

Asia on the Move: International Migration and Social Transformations in Asia

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Age of migration

- Globalization has caused a dramatic increase in the number of migrants worldwide—from 75 million in 1965 (ILO 2000) to more than 200 million in 2008 (IOM, 2008).
- According to the IOM, in 2005 migrants accounted for 2.9% of the world population. Migrant workers are estimated to be around 90~95 millions, accounting for 41.7~49.7% of all migrants.

Asia on the move

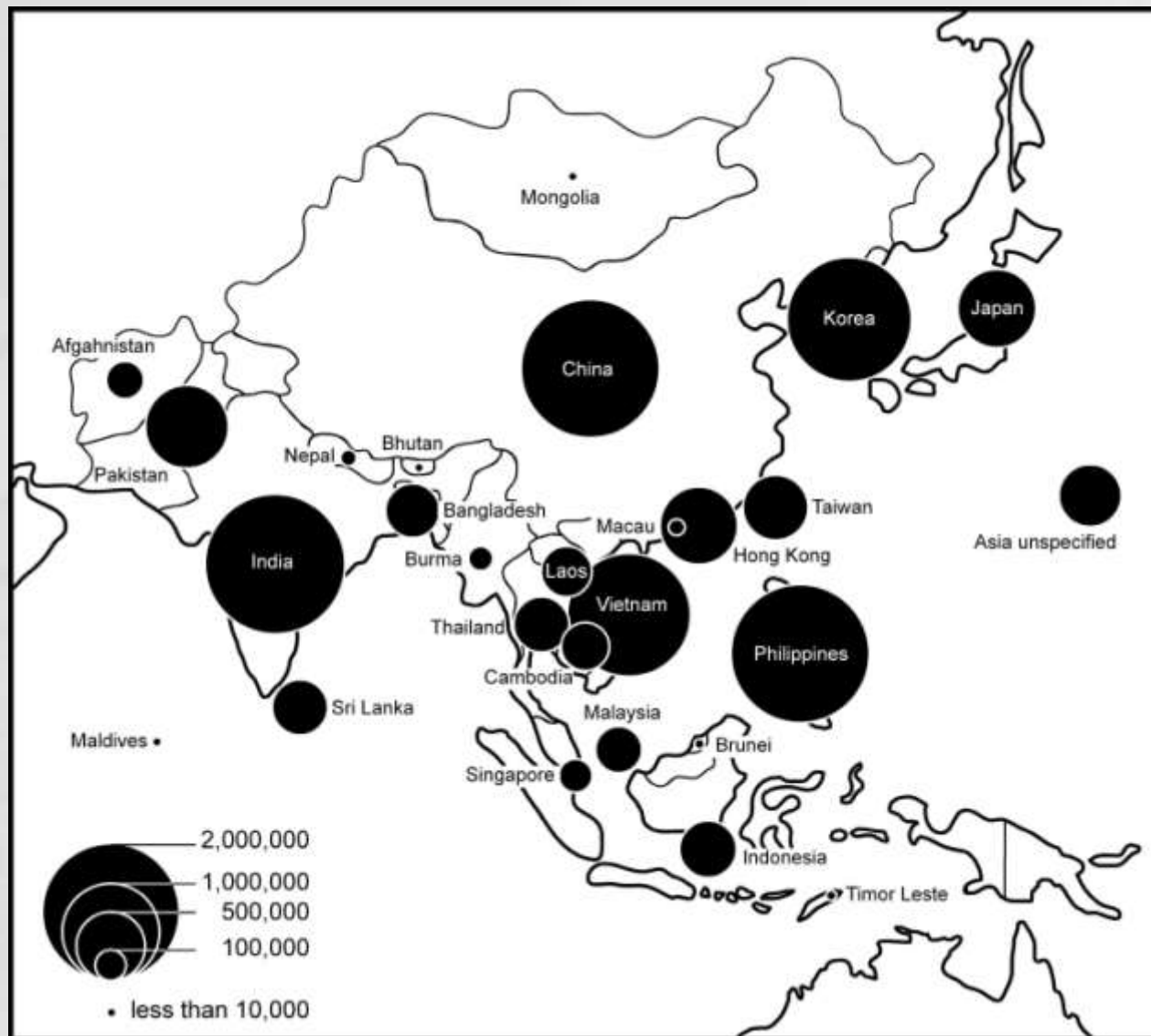
- Asia has become one of the most significant and “globalized” regions in the world not only in terms of the cross-border movement of capital and goods, but also in terms of the movement of people.
- International migration is having a significant impact in the social, demographic and economic development of all Asian nations.
- Over 20 million Asian workers are estimated to be living outside their native countries.

