Migration and Multicultural Contention in East Asia
Hyuk-Rae Kim and Ingyu Oh

Japan, Korea and Taiwan have experienced rapid and dramatic demographic changes during the last three decades. In all three countries, changes of fertility decline, ageing and sex imbalances preceded massive increases in international marriages and labour migration. In this article, we analyse how these demographic and social transformations affect policies of migration and integration in this region. Demographics are changing with the integration of foreign brides and professional migrants and with declining fertility rates. Despite this, the magnitude and speed of change within the policy provisions for migration and integration are still very limited and slow—Japan, Korea and Taiwan, for instance, all maintain ‘assimilationist’ or ‘passive multicultural’ migration and integration policies.

Keywords: Demographic Change; Labour Migration; International Marriage; Contested Governance; Multiculturalist Policies

Introduction

People residing in Japan and Korea have traditionally considered their nations to be homogenous (see, inter alia, Lie 2001; Sawada 2008; Tamura 2003). The existence of the Ainu (an indigenous Japanese ethnic group), together with a sizeable Korean and Chinese population, did not meaningfully challenge Japan’s notion of homogeneity. The myth of homogeneity in Korea also conveniently overlooked the presence of various ethnic groups—Chinese, Manchurians or Japanese, for example—who had migrated into the peninsula at different historical junctures. The situation in Taiwan was not substantially different from that in Japan or Korea. Although Taiwan openly acknowledged the existence of aborigines and other ethnic minority groups,
nationalists have encouraged citizens to embrace the concept of the single-nation-state principle since the birth of the Kuomintang government in 1949. This nationalist doctrine tenaciously held that the majority Han Chinese were a homogenous people devoid of multi-ethnic or multicultural heritages (Yang et al. 2006).

In the postwar development period, three broad demographic changes provide the context for a significant influx of international labour migrants, followed by so-called marriage migrants. Firstly, the fertility decline has progressed to a point where the conventional level of population growth—i.e. at least replacement level—is no longer tenable. Secondly, the rapidly ageing population in each country has dramatically increased the population dependency ratio (i.e. the total population divided by the total economically active population). Finally, Korea and Taiwan, in particular, experienced a skewed sex ratio in favour of male babies at birth in the early 1990s, although the tendency subsided in the 2000s. Japan, on the other hand, has just exhibited a low sex ratio beginning in 2010. The Korean sex ratio at birth in fact reached 116.5 male per 100 female babies in 1990 (Korea National Statistical Office 2008), which is a rare phenomenon in other parts of the developing world. These demographic changes in the 1980s and the 1990s were accompanied by a massive immigration of foreign workers and brides.

Aside from the general demographic changes, the burgeoning number of migrant workers in the three countries is attributed to concerted efforts by governments and businesses to deal with the presumed labour shortage in the 3-D and small- and medium-industry (SMI) sectors of the economy. Migrant workers primarily arrived from China, South-East, South and Central Asia, and South America. Korea and Japan actively sought ways of incorporating their ethnic descendants from China and South America, respectively. Moreover, the income disparities in the region have intensified intra-Asian migration within the last three decades (Kim 2004; Martin et al. 2006). The increasing level of education and income among native workers, coupled with the declining number of economically active people, exacerbated the labour shortages in the 3-D and SMI sectors.

International marriages quickly became the second most significant factor of international migration that began to destabilise the homogenous East Asian family structure (Constable 2005; Douglass 2008; Drumm 2001; Kim 2009). For instance, in 2006, international marriages constituted 6.1 per cent of the total registered marriages in Japan. In Korea, the rate of international marriages increased from 3.7 per cent in 2000 to 13.6 per cent in 2005, while it reached 15.5 per cent in Taiwan in 2004 (Korea Immigration Service 2006; Ministry of Internal Affairs 2006). A main pull factor for accepting marriage migrants is the dearth of domestic brides, particularly in rural areas, due to the exodus of young women to urban areas, and urban women migrating to foreign countries for study, work or marriage. In Japan many women elect to remain unmarried until their late 30s and 40s (Chung and Das Gupta 2007; Kim and Shin 2008; Okushima 2008; Sha 2008). Despite the significance of labour and marriage migrants who enter and remain in the host countries as legal residents and eventually as citizens, a considerable proportion of international migrants either
enter the countries unlawfully or become unauthorised residents for a variety of reasons. Currently, Korea has over 1.5 million documented and undocumented foreign residents; Japan accommodates around 2.5 million documented foreign residents; and Taiwan has close to half a million documented migrants (Korea Immigration Service 2008; Ministry of Internal Affairs 2008). An unforeseen consequence of the influx of these migrant workers and brides is that they bring their cultural traditions and practices with them, thus challenging the host society’s age-old beliefs about ethnic homogeneity and transforming the social and cultural fabric of these Asian societies.

