MIGRATION IN EAST AND SOUTHEAST ASIA

Samuel C. Y. Ku
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World Scientific

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MIGRATION IN EAST AND SOUTHEAST ASIA

Introduction

Migration is as old as mankind itself beginning with the movements of the first human groups from their origins in East Africa to their current location in the world. In today's context, we talk about moving across political boundaries from one place to another for the purpose of permanent of semi-permanent residence. There has been an undisputed increase in the importance of migration over the past decades, in general, and of migration of workers in Asia, in particular. It is one of the effects of an increasingly globalized world, where capitalism and free trade are gaining prominence.

In the past, Asians migrated mostly to Western countries or the Middle East. While Chinese migration to Southeast Asia goes back centuries, migration of the Asia–Pacific region as a whole started to grow in the 1990s. This trend was defined mainly by moves from less-developed countries (Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Laos, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Sri Lanka, and Vietnam) to fast growing newly industrializing countries (Brunei, Hong Kong, Japan, Singapore, South Korea, Taiwan). Malaysia and Thailand are an exception in this regard, and experience both significant immigration and emigration. While most migration in the region is temporary, trends toward long-term stay are becoming evident in some places.

In the first half of the 20th century, migration flows from Asia were low due to restrictive policies of colonial powers, and most movements within the Asia–Pacific region were usually connected with political struggles. The movement to the West started to grow in the second half of the 20th century. In the early 21st century, more than 20 million Asian migrants lived outside their home countries, six million (including illegal migrants)

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within the Asian region.[1] Most of the time, migration is motivated by economic reasons. Labor migration of mainly low-skilled workers within Asia was growing since the 1980s and culminated in the 1990s. In recent years, flows of the highly-skilled migrants, such as executives, technicians, and other professionals, have increased throughout the region, and demand for them is increasing. This "brain-drain" means a serious loss of human capital, at the same time these migrants are a source of remittances and investment for their home countries. This book addresses both low-skilled and highly-skilled workers migrating in search of better living or working conditions.

Migration is not limited to economic reasons. There are several other types of push (reasons for emigrating) and pull factors (reasons for immigrating), including environmental, political, and cultural reasons. There are, for example, many students and scholars that travel for better education and research opportunities to other countries, and a considerable number of return migrants, a phenomenon in human migration.

Illegal migration is an inseparable issue concerning migration as a whole. It has grown rapidly and affects many countries in the region. Labor flows from Indonesia and Thailand to Malaysia have been largely illegal. On the other hand, Thailand itself hosts large amounts of illegal workers from Myanmar.

This volume is a collection of scholarly chapters written by different authors. It is divided into two sections according to geographical areas: the Greater China region and Southeast Asia. The articles tackle various interesting issues including stateless illegal migrants or international brides.

The first part of the book deals with migration in Greater China, a region influenced by Confucianism and characterized by values emphasizing collective over independent thinking, social harmony over dissension, responsibilities over rights, and conservative over liberal social order. Mainland China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan, the so-called "three Chinas" used to have a close connection in the past, and share much similarity at the present. The Hong Kongese and Taiwanese societies are based on migration. Most people, apart from some aborigines in Taiwan, descended

[1]Hugo Graeme, *Migration in the Asia-Pacific Region* (Geneva: Global Commission on International Migration, 2005).

from migrants from Mainland China. Each society, however, has endured significant social, economic, and political changes.

The first chapter lays the basis for understanding the "three Chinas." Although Mainland China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan are identified as Confucius-heritage societies, they are divided by history and ruling ideology. Currently, they represent three distinct stages of democratization and corresponding phases of educational reforms. Also, citizenship education in these three regions has significantly changed meaning and practices in recent decades. Based on surveys of teachers who teach the subject of political and citizenship education conducted in 2013, the article describes the ways in which the present-day citizenship education in each of the societies reflects its political history and identity.

The second chapter examines mobility between Mainland China and Hong Kong, two cold war rivals. The article focuses on the flow of students for the purpose of pursuing their higher education. Before 1949, the communist over-take in China, many secondary students from Hong Kong pursued their further education in China. The cold war era is characterized by stagnation in this regard. After the Chinese economic reform and the hand-over of Hong Kong in 1997, there were still some students from Hong Kong who were willing to study in Mainland China, however, the trend changed towards a flow from Mainland China to Hong Kong.

The third chapter focuses on returning Chinese migrants, the so-called *haigui* or "sea turtles" (the word "sea turtle" in Chinese sounds the same as "returned from overseas"), a global phenomenon. Nearly half a million overseas Chinese scholars returned to China in the last 30 years since China opened up to the world. The *haigui*, with their new knowledge, skills, technologies and global networks, help transform China into a global hub of innovation and a knowledge-based economy ruled by laws of the free market.

The fourth chapter investigates the phenomenon of cross-strait migration between Taiwan and China. The political separation across the Taiwan Strait has lasted over six decades. In recent years, Taiwan and China have engaged in cultural and economic exchanges, which inevitably resulted in migration flows between them. Because Taiwan's key principle in exchanges with China is maintaining economic security, various policies regulating cross-strait migration have been adopted. Since Taiwan and

China are engaged in a political struggle that could even lead to war, the issue of cross-strait migration is much more complex than the migration in other countries.

