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# Movement of People in Asia and Civil Society: Managing Complex Challenges<sup>1</sup>

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## ASIA ON THE MOVE AND THE NEW FACES OF MIGRATION

Asia has always been home to hundreds of thousands of people on the move. Migration, for many reasons, has been an integral part of the region's history and has shaped much of its political, economic, and sociocultural landscape. With rapid globalization, there have been dynamic shifts in the forms of migration within and outside the region. To be sure, globalization has accelerated the movement of people and presented new opportunities for travel. The total number of international migrants as of 2010 was estimated at 214 million, or 3.1 percent of the global population. This is projected to increase to 405 million by 2050. Asia currently accounts for a substantial portion of that migration. The International Organization for Migration (IOM), for example, noted in a recent report that the total number of international migrants in East Asia in 2010 was estimated to be 23.2 million.<sup>2</sup>

There are two significant trends that have defined the movement of people in Asia. One is that the region is no longer made up primarily of major migrant countries of origin but now also has countries that are emerging as destinations for migration. China and India, for example, which had traditionally been countries of origin, are now also both transit and destination countries. In fact, the IOM estimates that 43 percent of Asian migrants move to other countries within the region.<sup>3</sup> These intra-regional and inter-regional

migration flows are driven largely by people's search for better opportunities and livelihoods. Notably, both intra- and inter-regional flows are not only increasing in volume but also in spatial complexity. Although many countries in Asia are labor-sending countries, some of these countries are also experiencing labor shortages and have aging populations. As a consequence, they have to confront the challenges that come from increasing immigration of labor migrants from across a broad spectrum of skills.

The other trend is that many of these flows comprise irregular migration—in all its different manifestations. While most migration occurs within legitimate legal and policy frameworks, there are cases that occur outside the regulatory norms of the countries of origin, transit, or destination. Irregular migration—broadly defined as encompassing individuals who are undocumented and without residency rights—is now a serious issue confronting many states in Asia. There is growing concern among many Asian governments about high levels of irregular migration, which is often linked to problems of migrant smuggling and human trafficking together with other transnational crimes such as drug trafficking and terrorism.

Every country in Asia, particularly in East Asia, is affected by irregular migration, whether as a country of origin, transit, or destination. Of particular concern to the region are undocumented labor migration and human trafficking. Human trafficking is a specific form of highly abusive irregular migration involving the exploitation of migrants, generally for profit. Southeast Asia has been identified as a major trafficking hot spot with an estimated 200,000–250,000 women and children from the region believed to be trafficked each year.<sup>4</sup> The issue has been given high priority, and governments in the region have adopted comprehensive anti-trafficking laws that cover trafficking for the purpose of both sexual exploitation as well as labor. Successful implementation of anti-trafficking laws, however, has been hampered by the lack of conceptual clarity, which is manifested in the conflation of human trafficking with migrant smuggling and prostitution in general.<sup>5</sup>

Smugglers linked to transnational organized crime groups have been responsible for some of these undocumented migrants, but other migrants in this category have been forcibly displaced as they fell victim to conflict and persecution. Decades of conflicts in the region have led to a huge number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees. Generally in the region, refugees are seen as illegal or irregular migrants, subject to immigration detention. The perceived blurring of the lines between economic migrants and asylum seekers presents further challenges to the refugee protection regime.

The IOM recently reported that Asia hosts the largest number of refugees and IDPs in the world.<sup>6</sup> Complicating the issue is the fact that many of

these IDPs are also stateless, as is the case, for example, with the Rohingyas in Myanmar. Many of these individuals who have borne the consequences of years of ethnic conflicts are not recognized as citizens of the countries in which they now reside, so they often do not enjoy the protection of the state. This stateless status is extended to their children and subsequent generations, which has resulted in a growing number of people who have become extremely vulnerable to various threats to their economic wellbeing and their lives. Conversely, IDPs in one country often become refugees who then seek asylum in other countries. Given their plight, these asylum seekers may resort to illicit modes of transit as a means to leave their country. At the same time, in the absence of viable, legal migration options for them to pursue, persons who are not considered refugees may seek to enter countries of their choice through the asylum channel.