Asia on the move (cont.)

- The continent is also the leading source of family and authorized economic migration to most of the world's immigrant-receiving regions and countries.
- The nine largest immigrant-exporting countries (Bangladesh, China, India, Indonesia, Myanmar, Pakistan, the Philippines, Sri Lanka and Thailand) together contribute between one half and two thirds of all documented immigrants and refugees to the international migration stream.

Asian Countries: Numbers Residing in OECD Countries

Source: OECD Database on Immigrants and Expatriates



Developments in Mobility in Asia-Pacific Countries

- **The Myth of Traditional Immobility**
- **Increased scale and complexity of movement**
- **Migration now within the reach of many**
- **Increased female involvement in migration**
- **Involvement of both high and low skilled groups**
- **Increased government involvement**
- **Growth of the migration industry**
- **Growth of both documented and undocumented migration**

Source: Graeme Hugo, “Population Movement and Human Development in the Asia Pacific - A Demographer’s View of the Major Issues”, Presentation at the 2009 ISSBD Asia-Pacific Workshop, Flinders University, Adelaide, Australia, 4th July 2009.

Trends and characteristics

- The various subregions of Asia have been characterized by specific migratory movements.
- Traditionally, South Asia is identified as a subregion of origin of migration, East Asia as a subregion of destination and South-East Asia as a subregion of both origin and destination.

Diverse patterns

- At the same time, however, migration flows have developed in different directions, particularly within the various regions, so that it is difficult to maintain the traditional characterizations.
- In East Asia, for instance, migration from China, although unauthorized, has become important in Japan and the Republic of Korea, and Koreans continue to enter Japan.
- South Asia cannot be considered just a subregion of origin, in view of the substantial migration from Bangladesh and Nepal to India.

Recent trends

- The very recent period has seen an increase in relatively more skilled temporary migration from Asia to other parts of the world, especially North America, Europe and Australasia.
- There have also been increases in outsourcing of a range of activities which have implied much greater expansion of services trade without necessarily involving the movement of people.

Recent trends (cont.)

- Recent migration has been rather different in terms of its nature and its duration.
- The movement of more educated and skilled professional workers has been dominantly to developed countries, either to the US, or western Europe or even to Australia and New Zealand.
- By contrast, the movement of unskilled or relatively less skilled workers has displayed a much more diverse pattern, with a large and growing extent of intra-Asian region migration.

Major Types of Migration

- South-North permanent and temporary skilled migration
- Constant Labour Migration – largely unskilled
- Student Migration
- Forced Migration
- Marriage Migration

Important points about labor migration

- Attention should be given to the fact that migration is not just an individual choice, but a choice taking place within a household.
- International labour flows do not occur randomly, but respond to linkages established through history (colonialism) and economic interaction.

Labor migration (cont.)

- The costs involved in international migration are offset by social networks that facilitate the movement of people who can enter into such networks and ensure the continuation of migration beyond the attractiveness of differentials.
- The cumulative changes in both sending and receiving countries brought about by migration ensure that migration flows will continue beyond the original intentions.