The fifth chapter explores the interaction between migrant workers and their environment by comparing the conditions for migrant workers in the four Asian tigers — Hong Kong, Singapore, South Korea, and Taiwan. Economic reasons have prompted these countries to open their borders and accept a flow of migrant workers. Migrant workers in Taiwan and Korea amount to almost all of the foreign labor. Korea has the most migrant workers, followed by Singapore and Taiwan. While in Hong Kong the majority of migrant workers are domestic workers, in Korea low-skilled workers constitute the majority. The article provides a comparative picture of the working and living conditions in the four Asian tigers.

Traditionally, it has been argued that with the lack of international safeguarding mechanisms migrant workers do not have enough power to influence the policies governing them. However, with the recent protests and uprisings of migrant workers, the roles of migrant workers and their influence in shaping the socio-politico-economic environment and policies in host countries are slowly changing. Access to labor unions and labor markets differ from country to country and there is still a huge gap between developing and developed countries.

The second part of the book looks closer at migration flows in Southeast Asia, in particular among countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) — Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam. Most of the intra ASEAN migration involves low-skilled labor for construction, agriculture, and domestic work. The growth in cross-border labor mobility within ASEAN has two distinguishable patterns: one is centered around the Mekong states with Thailand as the hub and Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, and Vietnam as labor suppliers; another is the Malay region, with Singapore, Brunei Darussalam, and Malaysia as the major destinations for workers from Indonesia and the Philippines.[2]

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[2]Chris Manning and Pradip Bhatnagar, *Movement of natural persons in Southeast Asia: How natural?* (Australian National University, 2003), <https://socialpolicy.crawford.anu.edu.au/acde/publications/publish/papers/wp2004/wp-econ-2004-02.pdf>.

The sixth chapter addresses the intra-ASEAN labor mobility and discusses whether labor movement is beneficial to the ASEAN Economic Integration of 2015. This initiative serves as a mechanism to demonstrate unity of member countries in their ability to push for economic independence, and is directed toward establishing an economic community that is capable of global trade. Intra-ASEAN migration of skilled labor contributes largely positively to ASEAN's growth path toward a solid economic community. The article identifies the push and pull factors behind ASEAN citizens' intra ASEAN migration, and determines whether selected ASEAN countries' labor market policies facilitate these countries' economic growth.

The seventh chapter examines the direction, patterns, and correlates of occupational mobility of overseas Filipino workers, one of the largest migrant communities. Occupational mobility is a process of changing from one occupation to another. There are significant differences in the occupational mobility of Filipino male and female labor migrants. A study from 1994 shows that the majority of male workers did not change occupations, while female workers were mostly upwardly mobile. Two decades later, the pattern has not changed for men. Women, on the other hand, became downwardly mobile. Patterns of mobility vary according to the different background and other factors, such as country of destination and duration of stay abroad.

The eighth chapter looks at the reasons behind the massive outflow of Rohingya, the largest Muslim minority in Myanmar. Since 2012, there have been several outbreaks of sectarian violence in the country. The lack of appropriate documentation due to denied Myanmar citizenship in combination with the anti-Muslim campaign has forced many Rohingya to the seas in search of a brighter future. They usually seek asylum in Bangladesh, Thailand, and Malaysia. The journey is facilitated by agents, who charge enormous fees. None of the countries in close proximity to Myanmar are signatories of the UN Refugee Convention, and authorities can forcibly return Rohingya back to Myanmar. Refugees have no access to public education, legal employment, or free healthcare, and many are engaged in dirty, dangerous, and difficult illegal jobs.

On the other end of the spectrum are highly-skilled labor migrants. They have attracted a great deal of attention from policymakers in recent years. Highly-skilled workers, such as architects, financial experts, engineers,

technicians, scientists, teachers, health professionals and IT specialists, are an essential input to an innovative economy. The ninth chapter examines flows of such migrants in the ASEAN countries. Singapore is the main recipient of skilled workers from abroad in ASEAN, while the Philippines and Malaysia are the main suppliers. The article gives specific recommendations to Vietnam, a country with a skills shortage caused by inadequate university training, as well as the emigration of its own skilled workforce. This issue is acute and of increasing concern for Vietnamese businesses.

International marriage matchmaking is widespread in Asia. In many countries, this is forbidden and can legally only be practiced as a non-profit activity. The tenth chapter analyzes the marketization of the international marriage business involving women from Mainland China or Southeast Asia, and Taiwanese men. Due to geographical proximity, most Taiwanese men looking for foreign wives join package tours to Mainland China or Southeast Asian countries, such as Vietnam or Thailand, while their American counterparts may prefer to travel to Russia or Ukraine. Many commercial matchmaking agencies arrange so-called 'brides-to-be' camps, where they teach women how to become Taiwanese wives.

This volume in set the context of global patterns of international migration, and features 10 studies on various aspects of migration within East and Southeast Asia, a region inhabited by over half the world's population.