Another type of IDP is victims of natural disasters. With the impact of climate change becoming more and more visible through extreme weather patterns, the increasing frequency of devastating cyclones has led to the displacement of a huge number of people, which in turn has left them in highly vulnerable conditions. Some analysts refer to them as climate refugees. It is estimated that about 200 million people, largely from Asia, Africa, and small island states, might be displaced as a result of climate change by 2050.<sup>7</sup>

In light of these new trends in the movement of people, there is a general consensus that migration—whether regular or irregular—needs to be managed more effectively. Carefully managed migration is regarded as a powerful force for economic growth, innovation, and overcoming human resource constraints in destination countries. In an economically dynamic Asia, managing migration is a critical agenda given that, despite its vibrancy, societies in the region are also aging. Countries in Northeast Asia—Japan, South Korea, and China—have demographic problems caused by low fertility and mortality rates and a shrinking working population due to their aging societies. On the other hand, for many sending countries in Southeast Asia like the Philippines, Indonesia, Vietnam, and Myanmar, which have favorable demographic features—large populations with the bulk being young—emigration produces remittances, which have become an important source of revenue, while also relieving labor pressures in the sending country.

Irregular migration, however, undermines the rule of law and exerts a heavy human toll on the migrants themselves. Many irregular migrants work in the informal economy, allowing unscrupulous employers to violate labor laws with relative impunity since irregular workers are unlikely to complain to the authorities. Increasingly, the security problematique generated by irregular

migration has been presented as a threat to peace, harmony, and economic progress on the national and international fronts.

As Asia continues with its dynamic economic growth, the movements of people are expected to only increase. It was against the backdrop of these two trajectories of growth that the idea of the “Movement of People in East Asia and the Role of Civil Society” project was conceived. Organized by the Japan Center for International Exchange (JCIE) and supported by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, the project sought to examine how the movements of people in Asia can better be managed. Although the movements of people now have many faces, as indicated above, the study focuses mainly on the labor migrants who form the bulk of the people on the move, particularly in East Asia.

The project focuses specifically on East Asia, bringing together eight selected country studies that examine issues from the vantage point of sending and receiving countries. Three of the eight studies—those on Japan, South Korea, and Singapore—focus primarily on receiving aspects of migration. The study on China focuses on both receiving and sending aspects, and the remaining four—those on Indonesia, Myanmar, the Philippines, and Vietnam—focus primarily on sending aspects. All of the country studies analyze the legal frameworks that are either conducive or detrimental to promoting labor migration. Added to these country studies is a chapter that brings in the regional perspective and assesses the effectiveness of the various regional frameworks that have been established to address the transborder implications of labor migration.

More importantly, in the absence of governance structures that protect regular and irregular labor migration, the project specifically examines the role of civil society groups in addressing many of the gaps in protection policies for labor migrants, and identifies ways in which the current state-led responses can be constructively improved to provide for the human security needs of people on the move.

## WHO IS (*STILL*) MOVING, WHY, AND WHERE?

The prospect of economic opportunities and a better life continue to be the primary reason for the movement of people in East Asia. These have been the main drivers that push labor migrants from developing countries in Southeast Asia to move to more developed countries. In East Asia, the primary destination countries of labor migrants, in descending order of migrant stock, are Thailand, Japan, Malaysia, Singapore, and South Korea.

The primary sending countries in Asia to destinations around the world in 2013 were China, the Philippines, Indonesia, Myanmar, South Korea, Vietnam, and Malaysia, while the primary sending countries to other destinations in Asia were China, Myanmar, Indonesia, Malaysia, South Korea, the Philippines, and Laos.<sup>8</sup> The Philippines has had a long history of sending migrant workers overseas, and today no fewer than 8.5 million Filipinos are reported to be living and working in more than 200 countries globally. As noted in Jorge Tigno's chapter, many of these migrant workers are highly educated and possess a professional employment background. According to Tigno, a majority of these skilled migrant workers leave the Philippines to seek better economic opportunities given that they are likely to receive higher pay in countries like Singapore and Japan, and it allows them to pay for their children's education. Remittance inflows to the Philippines accounted for nearly 10 percent of the country's GDP in 2014.<sup>9</sup>