The increasing significance of multicultural families and international migrants in avowedly homogeneous Asian societies prompted the governments to devise policies pertaining to migration, social integration and multiculturalism. New needs of multicultural governance for diversity policies led to a series of experimental programmes in multiculturalism, including multicultural centres for migrant workers where they can learn the host language and receive counselling on ways of adapting to local customs (see Joon Kim, this issue). Unfortunately, the content and framework of education and counselling remained basically assimilationist. Thus, foreign brides are expected to conform to the cultural norms of the host society, rather than the latter being expected to embrace multiculturalism as an evolving process of accepting international migrants. Even though migrant workers and foreign brides are increasingly important for economies and communities across East Asia, they continue to face institutional discrimination, human rights violation and exploitation in workplaces, communities and households (Lee 2006; Lee 2008; Liem 2007; Lim 2003; Narayan 2006). Despite efforts to promote multiculturalism, the programme content is rooted in the principle of cultural assimilation.

In this paper we examine the linkages between salient demographic changes and the social factors affecting international migration patterns. Moreover, we seek to explain the areas of convergence and divergence in regards to diversity policies in three East Asian countries, in order to highlight the varied forms of multicultural governance. In what follows, we analyse the demographic changes occurring in these countries, offer explanations on the changing dynamics of migration arising from an increasingly transnational workforce and bridal population, compare and contrast multicultural governance structures and diversity policies in the three countries, and suggest future policy implications for the challenge of transnational migration and multicultural governance in East Asia.

East Asian Patterns of Demographic Change

East Asian demographic changes during the postwar years can be traced back to the countries’ phenomenal development success, touted as a rare case of a regional economic miracle (see, inter alia, Clark 1989; Kim and Song 2007; Oh 1999; Vogel 1979). Simultaneously, Japan, Taiwan and Korea all experienced a series of social transformations that continue to challenge important areas of their traditional
societies. The demographic transformation is clearly one of the most significant changes in recent decades.

Aggregate demographic changes first appeared in Japan, although they quickly followed in the ensuing years in Korea and Taiwan. For example, the precipitous decline of the fertility rate and rapid ageing first occurred in Japan, notably in the 1980s, while a similar pattern occurred in Korea and Taiwan a decade later. Due to a general rise in living standards and the move of job preferences away from the 3-D and SMI sectors, the prevalence of labour shortages in these occupations created an impetus for both governments and businesses to search for alternative sources of labour. The exodus of young women from rural areas to cities also exacerbated the shortage of brides in rural areas (Das Gupta and Bhat 1997; Edlund 1999; Hesketh and Zhu 2006; Park and Cho 1995).

According to the United Nations (2007), Japan became an ‘aged society’ in 1994, with more than 14 per cent of the population in the age bracket 65 years and over, whereas Korea and Taiwan became an ‘ageing society’ in 2000, with more than 7 per cent of the population in the senior bracket. As shown in Table 1, Korea and Taiwan are projected to take only 18 and 15 years, respectively, to move from an ageing to an aged society—much faster than the experience of other developed nations. By 2050 all three countries will have a similar population structure, with the highest percentage of elderly population in the world.

It is worth noting that Korea experienced the quickest decline in total fertility rate among the three countries—from 6.2 children per woman in 1960 to 1.6 in 1990 (Korea National Statistical Office 2008). The country reached the world’s lowest fertility rate of 1.08 in 2005, which is much lower than the 2005 OECD average of 1.56 and substantially lower than the minimum 2.1 needed to maintain the current population level. The figures for Japan and Taiwan were 1.25 in 2005 and 1.18 in 2004, respectively. Although Korea and Taiwan have emulated the Japanese demographic pattern, the speed of catching up has been much faster than other countries. Significantly low fertility rates imply an exponential increase in the population dependency ratio in the future. In the case of Korea, for example, the core