Contract Labour Migration

- Mainly unskilled workers
- Contracted to particular employers usually for 2 years
- Restricted rights in destination
- Increasing involvement of women
- Both undocumented and documented
- Excessive rent taking and exploitation
- Increasingly segmented labour markets in destinations

Source: Graeme Hugo, “Population Movement and Human Development in the Asia Pacific - A Demographer’s View of the Major Issues”

Southeast Asian Countries: Estimates of Stocks of Migrant Workers in Other Countries

Origin Countries	Number	Main Destinations	Source of Information	Year
Burma/Myanmar	1,840,000	Thailand	<i>BurmaNet News</i> , 8 January 2007	2006
Thailand	500,000	Saudi Arabia, Taiwan, Myanmar, Singapore, Brunei, Malaysia	Sciortino and Punpuing, 2009	2007
Laos	173,000 ^b	Thailand	<i>Migration News</i> , January 2005	2004
Cambodia	183,541	Thailand	Lee, 2006	2006
Vietnam	400,000	Korea, Japan, Malaysia, Taiwan	<i>Migration News</i> , October 2007	2005
Philippines	8,726,520	Middle East, Malaysia, Japan	Philippines Overseas Employment Agency	2007
Malaysia	250,000	Japan, Taiwan	Asian Migrant Center, 1999	1995
Singapore	775,000 ^a		Beng and Chew, 2008	2008
Indonesia	5,800,000 ^a	Malaysia, Saudi Arabia, Taiwan, Singapore, South Korea, United Arab Emirates	<i>Asian Migration News</i> , December 2008	2008
Total	18,648,061			

a. Documented

b. Undocumented

Source: Graeme Hugo, "Population Movement and Human Development in the Asia Pacific - A Demographer's View of the Major Issues"