Unlike the Philippines, though, countries that recently joined the ranks of countries sending labor migrants abroad, such as Indonesia, Myanmar, and Vietnam, are sending largely low-skilled workers. Indonesia sends most of its foreign labor to Saudi Arabia and to neighboring Malaysia and Singapore. As described by Avyanthi Azis, there are between 4 and 6.5 million Indonesian labor migrants overseas, and this number comprises mostly women who work as domestic helpers, supporting the global trend toward the feminization of migration. The choice of destination country for outmigration, according to Azis, is largely influenced by religious affinity, culture, and language (as in the case of Malaysia). However, the protection of domestic workers has become a major issue in the country, exacerbated by the increasing propensity for irregular migration. Given its clandestine nature, getting accurate estimates of undocumented Indonesian migrant workers is difficult. Azis notes that the popular estimate stands at 1.8 million undocumented workers. She further notes that on average 20,000 Indonesian migrant workers are deported annually from Malaysia, with the highest number being about 50,000–70,000, which was reported in 2014. Given the porosity of the border between Indonesia and Malaysia, curbing irregular migration is a daunting challenge and it leaves many of these labor migrants highly vulnerable to “exploitation, employer abuses, and forced labor.”

Vietnam and Myanmar also send largely low-skilled workers abroad. In their chapter, Liem T. Nguyen, Duong B. Le, and Trang L. Nguyen note that the volume of Vietnamese migrant laborers has seen a dramatic tenfold increase from the 1990s to 2014, and like the Philippines and Indonesia, women form a significant portion of the migrant laborers who seek better

economic prospects by working overseas. Remittance inflows into Vietnam from migrant workers reach about US\$2 billion per year.

When compared with Vietnam, Myanmar's migration pattern is more complex. Myanmar's outmigration is driven by a mix of the prospects of better economic opportunities and the search for refuge away from the conflicts between the military and ethnic and insurgent groups in the country. With these two main drivers of peoples' movement, Moe Thuzar describes migration patterns in Myanmar as both internal and cross-border. The majority of the country's cross-border migrants are found in Thailand, which is estimated to be hosting about 2 million Myanmar migrants, while Malaysia and Singapore host somewhere between 200,000 and 300,000 each. Thuzar notes, however, that there are many "invisible" Myanmar labor migrants who have chosen the path of irregular migration. A large number of these irregular migrants started out as IDPs fleeing the conflicts in the country's Rakhine State before fleeing overseas. While it is difficult to estimate the exact number of Myanmar refugees in third countries, Thuzar's chapter puts the number at more than 400,000 based on UN data from 2014. The plight of Rohingya refugees from Myanmar has received quite a lot of attention in recent years due to the violent clashes between them and their Buddhist neighbors in Rakhine. Since 2012, thousands of Rohingya have fled Myanmar on boats to southern Thailand and beyond in the hope of reaching mainly Muslim Malaysia. Myanmar views the Rohingya population, which numbers well over 1 million, as illegal Bangladeshi immigrants and has denied them citizenship. The most recent estimates put the number of IDPs in Myanmar at 376,500 and refugees originating from Myanmar at around 479,000.<sup>10</sup> Apart from the dismal plight that these refugees face at sea, they are also victims of human traffickers who prey on their stateless status.

While studies on movements of people have often been largely focused on transborder migration, another significant development is internal migration. This is the case in Myanmar as discussed above. China provides another example of massive internal migration. As described by Tian Fangmeng, migration flows in China include both internal and outward movement. In the case of internal movements of people, Tian notes that China is currently seeing the "largest migration in human history," with about 245 million Chinese migrants living in locations other than their place of household registration. This dramatic increase has been due to the country's rapid urbanization. The same economic motivation applies to Chinese internal migration as to external migration, while the same problems and issues of migrant protection from labor exploitation and safety are also issues of concern. In response to the unprecedented scale of

internal migration, the Chinese government recently released its national urbanization plan in March 2014, which is a two-pronged policy approach aimed at targeting the problems faced by the “floating population.” The first approach is “citizenization,” which aims at changing the status of a “migrant” into an urban citizen with household registration (*hukou*) status. The second is “equalization,” which aims to give equal rights and welfare benefits to “temporary” migrants in the urban sector.

Aside from this huge number of internal labor migrants, China’s outward migration has also expanded. According to Tian, the conservative estimate of overseas Chinese emigrants is about 45 million and still increasing. The rate of Chinese migration to Africa and Europe is also expected to expand, driven by the country’s rapid economic growth that has resulted in hundreds of thousands of Chinese citizens being able to travel overseas. A notable development that is occurring in tandem with the dynamic changes in the Chinese economy is the changing nature of Chinese migrants. As described by Tian, while the traditional outmigration of less skilled workers and irregular migration from China continues—particularly from its southeast province—a new migration tide has emerged, as highly educated Chinese students, professionals, and investors move to foreign destinations. Many of these highly educated individuals have moved to more developed countries in North America and Europe. For instance, between 1998 and 2007, Canada welcomed an average of 33,000 new immigrants from China annually, most of whom have university degrees. This, according to Tian, has triggered serious concerns within China of a possible brain drain and it is something to which the Chinese government has been paying a lot of attention.