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age group (years)</th>
<th>1960</th>
<th>1980</th>
<th>2000</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2018</th>
<th>2030</th>
<th>2050</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0–14</td>
<td>42.3 (K)</td>
<td>34.0 (K)</td>
<td>21.1 (K)</td>
<td>19.2 (K)</td>
<td>12.7 (K)</td>
<td>11.4 (K)</td>
<td>8.9 (K)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>30.0 (J)</td>
<td>23.5 (J)</td>
<td>14.6 (J)</td>
<td>13.7 (J)</td>
<td>11.1 (J)</td>
<td>9.7 (J)</td>
<td>8.6 (J)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>64.2 (J)</td>
<td>67.4 (J)</td>
<td>67.9 (J)</td>
<td>65.8 (J)</td>
<td>60.3 (J)</td>
<td>58.5 (J)</td>
<td>51.8 (J)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65+</td>
<td>2.9 (K)</td>
<td>3.8 (K)</td>
<td>7.2 (K)</td>
<td>9.1 (K)</td>
<td>14.3 (K)</td>
<td>24.3 (K)</td>
<td>38.2 (K)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5.7 (J)</td>
<td>9.1 (J)</td>
<td>17.3 (J)</td>
<td>20.1 (J)</td>
<td>28.6 (J)</td>
<td>31.8 (J)</td>
<td>39.6 (J)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8.6 (T)</td>
<td>9.7 (T)</td>
<td>14.7 (T)</td>
<td>24.0 (T)</td>
<td>35.9 (T)</td>
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Notes: K = Korea; J = Japan; T = Taiwan.
age group of economically active population (25–54) has been dropping rapidly since 2005.

Table 1 provides us with another demographic implication. Not only are these countries experiencing one of the most rapid transformations from ageing to aged societies globally, but Korea and Taiwan are also going through the world’s fastest transition from industrial to post-industrial stages of demographic development, which shows a clear sign of severe workforce depletion in the 3-D and SMI sectors. Ageing and low fertility rates combined are undoubtedly the most significant factors. One could argue that the overall workforce size may be unaffected by the acute fertility decline, primarily due to the increasing number of senior members of society. However, it is equally likely that the ageing population does not meaningfully search for and compete in 3-D occupations, such as mining, construction, shipbuilding, long-distance trawling and nightshift nursing.

Finally, a skewed sex ratio at birth is the third aspect of population dynamics in this region, as Korea and Taiwan experienced temporary but serious sex ratio imbalance. Japan, on the other hand, is continuously experiencing a declining sex ratio disparity. Both Korea and Taiwan demonstrated an imbalance between the 1980s and the 2000s, although the pattern has gradually ameliorated. The preference for sons was facilitated by the introduction of pre-natal sex-detection technology during the early stage of pregnancy. As Table 2 shows, Korea was particularly adept in the technology, which had the effect of radically increasing the sex imbalance in 1990, despite the fact that the practice was outlawed in 1987. Male preference at birth obviously impacts on the overall female population, which eventually affects the availability of marriageable women as they come of age (Das Gupta and Bhat 1997; Edlund 1999; Hesketh and Zhu 2006; Park and Cho 1995). The extreme sex imbalance of the mid-1980s contributes to the current bridal shortage, as male babies born during that time are now in their mid-20s. Since 2000, however, a steady decline in the overall sex imbalance has been duly observed (Chung and Das Gupta 2007).

Taiwan also banned gender detection during pregnancy, albeit not until 2002 and with many loopholes in the legislation (Department of Health 2010). Since couples could find alternative ways of detecting foetal sex, the imbalance peaked in 2005. The Japanese trend indicates a low level of sex imbalance at birth that can be traced back to the 1970s (Yō et al. 2007). The reverse sex imbalance is also widely noticed in the

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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Korea</td>
<td>107.2</td>
<td>109.5</td>
<td>116.5</td>
<td>113.2</td>
<td>110.2</td>
<td>107.7</td>
<td>108.2</td>
<td>106.4</td>
<td>106.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>106.0</td>
<td>105.6</td>
<td>105.4</td>
<td>105.2</td>
<td>105.8</td>
<td>105.3</td>
<td>98.8</td>
<td>98.3</td>
<td>98.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taiwan</td>
<td>106.7</td>
<td>106.5</td>
<td>108.0</td>
<td>108.8</td>
<td>109.0</td>
<td>109.5</td>
<td>108.5</td>
<td>106.7</td>
<td>106.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Note: Peak figure in bold.
US, Canada, Denmark, Holland and the UK (Nonaka 2000). Attempts to nail down the causes of the sex ratio decline fail to produce definitive results, although it is clear that urban areas in Japan experience the greatest reverse sex imbalance. Many factors, including environmental influences such as pollution, are thought to be linked to the decline of sex ratios in Japan, although there is no definitive evidence (Yō et al. 2007).

