapid resumption in mobility since confirm such expectations.

However, all this hinges on certain assumptions about the nature of migration. Academics, officials and policy-makers were beginning to question some of these assumptions before the Crisis, and the experience of the down-turn has increased such concerns. More than ever, Asian migration is becoming a public policy concern that transcends purely economic perspectives. This paper has tried to show some of the reasons for this.

1. International migration is one aspect of much broader processes of globalization and social transformation. The increasing porosity of borders to various types of flows (capital, commodities, ideas, people) makes it much harder for governments to control migration and settlement. Growing regional cooperation also makes it harder for immigration countries to enforce draconian control policies. The failure of mass repatriation policies during the Crisis made such constraints on national sovereignty clear to many policy-makers.
2. Migration tends to create structural dependence for both emigration countries and immigration countries. Emigration countries like the Philippines need continuing outflow of workers to alleviate unemployment and remittances to support their balance of payment. This is one reason why the Philippines has not been able to drastically reduce emigration, despite major political pressures to do so. Immigration countries need continuing inflows because nationals will not move back into menial jobs in plantations, factories or the services, even in the event of recession and unemployment. That is why both Malaysia and Japan were very half-hearted about deportations of undocumented workers, despite the rhetoric of political leaders. Employers form powerful lobby groups to retain good workers and to obtain new ones. The structural dependence on migration gets translated into interest group politics, which leads to a politicization of migration.
3. The key organizational form of globalization is the transnational network, with multiple nodal points in different countries. This applies as much to the social networks which develop in the migratory process as it does to transnational corporations. Migration networks help organize and perpetuate migratory flows, even if governments wish to stop them. Social networks also play an important role in processes of settlement and community formation, as the discussions of Malaysia and Japan indicated.

4. Migration and ethnic diversity are important factors in continuing processes of nation-state formation. In the Philippines pronounced dependence on emigration threatens national identity and political legitimacy since it reflects sources of 'national shame': the inability to achieve economic development to provide a decent livelihood to citizens, and the inability to protect vulnerable citizens working abroad. Attempts to create new forms of instrumental quasi-citizenship like the *Balikbayan* are strategies for addressing this issue, which link up with tendencies to transnational identities inherent in globalization. In Malaysia, immigration has the potential to destabilize a delicate ethnic balance devised to deal with the consequences of colonial divide-and-rule policies. For Japan, increased immigration and settlement forces people to confront powerful myths of homogeneity and racial superiority. Thus in all three cases, migration and settlement have the potential to upset established ideas on national identity. This may threaten ruling elites, whose legitimacy is often based on ability to manipulate national symbols.
5. There are clear trends to democratization in east Asia, even though such processes are often uneven and uncertain. Japan fulfils all the criteria of procedural democracy and the rule of law. Increasing use of legal and human rights guarantees by immigrants and their supporters, particularly in the many NGOs, may help stabilize the situation of settlers, and eventually facilitate family reunion and community formation. In Malaysia, democracy and human rights guarantees are far less developed. Nonetheless, civil society organizations are campaigning for the rights of migrants, and using the legal system where possible.
6. Welfare rights can play a major part in stabilizing immigrant populations. Again there are clear signs that this is happening in Japan, with increasing access to general and special social services by immigrants. Such trends are not much in evidence in Malaysia or other immigration countries. However, the development of social safety nets is on the political agenda following the Crisis, so change is possible.

What can we conclude from these trends? Most actors in Asian migration processes still favour temporary labour migration. No doubt, the overwhelming majority of migrants will return to their countries of origin after some years abroad. But a growing minority will stay on in receiving countries, bring up their children, and make their lives there. This is likely to be a significant force for social, cultural and political change. However, there is as yet little evidence that Asian governments are modifying their models for dealing with ethnic diversity. In general, the following principles are entrenched:

- immigrants should not be allowed to settle;
- foreign residents should not be offered citizenship except in exceptional cases;
- national culture and identity should not be modified in response to external influences.

It appears that Asian nation-states have not undergone the substantial change in understandings of national identity and citizenship that have taken place in western countries over the last 30-50 year as a result of immigration. The question is: does this lack of change in policies for managing ethnic diversity indicate simply that the migration process is at a much earlier stage than in western countries, or does it indicate a fundamental and lasting difference between western and Asian nation-states? Here our knowledge ends, and the need for much more detailed study begins. In order to understand the effects of migration in East Asia, the dominant economic and public order perspectives in research need to be supplemented by detailed studies on:

- The extent of return migration and its effects on technology transfer, cultural values and social relations in areas of origin.
- The characteristics of settlement and community formation in East Asian immigration countries.
- The emergence of transnational communities and their effects on identity, culture and political behaviour.
- Public attitudes towards migration, differentiated by socio-economic groupings, in both sending and receiving countries
- Public policy debates on migration in both sending and receiving countries, with particular reference to the role of various interest groups and social actors.
- The activities of non-governmental organizations in both sending and receiving countries in stabilizing migrant populations and improving their rights.

- The role of national and international legal and human rights guarantees in changing the status and conditions of migrants and settlers.
- The development of welfare provisions and their significance for migrants.

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