## WHO IS RECEIVING MIGRANTS AND HOW?

In East Asia, Thailand, Malaysia, Japan, Singapore, and South Korea have long been countries of destination for labor migrants from Southeast Asian countries and from China, raising the challenge of how to deal with an influx of foreigners. Korea has been a popular destination owing largely to its more favorable foreign labor policy. As highlighted by Lee Hyejin, from 1993 to 2013, Korea saw the number of its foreign residents increase more than 18-fold—in fact, they now make up approximately 3 percent of the country’s total population.

The largest number of migrants in Korea are workers who hold a nonprofessional employment visa. This is followed by those who hold “working visit visas” and “overseas Korean visas,” both of which are reserved for ethnic

Koreans residing overseas and those from China who are of Korean ancestry. The next largest group of immigrants are those who are married to Koreans. According to Lee, by 2001 there were 566,835 foreigners in Korea, but because of the country's lax regulations, immigrants were overstaying their visas, and nearly half of all foreign residents were undocumented. To address this problem, the Korean government introduced the Economic Permit System (EPS) in 2003 to improve the country's labor regulatory framework. More importantly, the EPS system was aimed at institutionalizing provisions for equal treatment of foreigners at the state level.

A number of policies were introduced following the adoption of the EPS to balance the need to maintain the identity of Korean society while accommodating the entry of foreign residents, particularly the foreign spouses of Korean citizens. These policies include the introduction in 2006 of the Basic Direction and Promotion System for Policy on Foreigners, which provides an institutional framework to protect the rights of foreigners in Korea, and the 2008 Multicultural Families Support Act, which aims to help provide support to mixed (Korean and foreign) families. The EPS and subsequent regulations had an impact—in 2013, out of the 1.5 million foreigners in Korea, just 183,106 or 11.6 percent were believed to be undocumented. Despite these laws, however, Lee observes that the immigration policies in South Korea are still discriminatory against migrants with certain residency statuses and they fall short of integrating foreigners into Korean society. Lee argues that the state still “selectively categorizes foreigners according to a differentiated membership structure among foreign residents, factoring in national interests and competitiveness.” Low-skilled foreign workers are excluded from the country's integration process and are expected to return to their native countries once their visas expire. Meanwhile, undocumented workers are targets for deportation and are vulnerable to human rights violations without protection from the host government.

In contrast to Korea's recent moves to define and improve its immigration policy, Japan does not have a visible, official immigration policy. As explained by Toshihiro Menju, Japan's 127 million population is extremely homogenous, and with its abundance of highly educated human resources, the country's experience with accepting immigrants has been relatively limited. As of June 2014, there were 2.08 million foreign residents living in Japan—less than 2 percent of the population. Most of the foreign residents are from Asian countries, coming primarily from China (629,000), Korea (509,000), and the Philippines (214,000). Other foreign residents are from South America (240,000), North America (63,000), and Europe (61,000). About 78,000 are from Brazil.

While mindful of the dual challenges of depopulation and a rapidly aging society, Japan has stopped short of instituting a more formal immigration policy. This is explained by the very sensitive nature of the issue of immigration as perceived by the Japanese. According to Menju, many Japanese citizens have negative views of immigrants. This has resulted in a serious lack of objective discussion on immigration issues. Faced with the problem of a shortage of workers, the Japanese government has focused its attention on deploying more female and elderly workers to join the workforce. Meanwhile, to facilitate the entry of low-skilled foreign workers, Japan has used its Technical Intern Training Program, which ostensibly aims to transfer technology from Japan to developing countries by inviting human capital to Japan. In reality, however, the Technical Intern Training Program has been used to hire transient low-skilled and low-waged foreign workers for small local companies that face labor shortages. As argued by Menju, aside from the widening gap between official policy and actual practice, the Technical Intern Training Program lends itself to violations of human rights, with many trainees being exploited through unlawful overtime, underpayment or nonpayment, and so on.