Rapid ageing, low fertility and sex imbalances do not necessarily, in and of themselves, present a direct threat to current labour shortages. However, the recent demographic changes coincide with government policies that continue to favour importing labourers from overseas in select industries and facilitating international marriages. The mass media and policy-makers alike tend to propagate the idea that demographic changes are linked to labour migration, although we find no causality between the two. Be that as it may, migrant workers are mostly concentrated in the 3-D and SMI sectors.

Labour Migration

Managing the flow of migrant workers is an important policy concern in all three countries. Over the years, Korea has shifted its policy from inviting only industrial trainees on a rotation basis to further opening its borders to Korean descendants from China and Central Asia as guestworkers (Lee and Park 2005). Taiwan maintained the largest number of unskilled migrant workers on a quota system. However, there are fewer undocumented migrant workers than in either Japan or Korea. Japan’s approach has been to concentrate on professional migration initially in order to bolster its weak IT and digital technology industries and, later, to expand its stock of multilingual foreign staff for multinational corporations (Yamanaka 1993; Yorimitsu 2003). As can be calculated from the figures in Table 3, professional migrants in 2007 made up 30.6 per cent of the total migrant workforce in Japan, compared to 5.3 per cent in Korea and 4.0 per cent in Taiwan.

Japan is one of the few non-Western countries that has accepted a large influx of migrant workers since the 1970s. Beginning in the 1980s, Japanese factories and construction sites were supplemented by labourers from all over Asia and South

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Korea</th>
<th>Japan</th>
<th>Taiwan</th>
<th>Korea</th>
<th>Japan</th>
<th>Taiwan</th>
<th>Korea</th>
<th>Japan</th>
<th>Taiwan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>20,809</td>
<td>82,490</td>
<td>13,499</td>
<td>230,671</td>
<td>121,689</td>
<td>302,741</td>
<td>138,056</td>
<td>220,552</td>
<td>17,160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>24,105</td>
<td>88,281</td>
<td>11,409</td>
<td>289,477</td>
<td>132,432</td>
<td>313,201</td>
<td>187,946</td>
<td>219,418</td>
<td>21,086</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>27,585</td>
<td>103,040</td>
<td>14,014</td>
<td>322,558</td>
<td>105,595</td>
<td>319,612</td>
<td>180,792</td>
<td>207,299</td>
<td>24,316</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>30,816</td>
<td>113,814</td>
<td>15,085</td>
<td>253,050</td>
<td>109,450</td>
<td>337,380</td>
<td>211,988</td>
<td>193,745</td>
<td>28,463</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>33,929</td>
<td>130,474</td>
<td>15,384</td>
<td>467,084</td>
<td>125,075</td>
<td>352,263</td>
<td>223,464</td>
<td>170,839</td>
<td>18,264</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Note: Figures in bold denote largest number of each type of worker.
America. As Table 4 shows, Japan’s overarching policy toward migrant workers has been threefold. Firstly, the government discouraged the employment of unskilled foreign workers in order to close its borders to Chinese and other migrant workers (Yamanaka 1993). Second, the government set a policy guideline with which to allow firms to recruit professional migrants from the developed world and/or English-speaking countries. Finally, the government allowed firms in the 3-D and SMI sectors to begin hiring overseas Japanese from South America, and strictly monitored the inflow of other foreign workers by establishing a so-called ‘trainee system’ that prevented the permanent settlement of migrants who worked primarily in the 3-D sectors (Sano 1996; Yoshida 2006).

Korea and Taiwan began replicating the Japanese model in the late 1980s. SMI and 3-D firms urged the government to initiate a guestworker programme that would alleviate the presumed labour shortage, opening the doors to migrant workers from China and South-East Asia (Cheng 2003; Kwon 2004; Park 1994; Se et al. 2007). Although it is difficult to prove that maintaining homogeneity was the principal reason for providing temporary work visas to the Japanese-Brazilians (in Japan) and the Korean-Chinese (in Korea), both governments made a special effort to recruit overseas co-ethnics over other international migrant workers. The respective percentages of Brazilians and Korean-Chinese were 14.7 per cent in 2007 and 27.9 per cent in 2008 (Table 5).

