Pookong Kee | Hidetaka Yoshimatsu

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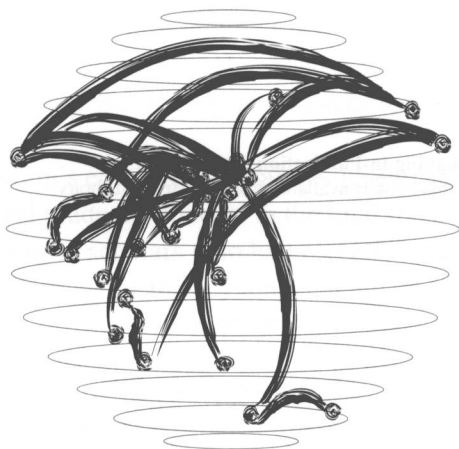
Global
Movements
in the Asia Pacific

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INTRODUCTION

Hidetaka Yoshimatsu and J. S. Eades

Globalization is one of the most important phenomena in the current international arena. It can be defined as the processes and activities that promote interdependence and interconnectedness between peoples and societies throughout the world, together with their acceleration and intensification. Globalization is variously seen as a challenge (Sassen, 1998; Bhagwati, 2004), a result of technological change (Castells, 1996, 1997, 1998), or a largely inevitable process that we have to live with and make work (Stiglitz, 2006). For as Friedman has pointed out (2005), thanks to the new technology and patterns of innovation, the world is now becoming increasingly flat.

Even though waves of globalization took place long before the 20th century as Alfonso Yuchengco reminds us in Chapter 2 of this book, the current phase of globalization is different from those that preceded it in terms of its extent and pervasiveness: it is unique in its scope. In the current globalized world, events taking place in one place can have an increasingly direct and profound influence on events in geographically distant locations, and in an increasingly short time. This pervasive globalization has been produced by a combination of factors: the falling cost of transport, thanks to the deregulation of air transport, the arrival of wide-bodied jets, and the container revolution in the shipping industry since the 1970s; the global acceptance of liberal capitalism, leading to free movement of people, goods, capital, and services, especially since the end of the Cold War in the late 1980s; and the rapid evolution in information and communications technologies in the 1990s.

Globalization as a process therefore has a complex and multidimensional nature. Even though most attention has been devoted to the economic dimensions of globalization, with trade, investment and financial transactions regarded as both its major causes and consequences, the social, cultural, environmental and political dimensions are also very important. These may be linked directly to the economy, as is typically the case with the environmental problems resulting from the long-distance transport of materials either by sea or air. The social and cultural dimensions of globalization also have a long-term impact on both societies and individuals in them, through changing attitudes towards politics, social institutions, and people's sense of identity (Castells, 1997). The political dimension is reflected in the growth of intergovernmental organizations, and national governments seek to formulate new systems of governance and cooperation in the face of the forces that globalization has unleashed (Castells, 1998).

Globalization has had a significant influence on a wide range of state and non-state actors at the local, national, regional, and global levels. It presents a major challenge to the cohesion of both local communities and nation states. Communities are affected by migration and the spread of new technologies, goods and values, while national governments seek to respond to their increasing inability to control flows of information, capital and people through developing new forms of regionalism, as seen most dramatically in Europe (Castells, 1998: 330–354.). Meanwhile, transnational corporations, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and local governments are increasingly forming their own cross-border linkages and networks that have a significant influence on the interests and behavior of the state.

The multidimensionality and complexity of globalization require politicians, technical specialists, administrators and researchers to examine its causes, processes, and consequences from plural, multi-disciplinary perspectives. We need to pay attention both to the logic underpinning globalization, and its implications for key issues involving state and society such as inequality, state sovereignty, and the prospects for liberal democracy.

Globalization and Global Movements

The growing pace, volume and complexity of international movements of people, goods, capital, services, and knowledge are both causes and

consequences of the latest round of globalization. In particular, the increasing movements of people, including migrants, tourists, students, and refugees, have an immense impact on society at many different levels (Castles and Miller, 1998). Intergovernmental organizations and national governments alike are forced to devise new institutions and administrative frameworks to manage the new forms of mobility. Inflows and outflows of people create new opportunities for people, but also result in new sorts of conflict in local communities. Moreover, the growing flows of trade, investment, technology, and knowledge have changed the world's industrial and economic maps. The diffusion of the latest technology and knowledge of production methods has shifted the location of value-added activities (Castells, 1996), away from the economically more developed nations to those like China and India currently experiencing their own waves of high-speed growth. Massive investment and the adoption of advanced technologies have enabled these countries to become major bases for manufacturing industries. Such a process of transformation has been accompanied by massive movements of skilled and unskilled laborers.

Whereas these movements often imply mobility of goods, people, capital, and knowledge on a global scale, they may also take place on the local or regional level, because of the lower transaction costs associated with geographic proximity. These regional movements are often effective responses to the challenges and opportunities brought about by global processes. This means that the extent, significance and consequences of global movements can be explored and understood by focusing on phenomena and processes taking place at the level of regions such as the Asia Pacific. Given that this region consists of nations with a range of cultures, political systems, and levels of development, investigation of the dynamics of movements within the region is all the more valuable for understanding the complex and multidimensional processes of globalization in relation to regional growth, stability and identity.