Singapore, on the other hand, has been often referred to as the home of immigrants. As described in Mathew Mathews and Debbie Soon's chapter, Singapore's history and position as a key site on international trade routes has made it an attractive destination for migrants. With its open immigration policy, Singapore attracts a wide spectrum of economic migrants from the high-skilled to the lower-skilled foreign labor (or "talent," as it is referred to in the country). As a multiethnic society, migrants also come to Singapore for personal or familial reasons.

Singapore has instituted a very efficient and organized immigration policy. In the past, highly skilled migrants mostly came from the United States, United Kingdom, France, Australia, Japan, and South Korea. More recently, and as a result of government policies in the 1990s to draw skilled labor from other countries, skilled workers from China and India now make up a significant portion of its foreign workforce. Until its most recent change in immigration policy, skilled migrants with tertiary education were given Employment Passes, which allowed them and their families to settle in Singapore and made them eligible to apply for permanent residency and eventually for citizenship. With its limited workforce, Singapore has also allowed low-skilled, low-wage migrant workers into the country. They usually work in domestic service and the construction industry.

As noted by Mathews and Soon, although immigrants are recognized as beneficial to Singapore's economic development, the sudden influx of

migrants between 2008 and 2011 has generated some resentment among Singaporeans toward the foreign migrants. According to Mathews and Soon, the unhappiness stems from “increased competition in the job market and for public goods, as well as from suspicions that foreign-born immigrants are not as committed to the cause of nation building.” At the same time, while there is less expectation that transient migrant groups will socially integrate, the idea of living in close proximity to and interacting with low-skilled foreign workers has also drawn some reservations.

Finally, although China has traditionally been a sending country, it now finds itself having to adjust as the country becomes a new destination for foreign migrants. Although most foreign work-permit holders in China are high-level managers and experts brought in by Chinese companies, the country has had to change its legal and administrative system to accommodate the presence of these foreign skilled workers. But as observed by Tian, with a growing foreign population, China also now faces the problem of irregular migration. How China deals with this emerging trend as it deals with its own migration issues will have significant bearing not only on China’s policies on immigration, but also on the trajectory of its economic development and growth.

### HOW HAVE GOVERNMENTS RESPONDED TO MIGRATION AND HOW MUCH HAS BEEN DONE TO PROTECT MIGRANTS’ HUMAN SECURITY?

For sending countries, the primary concern is supporting and protecting their citizens when they go overseas. Government responses and policies to address the security concerns of labor migrants in East Asia vary and depend largely on the importance placed by policymakers on migration as a development and security agenda.

Among sending countries, the differences are quite stark. With its long history of sending labor migrants overseas, the Philippines has come a great distance in providing assistance to its migrant workers. Tigno’s chapter outlines the comprehensive set of measures instituted by the Philippine government to help and educate its migrant workers. Various government agencies, such as the Philippine Overseas Employment Agencies, have been established to address the needs of migrants before and after their overseas employment. These agencies have implemented a number of policy measures to protect labor migrants, including various orientation and training programs, institutionalized and streamlined recruitment procedures, and assistance after their return to the country. But as Tigno

observes, although labor migration is managed and aided by the government, the mass outmigration is still largely driven by overseas demand and the private sector. Hence, despite the country's institutional mechanisms, irregular recruitment continues, giving rise to a number of problems for the workers themselves.

In the case of Indonesia, labor migration has largely been managed by the private sector, which is quick to capitalize on the strong demand abroad for low-cost labor, a resource that the country has in abundance. As discussed by Azis in her chapter, while outmigration has been a key part of the country's development, the private agencies that recruit and process migrant labor had generally been unregulated by the government until 2004, when a policy on migration was introduced and a legal framework and formal institutions were established. There are now 13 government agencies involved in protecting and supporting migrants. However, the lack of coordination among these agencies has led to substantial inefficiencies in the system, with labor migrants having to deal with lengthy and oftentimes expensive bureaucratic procedures. As a consequence, many low-skilled workers often resort to relying on recruitment agencies that exploit and abuse the process.