Taiwan and Korea, however, showed a difference in how each attempted to manage the flow of 3-D migrant workers. Taiwan, for instance, utilised bilateral agreements with supplier countries, while Korea adopted the Japanese system of worker rotation by issuing short-term job-training visas that were administered through private manpower-recruiting agencies (Sano 2004). Because these private companies, in many instances, misrepresented the terms of employment—such as working conditions and wages—many trainees left the companies to which they had originally been contracted (Kim 2003).5 As Table 3 shows, Taiwan had fewer undocumented workers, whereas Japan and Korea struggled to deal with the ballooning number of unauthorised workers who entered the countries on trainee visas. Unlike Japan, neither Korea nor Taiwan initiated temporary-worker programmes for professionals (Sano 2004). Indian professionals in Japan, however, have been noticeable in recent

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principle</th>
<th>Japan</th>
<th>Korea</th>
<th>Taiwan</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unskilled</td>
<td>Japanese descendants from Brazil; trainee rotation &amp; other work permits</td>
<td>Korean descendants from China; trainee rotation &amp; other work permits</td>
<td>S-E Asian migrants on bilateral quotas &amp; other work permits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skilled</td>
<td>Many</td>
<td>Few</td>
<td>Few</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undocumented</td>
<td>Many</td>
<td>Many</td>
<td>Few</td>
</tr>
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Table 5. Foreign residents by nationality (workers in italics)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Korea</th>
<th>Japan</th>
<th>Taiwan</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Koreans</td>
<td>613,791</td>
<td>14,152</td>
<td>593,489</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>237,497</td>
<td>559,771</td>
<td>462,396</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Korean-Chinese</td>
<td>377,616</td>
<td>299,384</td>
<td>73,598</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japanese</td>
<td>42,504</td>
<td>32,544</td>
<td>1,332</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brazilians</td>
<td>274,700</td>
<td>316,967</td>
<td>790</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US citizens</td>
<td>106,390</td>
<td>125,436</td>
<td>790</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vietnamese</td>
<td>24,908</td>
<td>78,948</td>
<td>47,836</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Filipinos</td>
<td>32,451</td>
<td>50,192</td>
<td>185,237</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thais</td>
<td>27,545</td>
<td>45,959</td>
<td>20,319</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mongolians</td>
<td>16,824</td>
<td>34,470</td>
<td>674</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indonesians</td>
<td>31,475</td>
<td>25,722</td>
<td>25,620</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indians</td>
<td>20,589</td>
<td>1,244</td>
<td>1,406,750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>560,031</td>
<td>1,352,461</td>
<td>1,915,030</td>
</tr>
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</table>
years due to the new Japanese initiative of attracting English-speaking, computer-driven information technology (IT) workers from India (over 20,000 in 2007).

The ethnic composition of international workers by country and occupation reflects, in part, the volatility of political relations between countries and cultural preference in certain areas of employment. Taiwan’s migrant workers mostly come from four South-East Asian countries: Thailand, the Philippines, Indonesia and Vietnam. Vietnamese workers are preferred for their Confucian heritage, whereas Filipina domestic workers are favoured for their English proficiency, deemed invaluable for the education of Taiwanese children (Cheng 2003). Thai and Indonesian male workers are mostly hired for construction sites in Taiwan (Se et al. 2007). The reliance on these South-East Asian migrant workers for the 3-D job sector derives from the policy directive of the Democratic Progressive Party (Minchindang), led by the former President Chen Shui-bian. The goal of the policy directive was to (a) ‘de-Sinicise’ the Taiwanese national and cultural identity, and (b) search for a new Taiwanese identity based on its long tradition of multi-ethnic and multicultural heritage (Chu and Lin 2001; Ho 2006). However, this policy directive was met by severe opposition from nationalists and China (Chu 2004; Chu and Lin 2001).

Tables 3 and 5 confirm one recent change—Japan, Korea and Taiwan are now hosting a large number of migrant workers from diverse ethnic and national backgrounds. Even though Japan has set the precedent in this region, Korea and Taiwan have quickly emulated the Japanese experience, despite some nuanced policy differences. The historico-political ties with China remain a big hurdle for Taiwan, whereas Japan and Korea face an upsurge of Chinese migrant workers in their societies.