Human Movement and Technology

Many of the early chapters in this book deal with the varieties of human movement to be found in the contemporary Asia-Pacific region. The first paper by Nobel Prize winner Yuan T. Lee (Chapter 1) begins with an account

of his own personal odyssey. In the early 1960s, he left Taiwan together with many other Chinese students to study in America, many of whom became successful in the companies and research institutes of the United States. However, instead of the conventional analysis of the "brain drain" and its impact on developing countries, Lee argues that the migrants' countries of origins may eventually benefit from the out-migration, as the migrants return with the technical knowledge acquired elsewhere and use it to build up high-technology industries back home. It is worth asking the conditions under which this can take place, given that it seems to be a more common phenomenon in the Asia-Pacific region than elsewhere. Clearly the new technologies brought back by the migrants can only take root where there is reasonable political stability, an institutional framework which is friendly to entrepreneurs, and a "developmental state" interested in fostering high-technology development (Woo-Cumings, 1999). The results, as Yuchengco reminds us in Chapter 2, can be seen in the rise of companies from the "dragon economies" (Hong Kong, Singapore, South Korea and Taiwan), as well as mainland China and India, becoming major players in the world market. Regional trade is also booming, with an increasing web of agreements between the ten ASEAN countries, China, Japan and South Korea, giving these countries an increasingly significant share of world trade. The other ingredient, discussed by Uchida in Chapter 3, is a population of highly skilled workers, able to help develop a knowledge economy and an environment for innovation. This may involve collaboration with the state, as in the development of science parks and silicon valleys around the region (Castells and Hall, 1994), including the Hsinchu Science-Based Industrial Park in Taiwan.

Dynamics of Migration: Households, Gender and Ethnicity

The main outlines of the contemporary migration system which has emerged in the Asia-Pacific region under the influence of globalization is described by Osaki in Chapter 4. She argues that two distinctive labor migration systems have developed in Asia. The first, centered on the Middle East, dates back to the rise in oil prices in the 1970s, which led to a massive construction boom and inflow of foreign workers in the Gulf states. The workers came initially from the surrounding states, but then increasingly from South Asia — at a

time when the previous migration to Europe was slowing down. From the 1980s, the action moved to East and Southeast Asia with the rise of the dragon economies. Countries such as Japan, Taiwan, Korea, Singapore and Brunei have increasingly attracted labor from South Asia, the Philippines, and mainland China, as their economies expanded. Typically, these workers are short-term migrants, performing dirty, dangerous and demanding jobs which the local workers are no longer interested in taking up. Longer term settlement is difficult or impossible due to immigration regulations, making it possible for the governments of the region to lay off migrant labor first when economic recession strikes. Osaki also mentions the increasing "feminization" of migration, with an increasing number of women workers from the Philippines and elsewhere taking over domestic labor as local women become increasingly involved in the professional labor force. While the remittances from these workers provide welcome support for the local economy back home, there is increasing concern about the impact of their absence on their families, particularly their children as other relatives are forced to take over responsibility for them.

The relationship between households and migration is also a central theme of Chapter 5 by Mike Douglass, building on his earlier work on migration (Douglass and Roberts, 1999). He starts from the classic observation that the household is an essential component of the capitalist system because of its role in the reproduction of labor: raising children and supporting family members are functions which are difficult to carry out through the market. However, the family is starting to abandon many of its traditional functions, as seen most dramatically in the falling birth rate and rapidly aging populations of Japan (Traphagan and Knight, 2003) and the other highly-developed countries of the region. Global movements of people therefore play an important role in allowing the household to continue to play its role in social reproduction, despite the increasing strains and tensions to which it is subjected. Specific mechanisms include the recruitment of foreign spouses (usually wives) to offset the local shortage of partners; adoption and surrogate motherhood as new alternatives to traditional reproduction and child-rearing, sending children abroad for education rather than educating them locally; and the use of migrant domestic workers, usually women, to take over the chores of caring for children and the elderly. Meanwhile, the elderly are themselves on the move, taking their pensions and

savings to countries where the cost of living is lower (e.g. Miyazaki, 2008; Ono, 2008), and where domestic help is cheaper, given the increasing lack of children either available or willing to look after their parents in old age.

Yamagami in Chapter 6 and Fielding in Chapter 7 focus specifically on migration to Japan as a case study of the general trends discussed in the earlier chapters. Yamagami notes that the proportions of women and skilled workers in the migrant labor force are both steadily increasing. He also points to the growing numbers of illegal and undocumented migrants, and increasing attempts by states to control them through sanctions against the employers for whom they work. Efforts to control the flow lead naturally to greater efforts by organized crime to help the migrants to cross borders, and thus an increase in human smuggling and trafficking. Finally, political instability in particular countries and regions usually results in an outflow of refugees and asylum seekers hoping to settle elsewhere, so that states constantly have to revise their laws and institutional arrangements for dealing with them. At the same time, countries suffering from aging populations and a shortage of labor in particular sectors of the market are actively encouraging migrants, especially highly skilled migrants to settle to fill these niches. Even in Japan, the numbers of skilled foreign workers being allowed to enter and settle is steadily rising, and the encouragement by the Japanese government of large numbers of foreign students to come to Japan for education will probably mean that this trend will continue in future.