The 10 articles have been carefully selected from articles presented at the 2014 International Conference on Asia-Pacific Studies: Migration and Transformation in the Asia-Pacific, held at the National Sun Yat-sen University (Taiwan) in November 2014.[3]

[3]Organized by the Institute of China and Asia-Pacific Studies (National Sun Yat-sen University) and the Department of Political Science (University of Philippines-Diliman).

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Part I
Migration in East Asia

Chapter 1

Understanding Chinese Citizenship and Citizenship Education: Comparing Teachers' Perspectives in Mainland China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan

Pei-te Lien[1,2]

Abstract

This paper reviews the flexible notion of Chinese citizenship and compares the teaching and learning of citizenship in Mainland China, Hong Kong,

[1] **Pei-te Lien** is Professor of Political Science and of Asian American Studies and Feminist Studies at the University of California, Santa Barbara. Her primary research interest is the political participation and representation of Asian and other nonwhite Americans. Among numerous other publications, she is author of *The Making of Asian America through Political Participation* (2001), lead author of *The Politics of Asian Americas: Diversity and Community* (2004), and co-edited *The Transnational Politics of Asian Americans* (2009). She is also the PI and co-PI of several major survey research projects, including the Gender and Multicultural Leadership Project <gmcl.org>. She can be reached at plien@polsci.ucsb.edu

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and Taiwan in recent decades. Collectively called the "three Chinas," each of the societies has its own political history and ruling ideology, even if they all are identified as Confucius-heritage societies. Each society, however, has also endured significant social, economic, and/or political changes in the past three decades or so and they currently represent three distinct stages of democratization and corresponding phases of educational reforms. In what ways does the present-day citizenship education in each of the societies reflect her political history and identity and differ from each other in curriculum priorities and pedagogical practices? In what sense is there commonness in the conceptualization and teaching of citizenship across these Chinese societies? After a review of literature, we present preliminary findings of a primary survey conducted in December 2013 of secondary school teachers who teach the subject of political and citizenship education, as well as college students in-training to teach the subject. In the analysis, we also compare current findings to similar empirical research done in the recent past, both in China as well as in Hong Kong and Taiwan, to gauge the degree of continuity and change in the meanings of "good" citizenship, and practice of citizenship education in each society as viewed by subject teachers.

Keywords: Asian Citizenship, Citizenship Education, Teachers' Survey in China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan.

1. Introduction

This chapter reviews the flexible notion of Chinese citizenship and compares teachers' perspectives on the teaching and learning of citizenship in Mainland China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan in recent decades. It is part of a larger study that seeks to unpack the black box of political learning in the major homelands of Chinese Americans by investigating the changing meanings and practices of citizenship education in these societies. Collectively called the "three Chinas," these societies are divided by history and ruling ideology, even if they all are identified as Confucius-heritage societies that can be characterized by values that place emphasis on collective over independent thinking, social harmony over dissension, responsibilities over rights, and conservative over liberal social order. Each society, however, has also endured significant social, economic, and/or political changes in the

past three decades or so, and they currently represent three distinct stages of democratization and corresponding phases of educational reforms. In what ways does the present-day citizenship education in each of the societies reflect her political history and identity and differ from each other in curriculum priorities and pedagogical practices? In what sense is there commonness in the conceptualization and teaching of citizenship across these Chinese societies? After a review of literature, we present preliminary findings of a primary survey conducted in December 2013 of middle school teachers who teach the subject of political and citizenship education as well as college students in-training to teach the subject. In the analysis, we also compare current findings to prior empirical research done respectively in each society to gauge the degree of continuity and change in the meanings of "good" citizenship and practice of citizenship education as viewed by subject teachers in-service and in-training.

The term civic and citizenship education (citizenship education, hereafter) may broadly refer to "the formation through the process of schooling of the knowledge, skills, values, and dispositions of citizens."[3] Political entities in the world, including those in the Asian region, have been showing a revived interest in reforming civic and/or citizenship education so as to better respond to profound social and political changes on both domestic and international fronts in recent decades. Kennedy notes that modern states have employed citizenship education as a strategy to support their values, structures, and priorities and that it cannot be "treated in isolation from the broader global environment."[4] Moreover, neither can citizenship education "stand by itself, independent of cultural norms, political priorities,

[3] This definition is used in John J. Cogan, Paul Morris, and Murray Print, eds., *Civic Education in the Asia-Pacific Region: Case Studies across Six Societies* (New York: Routledge Falmer, 2002), p. 4. It is used interchangeably with citizenship education in this research. In their research on international civic and citizenship education, Schulz and his associates note that the prevailing global trend is to use the term "citizenship education" to capture the dynamics in the field. See Wolfram Schulz, John Ainley, Julian Fraillon, David Kerr, and Bruno Losito, *ICCS 2009 International Report: Civic Knowledge, Attitudes, and Engagement among Lower Secondary School Students in 38 Countries* (Amsterdam: International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement, 2010).

[4] Kerry J. Kennedy, "Global Trends in Civic and Citizenship Education: What are the Lessons for Nation States?," *Education Sciences*, Vol. 2, No. 1, 2012, p. 127.

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