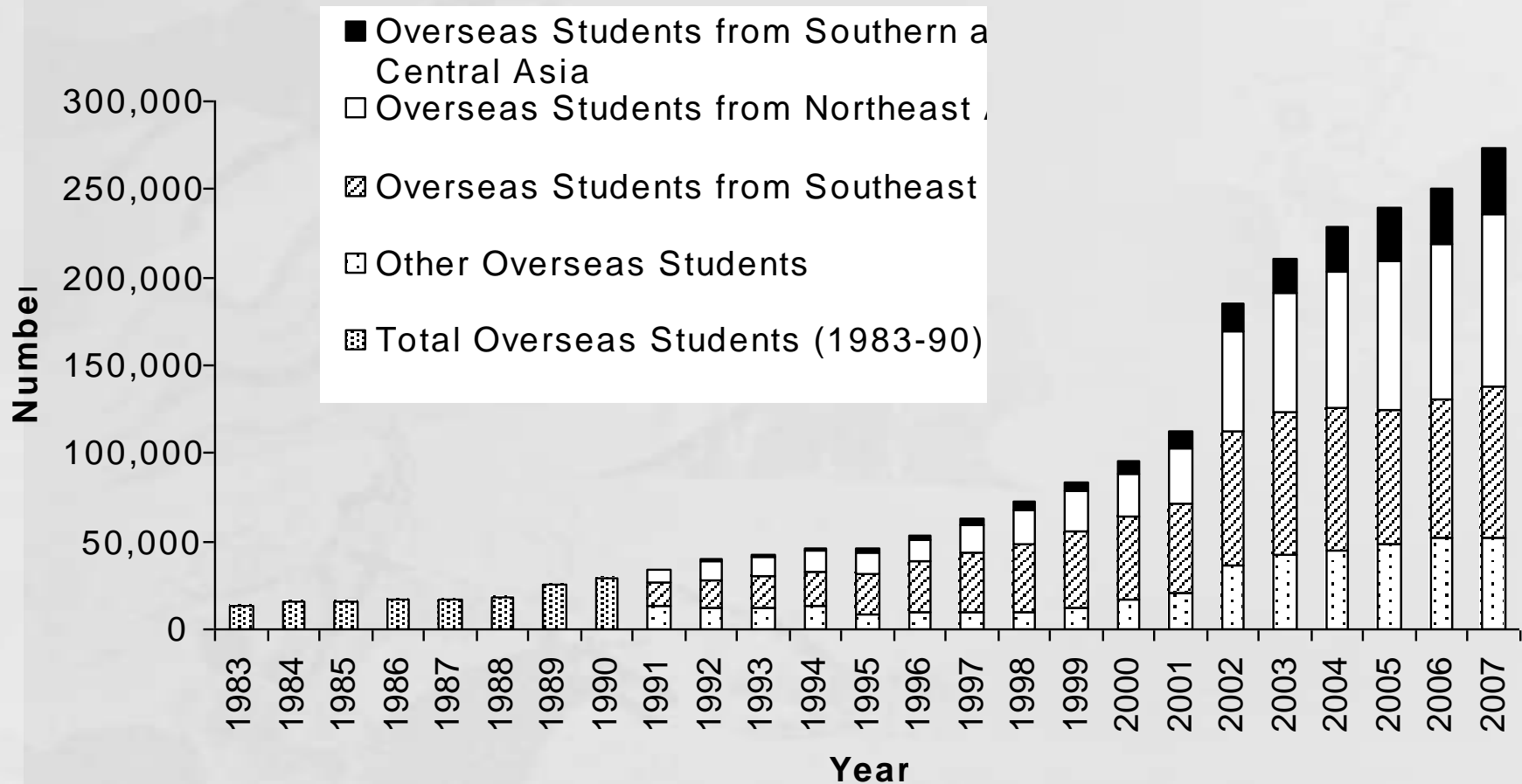
Forced Migrations

- Mandated Refugee movement - 29.3 percent of global total in 2008 (10 million persons)
- Increased asylum seeking
Key transit centres of Thailand, Malaysia and Indonesia
45 percent of all Asylum applications from Asia (383,000 in 2008, 12 percent higher than in 2007)
- Potential of climate change related displacement

Source: Graeme Hugo, "Population Movement and Human Development in the Asia Pacific - A Demographer's View of the Major Issues"

Overseas Students in Australian Universities, 1983-2007

Source: DEST *Students: Selected Higher Education Statistics*, various issues



Student migration: Expanding educational landscapes

- There are at least 1.8 million international students pursuing higher education outside their home countries – 45% of these students are from Asia, mostly from China, India, Japan, South Korea and Malaysia.
- Established education markets of the United States, Europe, Australia and NZ increasingly joined by new spaces of expanding educational opportunities in the global East Asia.



Source: Brenda Yeoh, "Families/Households in Motion", Presentation at the 2009 ISSBD Asia-Pacific Workshop, Flinders University, Adelaide, Australia,

Globalizing universities in East Asia

- Japan's Global COE program
 - To provide funding support for establishing education and research centers that perform at the apex of global excellence to elevate the international competitiveness of the Japanese universities. The program will strengthen and enhance the education and research functions of graduate schools, to foster highly creative young researchers who will go on to become world leaders in their respective fields through experiencing and practicing research of the highest world standard.
- Singapore's Global Schoolhouse policy
 - To fashion "a world-class education hub internationally renowned for its intellectual capital and creative energy" that is "global in institutional composition and global in student mix". Target: "double or triple the number of international students in Singapore to 100,000 or 150,000", focusing primarily on attracting Asian students.
- China
 - Plans to further develop its global capacity and potential, particular in the science and technology disciplines has led to policies aimed at re-investing in its top universities, increases in agreements to collaborate with foreign universities, and programs to induce former nationals particularly in the science and technology fields to return home.
- Korea's BK21 Project
 - Brain Korea 21 is one of several policies aimed at steering the country towards knowledge economy status - tasked with building seven world-class universities through "an increased emphasis on global connections, to be fostered by scholarly exchanges, the recruitment of overseas staff, and re-connections with diasporic science and technology networks.

Increasing nexus between student migration and skilled migration

- Concept of ‘designer’ migrants
- In Australia in 2005–6, 16,296 Asia-Pacific people on student visas took out permanent residency
- 81 percent of Asia-Pacific settlers had an Australian qualification

Source: Graeme Hugo, “Population Movement and Human Development in the Asia Pacific - A Demographer’s View of the Major Issues”

Brain drain or brain circulation

- Coined by the British Royal Society, the term brain drain appeared in the 1960s and referred to the migration of highly-educated skilled scientists and technologists to the United States in the 1950s and 1960s.
- Today, brain drain refers only to cases of emigration related to the continuation of scientific activities while brain waste to situations when researchers abandon science altogether.