Vietnam, on the other hand, has strengthened its legal framework to manage labor migration and protect its migrants. As noted by Nguyen, Le, and Nguyen, from the start of the 2000s, Vietnam revised or introduced a number of legal documents that outlined the rights and responsibilities of migrant workers and recruitment agencies. They also created the Department of Overseas Labor to take the lead in managing the requirements and activities of migrant workers and an Overseas Workers Support Fund to assist the migrant workers. In 2006, the Law on Vietnamese Labor Working Abroad under Contract was enacted as well. In 2012, the Migration Resource Centre was established with the help of the IOM to provide information and advisory services to ensure the safety of Vietnamese migrant workers.

Compared with the Philippines, Indonesia, and Vietnam, the Myanmar government's policies toward migration are rather uncoordinated. Given the complexity and the different types of people on the move in Myanmar, which includes IDPs, the lack of coordination is no surprise. As explained by Thuzar, migrant worker concerns are dealt with mainly by the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Security, which has no jurisdiction over IDPs. Nonetheless, the ministry has undertaken some measures to address concerns about workers' rights and other issues, both internally and for overseas workers. New labor laws have also been passed recently by the parliament, covering issues such as minimum wage, employment and skills development, and social security. Other measures include the setting

up of hotlines for migrant workers to make complaints, the establishment of Migrant Resource Centres at the Labour Exchange Offices in Mandalay and Dawei (with support from the International Labour Organization) to provide information to potential migrants and their families, the provision of information on registered (i.e., legitimate) overseas and domestic employment recruitment agencies on the ministry website, and the opening of Migrant Reporting Desks at the departure and arrival halls at Yangon International Airport.

Changes in government frameworks can also be observed in receiving countries. Their respective policies are both reactive and proactive. For Singapore and Korea, it can be argued that their labor migration policies shift seamlessly from being proactive to reactive, depending on the demand for foreign labor and how their respective societies react to the inflow of foreign workers and their families. From Mathews, Soon, and Lee's chapters, it appears that these governments now have to seriously confront the issue of integrating migrants into the country, and it is no longer a question of addressing just the economics of migration but also the political and cultural implications of receiving migrants. Even a reticent society like Japan is finding that it must face this issue sooner rather than later, as its society is rapidly aging and its labor shortage is becoming more acute.

Overall, while governments are adjusting their respective policies on migration, the common observation that has come out from these different country studies is that ensuring the rights and protection of labor migrants remains a critical issue, and that irregular migration, with all its attendant risks, continues to be on the rise. These multifaceted concerns have driven countries to work together and establish regional mechanisms for managing migration. The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) has been playing a central role in creating regional frameworks. These include the measures outlined within the ASEAN Economic Community Blueprint, which encourages the liberalization of the movement of skilled labor as one key goal; the 2007 Declaration on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers; and the establishment of the ASEAN Committee on Migrant Workers. But as Atsuko Geiger observes in her chapter, these mechanisms face a number of limitations. Among these is the practice of consensus building, which slows down the forward progress on measures to protect migrant workers. And since the governments of sending, receiving, and transit countries have different interests that are defined by their different levels of economic development and different political systems, it has been challenging for governments in the region to tackle migration issues more directly.

Thus, as government efforts at managing migration continue to face challenges of capacity, resources, and uneven levels of political will and commitment to meet the issues head on, the role of civil society has become even more important in providing critical interventions for the security and wellbeing of migrants.

## CIVIL SOCIETY'S ROLE IN ADVANCING HUMAN SECURITY FOR PEOPLE ON THE MOVE

The roles that civil society organizations (CSOs) and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) play in ensuring the protection of migrants are wide-ranging—from advocacy, education, and training, to assisting and facilitating migrants' integration into their host countries. Given those different roles that they take on, the extent and nature of civil society's engagement in the protection of migrants, particularly labor migrants, are uneven across the countries examined in this volume.

In the Philippines, civil society groups have played a key intermediary role in managing outmigration from the country. CSOs representing the needs of migrant workers have operated openly and legally since 1986 and are seen as “partners of the State in the protection of Filipino migrant workers and in the promotion of their welfare.” The way the NGO community has been organized in the Philippines is also quite interesting. As described by Tigno, there are four types of migration CSOs operating in the country. Type 1 are the nonprofit NGOs that are reliant on foreign donors and social welfare organizations and that provide research support on migration issues, as well as shelter, educational services, and limited financial support to individual migrants. Type 2 are the mass membership or people's organizations that claim to represent particular migrant or migration-related groups or sectors such as domestic workers, seafarers, or the families that migrants have left behind. Type 3 are faith-based organizations or those that fall within the ambit of religious organizations that provide spiritual counseling and shelter, particularly to vulnerable migrant groups such as trafficked women and children. And finally, type 4 are network or alliance-based organizations that supplement the different kinds of assistance provided by the other three types of CSOs by helping to coordinate their initiatives.

