

## INTRODUCTION

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UN Secretary General Kofi Annan states that it is "time to take a more comprehensive look at the various dimensions of the migration issue, which now involves hundreds of millions of people and affects countries of origin, transit and destination. We need to understand better the causes of international flows of people and their complex interrelationship with development."<sup>1</sup> This point resonates strongly in Northeast Asia, where cross-border movement of people is a recent phenomenon in post-WWII history and is catching most national governments, regional authorities, and local communities unprepared. The historical and contemporary context of the phenomenon makes it a particularly salient issue with important policy implications.

In spring 2001, the Center for East Asian Studies asked a team of experts to select some salient human migration developments in Northeast Asian countries, describe the background and the current state of those developments, and identify areas that may pose challenges to the region's international relations. In November 2001, the researchers met at a seminar in Monterey, California, to share their findings. The participants came from China, Japan, Korea, Mongolia, Russia, and the United States. As described below, the group identified several problem areas. A follow-up seminar was held in Tokyo in October 2002, with participants from the first seminar and several additional experts. What follows are the papers that were presented at the Tokyo seminar, some of them in revised form.

International relations in Northeast Asia are seriously affected by the history of imperialism, war, and ideological conflict. Despite the end of the Cold War and growing economic ties within the region, reconciliation between the peoples of the region has been excruciatingly slow. While globalization, internationalization, and regionalization in the economic, social, and technological fields are expanding people-to-people contacts in this part of the world, nationalism and localism remain powerful forces in each country.<sup>2</sup>

The ongoing "tug of war" between internationalism/regionalism and nationalism/localism in Northeast Asia is also affecting the welfare and the rights of individuals. The hundreds of thousands of individuals crossing national borders today include both short-term and long-term visitors, permanent immigrants, businessmen, entertainers, educators, students, economic refugees, and political defectors. Also impacted by cross-border human flows are the members of the communities "playing host" to the foreign migrants.

Concern for the security of individual citizens has been captured by the concept of "human security."<sup>3</sup> Human security relates to questions of livelihoods and human development.<sup>4</sup> It focuses our attention on those problems that threaten the individual's well-being and non-military means of alleviating such threats.<sup>5</sup> Although the broadening of the definition of security to include human security has its own problems,<sup>6</sup> it adds an important dimension both to our knowledge of contemporary security problems and to our understanding of the expanding human dimension of globalization and internationalization.

There is a growing literature on internal and international migration in Asia-Pacific, but most works are focused on individual countries of origin or destination, or on the broader Asia-Pacific region.<sup>7</sup> There are very few comparative studies. Moreover, most studies do not take Northeast Asia as a region to be examined as a whole; nor do they discuss the impact of cross-border migration on the local communities in human security terms.

The existing literature informs us that migration in the Asia Pacific region has substantially grown in the last decade and that the growth will continue. It tells us that there are economic, political, and technological reasons behind the growth, with the economic "push and pull" factors becoming the most important.<sup>8</sup> The current literature reveals that national responses have varied significantly from country to country, with selective control being the prevalent pattern among the receiving countries, e.g., Japan and South Korea, and relatively free emigration policies adopted in most sending countries, e.g., Malaysia, the Philippines, and China.<sup>9</sup> There is also a growing literature focused on the formation in Asia-Pacific and elsewhere of "transnational communities," composed of networks of ethnic communities in the sending and

receiving countries.<sup>10</sup> Existing studies note many important consequences of these trends. Some of the most important ones are: the trends toward double (or multiple) citizenship and the challenge this poses to the traditional notion of citizenship based on nationality and ethnic homogeneity;<sup>11</sup> discriminatory immigration policies and human rights violations;<sup>12</sup> and illegal emigration and immigration and the resulting erosion of sovereignty or national control.

There is inadequate attention to important differences in migrant communities and local responses between Southeast Asia and Northeast Asia. For example, the state and state institutions in Northeast Asian countries are far stronger than those in Southeast Asia and they have, until fairly recently, been able to control trans-border migration strictly and fairly effectively, on the part of both home and host countries. The state-dominant modernization of the Northeast Asian countries in the previous century and the state-centric policy agenda formation in each country of the region clearly affect the way issues of human flows in the region are discussed domestically.