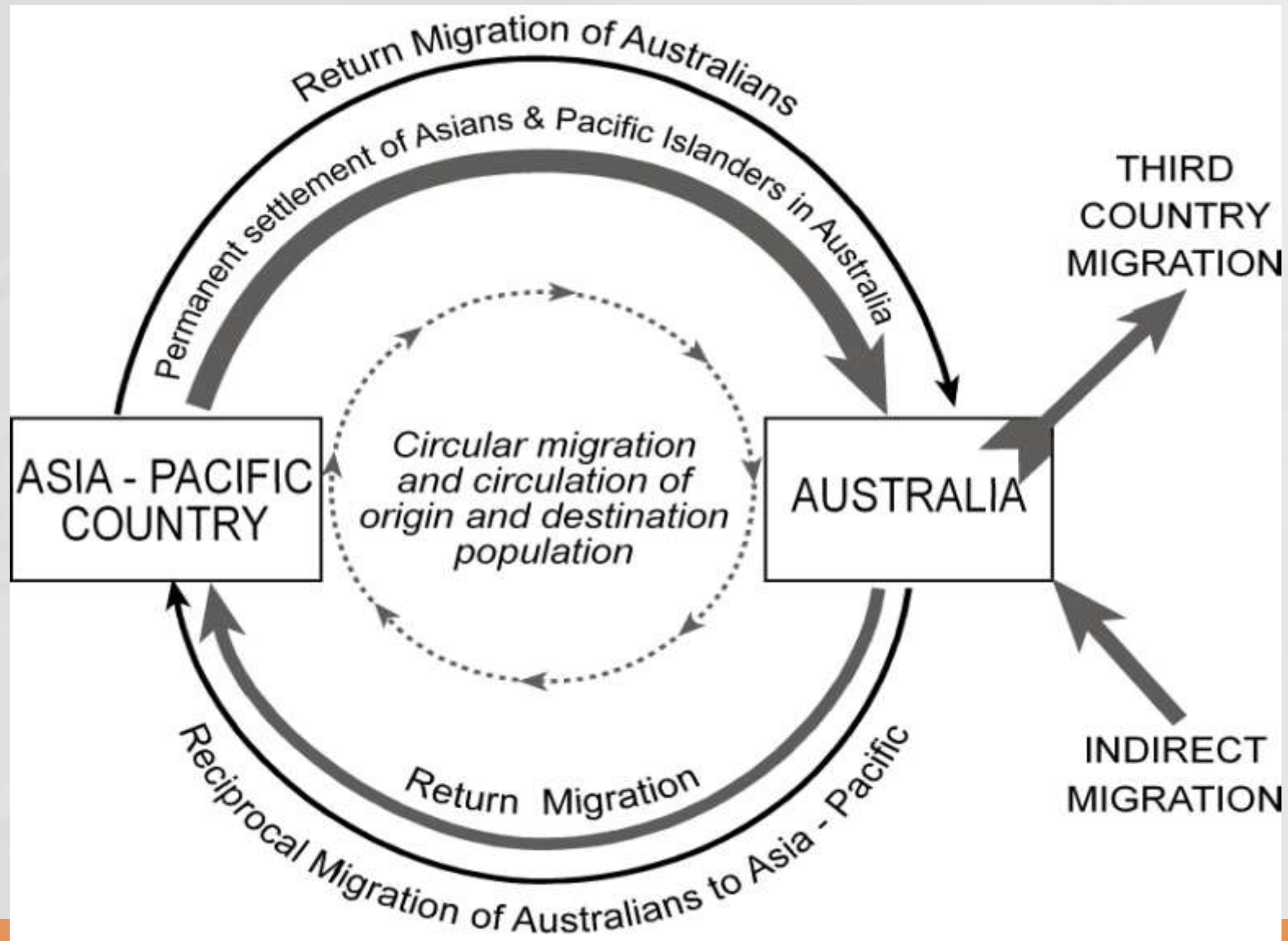
Brain drain (cont.)