While the Philippines has the widest range of and most institutionalized migration CSOs, it has also been observed that there are issues in how these different CSOs engage with each other. As argued by Tigno, ideological differences exist between CSOs, with some referring to themselves as being more

progressive and genuinely “pro-migrant,” while others prefer to deal with the root causes of outmigration and the problems in the Philippine society that push people to leave the country. CSOs also vary in their capacity and ability to influence policy. Overall, with the extensive organization of CSOs within and outside the Philippines, NGOs have been successful in lobbying for the protection of migrant workers with governments and through the use of the media.

In contrast to the Philippines, the Indonesian CSOs that work on migration have not been as influential as they could be. This is partly due to the lack of political space to operate, particularly during the repressive period of the Suharto regime. Nonetheless, there are now more than 100 NGOs that work on issues related to labor migration from Indonesia. The main players are NGOs that represent women’s rights, such as Solidaritas Perempuan. Azis has observed that NGOs that work with migrants operate similarly to the labor unions that represent the domestic laborers—they collect data, advocate policies, provide training and assistance, and raise public awareness. Also, much like the Philippine case, CSOs and NGOs have been set up overseas in places like Hong Kong to provide protection for Indonesian migrant workers. But unlike in the Philippines, CSOs in Indonesia do not yet have enough leverage to lobby the Indonesian government for better protection for their own migrant workers. As argued by Azis, it will require the gradual deepening of political reforms in Indonesia before more progress can be made on giving CSOs greater capacity to effectively engage with the government on advancing the protection agenda for Indonesian foreign workers abroad.

While the role of migration CSOs in Vietnam is still limited, Nguyen and Le note that there are CSOs such as the Institute for Social Development Studies and the Institute of Population, Health and Development that have been involved in research and policy advocacy work. They also argue that there is great potential for these CSOs to work with and support the government in providing social security and support for migrant workers. CSOs have also become increasingly visible in Myanmar, particularly since the opening up of the country in 2011. As noted by Thuzar, the space for CSOs to interact and operate is widening in Myanmar with the relaxation of the rigid regulations of the past.

The same positive prospects hold true for CSOs in Singapore. Given the dynamic changes in its economy and demography, CSOs find themselves playing an important role in the integration and protection of migrants in Singapore. As noted by Mathews and Soon, there are two categories of CSOs in Singapore: those that serve as “junior partners” to the state and those that work in resistance to the state. The first category includes a host

of immigration and cultural associations, as well as CSOs that provide welfare and social assistance to migrants; they actively provide professional and personal development programs aimed at equipping foreign workers with stronger job skills, counseling services, and common spaces where immigrants can interact with the local population. The other type of CSOs argue against the legislative and policy framework of the state, and they have campaigned for better working conditions for migrant workers and protection against human trafficking. These groups actively attempt to change attitudes and policies regarding immigrants, calling for greater protection and often working to raise public awareness. As pointed out by Mathews and Soon, the advocacy carried out by these CSOs has borne fruit in making the government more sympathetic to and tolerant of these migration-related organizations. It is therefore expected that CSOs will become even more involved in migration matters as foreign workers continue to be important to and prevalent in Singaporean society.

What about CSOs in receiving countries? The story here is even more promising despite the fact that CSOs in receiving countries like South Korea and Japan do not have a lot of experience dealing with immigrants. However, given the largely homogeneous nature of Korean and Japanese societies, the assistance of CSOs in both countries in helping immigrants—particularly foreign workers—in protecting their rights and helping them integrate into society are of critical importance. South Korea's Migrants' Trade Union has been proactive in setting up linkages between the NGOs and migrants within Korea, as well as with organizations from the sending countries. This has gone a long way in helping ensure the protection of the rights of foreign workers. In Japan, CSOs have also been active in helping immigrants adjust to living in Japan. As noted by Menju, with the mainstream Japanese society's mistrust of immigrants and the absence of a comprehensive government policy on immigration, Japanese CSOs have proactively organized international exchange programs and provided Japanese lessons for local migrant students. A handful of Centers for Multicultural Information and Assistance have also been set up in cities across Japan to address the gaps in government policy, help migrants adapt to local conditions, and help them with their problems. That said, CSOs in both countries recognize that a lot more can be done to achieve comprehensive policies to manage migration in a way that benefits all parties concerned.