There are also some cultural differences among the migrants of different nationalities and we need to examine them carefully. For example, identity formation and retention appears to take on different characteristics between Chinese, Koreans, and Russians in Japan, not only because of the different kinds of reception the migrants face in the host communities but also due to the way the migrants' identity has been formed in their home culture. There is a striking contrast, for example, between the individualistic identity formation in Russia and the communitarian identity formation in Korea, China, and Japan.

Moreover, demographic and population patterns differ so much among the Northeast Asian countries that the push and pull factors are presenting a very complex set of issues in the region. China is the most important emigration country and the Chinese constitute the largest migrant communities in the neighboring countries. More recently, however, the Chinese government has begun to promote the repatriation of overseas Chinese to strengthen the technical, managerial, and financial bases of domestic enterprises. Russia is both a receiving and increasingly a sending country. It is deeply concerned about the downward population trends among the ethnic Russians but weary of the growing foreign migrant communities in the country. Japan is largely a country of destination or transit for foreign migrants, with the ethnocentric attitudes of its people being seriously challenged by the need to import foreign labor to deal with the growing labor shortage and the aging of the population. South Korea has long been a sending country but has recently begun to receive migrants from other countries. Also more recently, the Korean government has begun to promote the return of ethnic Koreans from abroad to strengthen the domestic economic foundation. Mongolia is also a sending and receiving country, but problems associated with migration relate mostly to the receiving end. North Korea receives virtually no foreign migrants but sends its citizens to both China and Russia, creating arguably the most serious human security problems regarding migration in Northeast Asia.

Some of the migration streams in the region have received more scholarly attention than others. For example, the Carnegie Center in Moscow has published studies of Sino-Russian relations, including Chinese migration into Russia in the 1990s through 2000.<sup>13</sup> These studies suggest that Chinese migration into Russian is of great importance to future Sino-Russian relations but that further research is necessary to monitor the changing dynamic of Chinese migration, particularly in the Russian Far East, and its impact in the regional and local contexts.<sup>14</sup> Other migration streams have received mostly journalistic observations, the most visible example being the North Korean defectors in China. Virtually ignored are Russians in Japan, Koreans in Russia, and Russians and Chinese in Mongolia.

In short, a comparative study of the major developments in human flows across national borders in Northeast Asia is called for. The current project is an attempt to meet that need.

As noted above, most of the current project members (see the list below) met in Monterey in November 2001 and shared their findings. Their papers were compiled into "International Seminar: Human Flows across National Borders in Northeast Asia, Proceedings, Monterey, California, November 2-3, 2001" and are available from the Center for East Asian Studies. The participants in the seminar identified the following problematic areas:

- 1) The growing intra-regional migration due to disparate demographic patterns, the inevitability of accelerated migration within and across national borders, and the need for bilateral and multilateral coordination of population, migration, and economic policies among the Northeast Asian countries

2) The divergence of views and interests between Moscow and the Russian Far East regarding the growing Chinese migrant population in the latter area and increasing (and exaggerated) fear of “yellow peril” among the local population.

3) The growing Chinese labor migration in Japan and discriminatory labor practices by some Japanese employers, with potentially serious implications for Japan-China relations

4) The mixed reaction of the local populations in Niigata and Hokkaido, Japan toward the growing presence of Russian migrants, increasing cases of crimes involving Russians, and cultural frictions between Russians and some segments of the host communities

5) Northeast Asian countries’ application of conflicting definitions of nationality and citizenship with regard to ethnic Koreans from China, the former Soviet republics, and North Korea, and resulting political and legal complications, including the status of North Koreans in the neighboring countries

6) Mongolians’ acute sensitivity toward Chinese migrants and the serious plight of Russian residents in Mongolia

7) Disparate and sometimes conflicting approaches between the central, regional, and local governments toward migration issues in each country

8) The lack of participation of civil society groups and organizations in the mediation and amelioration of tension and conflicts involving foreign migrant communities in each country

The project members were asked to continue their research, sharpening their focus on the real and potential human security problems in the cases they were investigating. Subsequent developments in Northeast Asia highlighted another area that was threatening both human security and diplomatic relations in the region—the plight of North Koreans who fled to northeast China to escape the economic crisis and possible political persecution in their country, many of them seeking safe passage to a third country, mostly to South Korea. So, this case was added to the project and a new member to study it.