- Another important distinction is whether brain drain occurs internally or externally.
- Internal brain drain refers to situations when researchers lastingly abandon science for private business or other areas where they use their scientific expertise.
- External brain drain refers to situations when researchers lastingly leave their country of origin to do research.
- Brain exchange refers to various forms of short-term scientific migration (less than one year).

Brain circulation

- In some parts of the world, the old dynamic of "brain drain" is giving way to one I call "brain circulation."
- Most people instinctively assume that the movement of skill and talent must benefit one country at the expense of another.
- But thanks to brain circulation, high-skilled immigration increasingly benefits both sides. Economically speaking, it is blessed to give and to receive.

A Model of the Australia's Migration Relationship with the Asia-Pacific



Return migration

- Millions of international migrants return home every year, many remaining permanently, while others emigrate again.
- Some return because they are required to do so by host countries, others return because they have accomplished their goals as migrants and still others find that the costs of migration outweigh its benefits.

Return migration (cont.)

- Migrants who return home often bring expertise and savings.
- Some use their savings to start businesses that contribute to job creation, even if on a modest scale.
- Some pass their expertise along to others as teachers or trainers. Some form part of a new critical mass of skilled workers that may launch new ventures in their countries and promote economic development.

Feminization of Asian migration

- Women constitute almost half of all immigrants in Asia.
- In several countries, considerably more women than men are emigrant workers: In 2005, for example, over 65% of the nearly 3,000 Filipinos that left the country every day for work or residence abroad were women. In 2002, two women left Sri Lanka for every male emigrant. Between 2000 and 2003, 79% of all migrants leaving Indonesia to work abroad were women.

Increasing feminisation of migration

- Women are taking an increasingly prominent part in contract labour systems:
 - Women now comprise the majority of migrant workers legally deployed from the Philippines and Indonesia, of which most are employed as domestic workers (and entertainers in the case of the Philippines).



Filipinas in
Hong Kong



Calling home from Singapore

New migrants
at a party
organised by
the Anglican
church in
Cyprus



Female labor migrants

- Asia is one of the world's largest suppliers of female domestic workers, with Indonesia, Sri Lanka and the Philippines being the largest exporters.
- Many of these women become domestic workers in other Asian countries as well as in other regions, especially the Middle East and Europe. The ILO reports that in 2003 there were 200,000 foreign domestic workers in Hong Kong (SAR, China) and 155,000 in Malaysia.
- One third of the labor migrants within the region are women, the great majority of whom work in domestic services or entertainment, sectors often not covered by national labor laws.

Female labor migrants (cont.)

- Among female migrants from Asia who move to work, low-skilled women predominate.
- They are concentrated in a relatively small number of occupations. However, highly skilled Asian women also migrate for work abroad, although many end up doing menial labor.
- For instance, many Filipino women who have tertiary level education have become domestic workers overseas.

Female labor migrants (cont.)

- The demand for nurses is a major pull factor, especially to meet shortages in wealthier countries.
- In 2003, an estimated 85% of employed Filipino nurses were working abroad. In Singapore, 30% of the nurses registered in 2003 were born outside the country.

Female trafficking

- One third of the global trafficking in women and children occurs in South East Asia, where there are an estimated 230,000 victims.
- The Greater Mekong Subregion, comprising Cambodia, Yunan Province of China, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Myanmar, Thailand, and Viet Nam, are major trafficking areas, as is Indonesia.

Female trafficking (cont.)

- Thailand, in addition to being a destination country, serves as a source and transit hub for trafficked persons to other Asian countries, Australia, the United States and Western Europe.
- South Asia has the second largest number of internationally trafficked persons, estimated at 150,000.
- India and Pakistan are major countries of destination for trafficked women and girls and are also transit points into the Middle East.
- ILO estimates that once victims are in destination countries, traffickers net \$32 billion a year – half generated in industrialized countries and almost one third in Asia.