International Marriages

Japan, again, is the leader in the region when it comes to international marriages. The dearth of marriageable women in rural areas and the tendency of urban women to remain single largely explain the proliferation of such marriages. In addition, many Japanese women elect to go overseas for university study or to find a foreign groom. In Korea and Taiwan, the main reasons for international marriage are similar to those in Japan. Additionally, the sex imbalance at birth within the last two to three decades in Korea and Taiwan has led to a decline in the total number of marriages as well as to bridal shortages in both rural and urban areas. As a consequence, Korea (13.6 per cent in 2005) and Taiwan (15.5 per cent in 2004) experienced a sudden increase in the number of international marriages compared to Japan (Table 6). Also, as Table 7 shows, the abrupt increase in international marriages in Korea and Taiwan can be attributed to the diversification of marriage partners from South-East Asia. In Korea, marriages with a Japanese spouse declined significantly from 18.2 per cent in the 1990s to 4.7 per cent in 2008 (Kim 2009). On the other hand, the percentage of

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<tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Korea</td>
<td>4,710 (1.2)</td>
<td>13,494 (3.4)</td>
<td>12,319 (3.7)</td>
<td>35,447 (11.4)</td>
<td><strong>43,121 (13.6)</strong></td>
<td>39,690 (11.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>25,625 (3.5)</td>
<td>27,727 (3.5)</td>
<td>36,263 (4.5)</td>
<td>39,511 (5.5)</td>
<td>41,481 (5.8)</td>
<td><strong>44,701 (6.1)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taiwan</td>
<td>21,338 (11.7)</td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>20,338 (15.5)</strong></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign wives</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Korea</td>
<td>619</td>
<td>10,365</td>
<td>7,306</td>
<td>25,594</td>
<td>31,180</td>
<td>30,208</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>20,026</td>
<td>20,787</td>
<td>28,326</td>
<td>30,907</td>
<td>33,116</td>
<td>35,993</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taiwan</td>
<td>19,062</td>
<td>17,567</td>
<td>11,121</td>
<td>11,211</td>
<td></td>
<td>6,816</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign husbands</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Korea</td>
<td>4,091</td>
<td>3,129</td>
<td>5,015</td>
<td>9,853</td>
<td>11,941</td>
<td>9,482</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>5,600</td>
<td>6,940</td>
<td>7,937</td>
<td>8,604</td>
<td>8,365</td>
<td>8,708</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taiwan</td>
<td>2,276</td>
<td>2,771</td>
<td>2,687</td>
<td></td>
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<td>2,708</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Figures in parenthesis are percentages.
foreign brides from the Philippines and Vietnam grew to 4.6 and 20.4, respectively, in 2008 (Korea National Statistical Office 2008).

Despite diversification, Chinese women (including ethnic Koreans from China, or joseonjok, who are listed as Chinese nationals) represent the largest group of international brides for Korean and Japanese men. This pattern remained unchanged in Korea, since marriages with joseonjok constituted 31.4 per cent of total international marriages, whereas marriages with the Chinese stood at 25.2 per cent (Korea Immigration Service 2008). Table 7 shows, however, that Taiwanese men prefer Vietnamese women.

The future marriage trend is unclear, although we are no longer witnessing spikes in international marriage rates. The demographic impact of sex-ratio imbalance in Korea and Taiwan is expected to decline in the long run, except for the rural and urban poor, who will continue to experience difficulty finding brides as young women tend to avoid marriage partners from this socio-economic group. The relatively lower levels of sex imbalance witnessed in Japan may not solve the bridal shortage in the rural communities and among the urban poor.

We find that East Asia is now full of migrant workers and foreign brides who chose this new destination for socio-economic reasons. We also find that the governments in Japan, Korea and Taiwan have considerably eased the process of contracting international marriages and obtaining work visas (see also Seol 2005; Sha 2008). Increasing population diversity in East Asia has brought about changes in local multicultural policies in order to allay ethnic tensions between newcomers and host