The papers that follow are all “works-in-progress”. The case studies show a wide variation in the relative importance of political, economic, and social factors among the cases under investigation. In most cases, there is also a cultural dimension to the interaction between the migrants and the host communities. In the next phase of our project, we need to address additional questions: Why has there been no effort to develop a regional approach to human flows in Northeast Asia? What can be done to change the situation? What are the consequences of unmanaged or mismanaged flows of people across national borders in the region, where nationalist and ethnocentric attitudes are still widely observed? How should local, provincial, and national authorities coordinate their policy to ameliorate the negative consequences of trans-border migration and take advantage of the opportunities it presents?

The authors agreed to share their analyses at the current stage—professionally a precarious move. They believe that the sharing of their respective studies at this point will bring the issues under examination to the attention of other scholars, as well as policymakers and that they can contribute to the growing debate on the host of issues that cross-border human flows present to the peoples of Northeast Asia.

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**Notes:**

<sup>1</sup> Strengthening of the United Nations: an Agenda for Further Change. Report of the Secretary, United Nations General Assembly, Fifty-seventh Session, New York: United Nations, A/57/387, p. 10.

<sup>2</sup> For a comprehensive study of regionalism and nationalism in Northeast Asia, see T. Akaha, ed., Politics and Economics in Northeast Asia: Nationalism and Regionalism in Contention, New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999.

<sup>3</sup> For a comprehensive review of competing approaches to security and advocacy of "human security" to overcome the conceptual and empirical limitations of national security, see R. Thakur, "From National to Human Security," in S. Harris and A. Mack, eds., Asia-Pacific Security: The Economics-Politics Nexus, Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1997, pp. 52-80. For a succinct discussion of the promises, premises, and limits of human security as a focus of international relations research, and E. Newman, "Human Security and Constructivism," International Studies Perspectives, vol. 2, no. 3 (August 2001), pp. 239-251.

<sup>4</sup> Curley, "Cooperation between Multilateral Institutions and NGOs," p. 7.

<sup>5</sup> R. Thakur, "From National to Human Security." For an explanation of Japan's human security diplomacy, see T. Yamamoto, "Human Security: What It Means, and What It Entails," a paper presented at the 14<sup>th</sup> Asia-Pacific Roundtable, 3-7 June 2000, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

<sup>6</sup> Curley points out, for example, that Barry Buzan a noted IR scholar in Britain has argued that the use of "human security" causes confusion rather than clarity of discussion on security issues in the IR community. (M. Curley, "The Role of NGOs in Non-traditional Security in Northeast Asia," 2001, unpublished paper, p. 8.

<sup>7</sup> See, for example, S. Castles, Migration as a Factor in Social Transformation in East Asia, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University, 2000; W. A. Cornelius, "Japan: The Illusion of Immigration Control." In P.L. Martin, W.A. Cornelius, and J.F. Hollifield, eds., Controlling Immigration: A Global Perspective, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1994, pp. 375-410; A. Davidson, and K. Weekley, eds., Globalization and Citizenship in the Asia-Pacific, London: Macmillan, 1999; D. Ip, The Chinese Diaspora and Mainland China: An Emerging Economic Synergy. Houndmills, Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1996; Y. Katsuo, "Movement for Residence Rights of Undocumented Workers Begins." The Japan Observer: Japan's Alternative Monthly, 1999 <http://www.twics.com/~anzu/archive/1999/9911-undocumented.html>; H. Komai, Migrant Workers in Japan, London: Kegan Paul International, 1995; C. Lever-Tracy, D.F.K. Ip, and N. Tracy, The Chinese Diaspora and Mainland China: An Emerging Economic Synergy, Basingstoke: St Martin's Press, 1996; P. Martin, A. Mason, and T. Nagayama, "Introduction to Special Issue on the Dynamics of Labor Migration in Asia," Asian and Pacific Migration Journal, vol. 5, nos. 2-3, (1996); H. Mori, Immigration Policy and Foreign Workers in Japan, London: Macmillan and New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997; N.G. Schiller, "Citizens in Transnational Nation-States: The Asian Experience," in K. Olds, P. Dicken, P.F. Kelly, L. Kong, and H.W. Yeung, eds., Globalization and the Asia-Pacific: Contested Territories, London: Routledge, 1999; E. Sinn, ed., The Last Half Century of Chinese Overseas, Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1998; R. Skeldon, "Urbanization and Migration in the ESCAP Region," Asia-Pacific Population Journal, vol. 13, no. 1 (12998), pp. 3-24; G. Wang, "Among non-Chinese," Daedalus, vol. 20, no. 2, (1991), pp. 135-158; M. Weidenbaum and S. Hughes, The Bamboo Network: How Expatriate Chinese Entrepreneurs Are Creating a New Economic Superpower in Asia, New York: The Free Press, 1996.