Fielding's chapter deals in detail with the different waves of migrants coming to Japan and their locations within the country. Large-scale Korean and Chinese immigration to Japan dates back to Japan's colonial empire, which lasted from 1895 to 1945 (Weiner, 1994). Though many of these "oldcomer" migrants returned to China, Taiwan and Korea after the Second World War, some remained and became the nuclei of new waves of Chinese and Korean immigrants in the post-war period, as the Japanese economy revived (Ryang, 1997, 2000). They were also joined by an increasing number of "newcomers," including migrants from Thailand and the Philippines (often young women working as hostesses or entertainers), and South Americans claiming Japanese ancestry, most of them from Brazil and Peru (Tsuda, 2003). There are also differences in the location of different migrant groups, with the Chinese and Koreans largely concentrated in Kansai, and the more

recent migrants more heavily concentrated in the Kanto and Chubu regions, around Tokyo and Nagoya. Finally, there are groups of assorted westerners, many of them working as professionals and teachers in Tokyo and the other major cities.

In Chapter 8, Liu-Farrer focuses on the Chinese community in contemporary Japan, particularly the skilled workers involved in information technology and related industries. A fascinating pattern emerges from her data: because they have Chinese workers fluent in Japanese working for them, some Japanese companies have found themselves able to expand their business to China. The bi-cultural immigrant workers thus become managers and specialists, occupying strategic positions in the companies that employ them. Clearly, many of the overseas workers trained in Japan are staying on in Japan to work for Japanese companies, many of which have been aggressively recruiting foreign talent. Unlike Japanese workers, however, they tend to change jobs regularly, moving generally between small- and medium-sized companies, partly because they find their progress into management positions blocked because they are still considered outsiders. In fact some workers do manage to get promoted, sometimes by demonstrating their ultimate commitment to Japan — by naturalizing and taking Japanese citizenship, in addition to permanent residence.

In contrast, Nagy (Chapter 9) focuses on the Japanese bureaucracy and its attempts to make life in modern Japan more bearable for foreigners. He presents case studies of multicultural policies in three areas of Tokyo: Shinjuku and Adachi Wards in central Tokyo, and Tachikawa City to the west. Shinjuku, in the commercial heart of the city, has the most diverse population, 10 percent of which are foreigners. While stopping at granting actual voting rights, Shinjuku tries hard to include the foreign population in its activities, by providing Japanese language programs, and information on topics such as disaster relief (given the danger of earthquakes) in foreign languages. Similar initiatives and problems are found in Adachi. However, rates of participation in these activities by foreigners remain low, partly because they have their own sources of information and support in the existing ethnic communities and church groups. The reasons for the lack of success are perhaps best summed up by Nagy's analysis of the problematic nature of the programs in Tachikawa. The events intended to include foreigners in fact emphasize the differences between foreign and Japanese

residents and cultures. And in attempting to teach foreigners about Japanese culture, they focus on traditional elements such as tea ceremony and flower arrangement, which have little practical relevance to life in modern Japan.

Labor Markets and Remittances

A theme from Douglass' chapter, that of the regional demand for carers in aging societies, is the starting point of Cortez (Chapter 10). This chapter discusses recent developments in migration patterns between the Philippines and Japan. Until the beginning of the 21st century, the majority of male migrants from the Philippines to Japan were trainees, working in the automotive and electrical industries. Women migrants were divided between younger "entertainers," many of them actually working as hostesses in bars (Dizon, 2006), and domestic helpers, for which demand has been rising thanks to the rapidly aging Japanese population. The regional demand for nursing and care services throughout the region has led to a proliferation of training institutions in the Philippines, which the Philippine government has increasingly tried to bring under scrutiny and control. Under the terms of a free trade agreement between the two countries, Japan agreed to accept a quota of both nurses and caregivers from the Philippines from 2007, as a response to the increasing demand for care. These workers would be given a period of three years (for nurses) and four years (for caregivers) to pass Japanese licensing examinations, after which they could stay in Japan indefinitely. Even though the tough examination hurdle probably means that few Philippine workers will stay permanently under this agreement, the agreement does point to the possibility of freer legal movement of these categories of skilled workers in future, as the flows of labor increasingly reflect the demographic imbalances between the countries of the region.

Camacho, in contrast, traces the consequences of migration for the Philippines and its economy (Chapter 11). A feature of the Philippines is that supply of skilled labor produced by the education system has grown faster than the economy as a whole, where the rate of growth has been much more variable: industry has in fact declined along with agriculture over the years, while poverty has persisted, especially in the rural areas. Emigration