In sum, in spite of the varying degrees of engagement and different roles that CSOs play in helping to manage the movements of people, their involvement has and will continue to be of great value to improving the plight of migrant workers. To be sure, the social, financial, and moral support provided

by CSOs in different country settings are intangible benefits that need to be further supported not only by other sectors of society, but by the governments themselves.

At the regional and international level, CSOs are also important actors in building and promoting international norms of protection. As Geiger notes, CSOs undertake regional advocacy, push for ratification of international conventions, and monitor governments' actions. Further, CSOs are "catalysts to bring local-level experience and migrant-oriented perspectives into higher political dialogue." This can, as argued by Geiger, "contribute to the construction of a better system, one that does not only address issues of migrants' rights and human security but also manages migration flows more effectively."

## CONCLUSION

As the world continues to see people on the move and in increasing numbers, states and their societies need to fully understand the implications of such movements. As the country studies in this volume show, managing the cross-border movements of people is not and cannot be the sole domain of governments. While it is critical for governments of both sending and receiving countries to be prepared and put in place the right regulatory policies and supporting mechanisms to ensure the safety and security of migrants, equal consideration should be given to managing the social and psychological impact of migration. For countries that are turning to migration as a means to address their own labor shortages and the needs of their rapidly aging societies, the issue is no longer about the economy but also about social cohesion and integration. Meanwhile, for countries that encourage emigration to support economic growth, the issues that arise are not just about the economy but also about the security of their migrant workers and the welfare of the families they leave behind. The picture becomes even more complicated when countries have to deal with the issues associated with irregular migration.

Indeed, the emerging challenges of cross-border movements are multifaceted and require multiple solutions geared toward specific needs. The different and oftentimes competing demands compel multilevel responses, which in turn require the involvement of other actors beyond the state. As this volume shows, governments need to engage with CSOs, as they are critical partners in bringing about a more human-centered approach to managing migration. Similarly, CSOs must step up and improve their capacity to deal with the

different challenges faced by migrants. Managing the new face of migration will require not only coming up with solutions to persistent problems, but also the ability to continuously learn about the specific human security concerns of people on the move.

## NOTES

1. Information in this overview chapter is taken from the other chapters in this book unless otherwise noted.
2. International Organization for Migration (IOM) Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, *Regional Strategy for Asia and the Pacific 2012–2015* (Bangkok: IOM, 2012), <https://www.iom.int/sites/default/files/country/docs/AUP00548-RO-Bangkok-Regional-Strategy.pdf>. It should be noted, however, that migration estimates vary widely. Utilizing the World Bank's 2013 estimates for total migrant stock, for example, Atsuko Geiger in this volume found the number to be closer to 15.5 million (taking the ASEAN+3 countries as “East Asia” and discounting for migration between China, Hong Kong, and Macao).
3. *Ibid.*
4. Jay G. Silverman, Michele R. Decker, Heather L. McCauley, Katelyn P. Mack, *A Regional Assessment of Sex Trafficking and STI/HIV in Southeast Asia: Connections between Sexual Exploitation, Violence and Sexual Risk* (Colombo: United Nations Development Programme Regional Centre, 2009).
5. S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS), *Report on Managing Cross-Border Movements of People: Promoting Capacity and Response for Irregular Migration* (Centre for Non-Traditional Security, RSIS: Singapore, 2013).
6. IOM, *Regional Strategy for Asia and the Pacific 2012–2015*. It should be noted that this report covers East, South, and South-West Asia, with Pakistan and Iran alone hosting 2.7 million Afghan refugees.
7. Frank Biermann and Philipp Pattberg, eds., *Global Environmental Governance Reconsidered* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2012).
8. Based on the World Bank bilateral migration matrix for 2013, <http://econ.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/EXTDEC/EXTDECPROSPECTS/0,,contentMDK:22803131~pagePK:64165401~piPK:64165026~theSitePK:476883,00.html>.
9. IOM, *Regional Strategy for Asia and the Pacific 2012–2015*.
10. UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), “2015 UNHCR Country Operations Profile—Myanmar,” <http://www.unhcr.org/pages/49e4877d6.html#>.