<sup>8</sup> S. Castles, "The Myth of the Controllability of Difference: Labour Migration, Transnational Communities, and State Strategies in East Asia," paper presented at the International Conference on Transnational Communities in the Asia-Pacific Region: Comparative Perspectives, Singapore, August 7-8, 2000

<sup>9</sup> See, for example, S. Castles, "The Myth of the Controllability of Difference."

<sup>10</sup> For discussions of transnational communities in general and in other parts of the world, see, for example, T. Faist, "Transnationalization in International Migration: Implications for the Study of Citizenship and Culture," Working Paper Series for the ESRC Transnational Communities Programme at Oxford University, WPTC-99-08, 1999; P. Kennedy and V. Roudometof, "Communities Across Borders under Localizing Conditions: New Immigrants and Transnational Cultures," Working Paper Series for the ESRC Transnational Communities Programme at Oxford University, WPTC-01-17, 2001; A. Portes, "Globalization from Below: The Rise of Transnational Communities," in D. Kalb, M. Van der Land, R. Staring, B. van Steenbergen, and N. Wilterdink, eds., The Ends of Globalization: Bringing Society Back In, Boulder and New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 2000, pp. 253-270; A. Portes, L.E. Guarnizo, and P. Landolt, "Introduction", Special Issue: Transnational Communities, Ethnic and Racial Studies, vol. 22, no. 2, pp. 217-237; M.P. Smith and L.E. Guarnizo, eds., Transnationalism from Below, New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1998; L. Pries, ed., Migration and Transnational Social Space, Ashgate: Aldershot, 1999; and S. Vertovec and R. Cohen, eds., Migration, Diasporas, and Transnationalism, Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar, 1999.

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<sup>11</sup> See, for example, S. Castles, "New Migrations, Ethnicity, and Nationalism in Southeast and East Asia," in A. Rogers, ed., Transnational Communities Program: Working Paper Series, Economic and Social Research Council, <http://www.transcomm.ox.ac.uk/working%20papers/castles.pdf>.

<sup>12</sup> See, for example, H. Mori, Immigration Policy and Foreign Workers in Japan, London: Macmillan and New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997; H. Komai, "The Cases of a New Receiving Country in the Developed World: Japan," paper for UN Technical Symposium on International Migration and Development, The Hague, July 1998; D. Zha, "Chinese Migrant Workers in Japan."

<sup>13</sup> G. Vitkovskaia and D. Trenin, eds., Perspektivy Dal'nego Vostochnogo Regiona: Mezhsranovye Vzaimodeistviye [Perspectives on the Far Eastern Region: Interstate Cooperation], Moscow: Moscow Carnegie Center, 1999; S. Garnett, ed., Rapprochement or Rivalry? Russia-China Relations in a Changing Asia, Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2000.

<sup>14</sup> See V. Gelbras, "Chinese Migration in the Russian Far East: Moscow's View," a paper presented at the international seminar on "Human Flows across National Borders in Northeast Asia: A Human Security Perspective," organized by the Monterey Institute of International Studies Center for East Asian Studies and the United Nations University, Tokyo, November 20-21, 2002.