Marriage migration

- Due to a high demand for foreign brides, migration for marriage is increasing in Asia.
- In many East and South-East Asian countries, the increase in women entering the workforce – coupled with a trend towards delaying or forgoing marriage and childbearing altogether is leading to a demand for more ‘traditional’ brides in order to maintain the household.

Marriage migration (cont.)

- In Taiwan, brides now represent about half of the total migrant population. Since the 1990s, nearly 100,000 Vietnamese women have married Taiwanese men.
- There is also a surge in the numbers of women migrating to South Korea to marry local men. Significant numbers of Filipino women have married men in Japan, Australia, North America and Europe.
- In South Korea, international marriages account for 11% of all marriages, and in rural areas 33% of marriages are interracial or interethnic marriages.

Rising cross-nationality marriages

◉ Asian countries

- 'experienced dramatic increase in international marriages' (UNESCAP, 2007)
- majority of involve foreign women and local men.

◉ Taiwan

- international marriage comprising 32% of the nation's marriage statistics in 2003 (Jones & Shen, 2008): 92% are female immigrant spouses, two thirds from China and the rest from Southeast Asia (Vietnam, Indonesia, Thailand and the Philippines).

◉ Korea

- 14% of new marriages in 2005 were between Koreans and foreign spouses, of which 65% were women (ethnic Koreans from China's Liaoning, Heilongjiang and Jilin provinces (seven out of ten), Vietnam, Japan, the Philippines, Mongolia and Uzbekistan).

◉ Japan

- 1980 international marriage figure of 4,386 quadrupled after a decade to 20,026 (Wang & Chang, 2002) – foreign spouses from the Philippines, China, Korea and Taiwan.

◉ Singapore

- 8,086 marriages (38.9% out of 20,775 registered marriages, 2007) between citizens & non-citizens
- Non-citizen brides: 96.9% from Asia; Non-citizen grooms: 65.3% from Asia

Marriage migration (cont.)

- Increasingly significant because
 - more young adults travelling – students, tourism, education
 - commodified marriage
- Breaking down previously strong anti-migration stance in places of S. Korea, Taiwan and Japan

Marriage migrants and (non)incorporation

- ‘Foreign brides’ from developing countries in Asia often face a number of challenges in host nations:
 - Lack of social networks and support
 - Obstacles to finding jobs given language barriers and social isolation
 - Discriminatory discourses (e.g. ‘low quality’ of ‘new Taiwan children’)
 - Barriers to obtaining formal and substantive citizenship
 - Vulnerability (e.g. economic dependence on husbands, fear of deportation)

Remittances

- Remittances are a major part of the economies of the South Asian countries.
- The Sri Lankan government has stated that overseas remittances “have now become the backbone of the country’s economy.” About a million overseas contract workers from that country, 60% of them female domestic workers, sent home \$1.2 billion in 2002.

Remittances (cont.)

- Of the roughly \$6 billion remitted annually to the Philippines in the late 1990s, migrant women transferred one third. Bangladeshi women working in the Middle East sent home 72% of their earnings on average.
- Remittances sent by Mongolian workers and women married to South Korean men are a significant source of foreign currency for Mongolia.

Consequences of migration

- Demographic diversity and cultural diversity
- Creation of ethnic communities (e.g., the Borderless Village in Ansan city of South Korea)
- Transnational family and social and economic linkages
- Impetus for change of attitudes toward foreigners and the concept of national identity

Becoming multicultural

- Northeast Asian countries are entering the first phase of multiethnic and multicultural society.
- The current trend is a challenge for NE Asian countries known for strong homogeneity and nationalism.
- NE Asian countries need to develop new values and systems for social integration in multicultural environments.

From migrant worker problem to social integration problem

- Initially migrant worker problems involved labor supply and human rights issues.
- Now other issues related with social integration are important: marriage, family, naturalization, citizenship, education, health and medical service, welfare, community, assimilation, and identity.

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