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Korea</th>
<th>Japan</th>
<th>Taiwan</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Foreign wives</td>
<td>Foreign husbands</td>
<td>Foreign wives</td>
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<tr>
<td>Korean</td>
<td>6,066</td>
<td>2,087</td>
<td>614</td>
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<td>Chinese</td>
<td>41,118</td>
<td>4,670</td>
<td>11,644</td>
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<td>Japanese</td>
<td>7,145</td>
<td>596</td>
<td>1,314</td>
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<td>American</td>
<td>567</td>
<td>604</td>
<td>177</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vietnamese</td>
<td>7,426</td>
<td>37</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cambodian</td>
<td>4,508</td>
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<td>25,711</td>
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<td>Filipino/a</td>
<td>3,811</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>10,242</td>
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<td>1,270</td>
<td>25</td>
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<td>Uzbekistani</td>
<td>896</td>
<td>21</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Thai</td>
<td>1,447</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1,637</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>British</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brazilian</td>
<td>311</td>
<td>261</td>
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<tr>
<td>Peruvian</td>
<td>121</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>2,968</td>
<td>2,117</td>
<td>2,859</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: ‘Chinese’ for Korea includes the Korean-Chinese. Marriages with the Korean-Chinese were not included in Table 6 for Korea. Figures are for 2005 except for Taiwan, which are for 2006.
societies. Policies of diversity in Japan, Korea and Taiwan have targeted these various groups of migrant workers and foreign brides, including offering them free language-learning services and counselling. However, we also find that East Asian governments are still reluctant to provide these migrants with genuine multicultural care (Kim and Shin 2008; Lee 2003; Se et al. 2007; Seol 2005).

Policies of Diversity

Although Taiwan (Hoklo, Hakka, Waisheng ren and aborigines), Korea (Koreans, Manchurians, Chinese and Japanese) and Japan (Japanese, Ainu, Koreans and Chinese) have been multi-ethnic societies for centuries, policy-makers have only recently explicitly articulated in the public discourse the concepts of tolerance, diversity and multiculturalism. Given the apparent lack of multicultural experience among the population in these countries, it is not surprising that international migrant communities and their advocates express discontent toward these diversity-related policies. Because of the ethnic tension between international migrants and host societies, the countries’ governments have put in place policy measures in order to alleviate the problem. Generally, four types of diversity policy are possible: assimilationist, preparationist, passive multicultural and active multicultural (Bleich 1998: 83).

Non-multicultural policies may be termed assimilationist or preparationist. The goal of assimilationist policies is to subsume minority groups into the dominant society. The intention of preparationist policies is to expel or deport migrant workers once they outlive their usefulness. On the other hand, multicultural policies include passive and active multicultural standpoints. The passive standpoint merely tolerates diverse cultural expressions that do not threaten the social boundary of a homogeneous society, whereas the active multicultural policy intentionally incorporates the perspectives and cultures of minority groups, thereby transforming important social institutions.

Based on this conceptual map, we find that East Asia as a whole grapples with the prospect of multiculturalism in varied forms. Diversity policies include non-multicultural and multicultural types, and those that implement multicultural policies tend to be passive, rather than active. In analysing these diversity policies, we compared the three countries based on the following factors: public education and awareness campaigns on multiculturalism, mass media programmes, and legislation that prohibits ethnic and racial hatred in the workplace (see Table 8).

Among the three policy areas of diversity, multicultural education has been a thorny issue in the three countries. Even Taiwan—a leader in this area, with its long historical heritage of multiculturalism and diversity—maintains passive multicultural policies with regard to its educational reform (see also Chen 1996). Multicultural curricula, pedagogical training and textbook development are virtually absent in Japan and Korea, even though Japan has a significant number of ethnic minorities who have lived in the country for generations—the Ainu, Koreans and Taiwanese.
Neither the Korean nor the Japanese governments formally acknowledged educational diplomas conferred by their ethnic schools.

The mass media is the only area where the multicultural campaign has been vibrant in all three countries. Foreigners are often shown on television programmes to illustrate their integration into society. In Japan, foreigners appear on television shows or news press as cultural assimilators, singing Japanese enka (traditional Japanese soul music for the elderly) or cooking Japanese food while speaking in fluent Japanese. At other times, however, they are portrayed as unwanted foreigners disrupting Japanese civilisation and homogeneity (Sawada 2008). Recently, TV programmes have been showing heated debates between foreigners and influential Japanese celebrities over the issue of the separatist or racist tendencies of Japanese people, culture and education. In Korea, foreign brides appear on television to explain in fluent Korean how they are assimilating into Korean culture. These programmes contain high emotional content, especially when the foreign bride’s family members, who were flown to Korea to meet their daughters, appear by surprise on the stage. A recent Taiwanese TV show featured a panel of journalists who bad-mouthed foreigners by citing (mainly fabricated) horror stories about them. These anecdotes provide indirect evidence that the underlying intention of mass-media activism toward multiculturalism is not yet actively multicultural.

Given the nascent status of diversity policies in Japan, Korea and Taiwan, it is natural to expect that the governance of migration will continue to be contested by various migrant groups in these countries. Japan, for example, reintroduced fingerprinting in 2008, an egregious reminder of the preparationist policy that had continuously beleaguered foreign residents until the early 1990s. Koseki, or family registries, still document the individual marriage and naturalisation records of foreign residents, in tandem with legal pressure on these foreigners to change their last names to Japanese-sounding ones. The third and fourth generations of Korean Japanese are not allowed to adopt Japanese citizenship if any of their ancestors or relatives had any criminal record (Oh 2012). The issue of human rights abuses of foreign brides and migrant workers continues to be the topic of social outcry in Japan, too (Ajia Josei Shiryô Senta- 2008).

In Korea and Taiwan, human rights abuse is a common problem when it comes to the unfair practice of migration governance. Instead of promoting multiculturalism, these societies as a whole tend to pressure foreign brides to adopt traditional

<table>
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<th>Policy areas</th>
<th>Japan</th>
<th>Korea</th>
<th>Taiwan</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Education reform</td>
<td>Assimilationist or preparationist</td>
<td>Assimilationist or preparationist</td>
<td>Passive multicultural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mass media campaign</td>
<td>Assimilationist or passive multicultural</td>
<td>Assimilationist or passive multicultural</td>
<td>Assimilationist or passive multicultural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anti-hatred legislation</td>
<td>None or preparationist</td>
<td>None or preparationist</td>
<td>None or preparationist</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8. Diversity policies
Confucian family roles within the rural farming areas. Poor working conditions and low wages are not complemented with a social safety-net for workers who are either injured or laid off. The process of naturalisation is very slow and involves layers of red tape, which prevents permanent settlement. In all three countries, discrimination against their own co-ethnics from Latin America and China is an intriguing phenomenon seldom observed in the British Commonwealth or the EU. The trafficking of women for prostitution is also rampant near the US military bases in Korea and in urban back-alleys in Taiwan (Sawada 2008).

Amid the injustice and unfairness so prevalent in migration governance, the involvement of non-governmental organisations in restoring the human rights of international migrants has led to mixed results. Starting in Japan in the 1980s and spreading rapidly into Taiwan and Korea in the 1990s and 2000s, many civil-society movements started to tackle the ill-treatment of foreign migrant workers and brides. The topic of finger-printing, discrimination against non-white husbands who married Japanese women, and the human rights abuse of foreign brides was the central discourse among civic organisations and NGOs in the 1980s (Ajia Josei Shiryô Senta- 2008; Lie 1986). Since the early 1990s, migrant workers in Korea have relied upon NGOs as a source of empowerment in the protest against ill-conceived government policies. In parallel with civic activism, migrant workers also set up grassroots organisations, such as the Migrants’ Trade Union (MTU), founded on 24 April 2005 (Kim 2003, 2005; Liem 2007; Lim 2003).

Despite these efforts, Japan, Korea and Taiwan have yet to adopt legislation that prohibits anti-immigrant crimes and violence. The only visible reform concerns the laws regarding domestic violence against wives. In Japan and Korea, these laws are now amended to include foreign wives (Asis 2004; Lee 2008). Attempts were made to prosecute those who verbally abused migrant workers with racial slurs in Korea, although these did not lead to the enactment of hate-crime laws (Lee 2008). As Table 8 indicates, the overall diversity policy in this region remains in limbo between the non-multicultural and the multicultural, even as the presence of international migrants, brides and the children of mixed ethnic heritage is clearly on the rise and the impact, particularly on rural communities, is quite significant.

**Discussion: The Contested Governance of Migration**

Our analysis of demographic changes, migration patterns and policies of diversity leaves us with one lingering policy-related question: is there any structural reason why governments in East Asia remain either passive multicultural or assimilationist? We believe the answer is related to the changing demographic structure and illusive government policies to deal with increasing dependence on foreign labour, and brides, who are progressively challenging the homogeneous social structure of these countries.

The demographic changes and their projected future ramifications have been alarming policy-makers in this region. Accepting labour and marriage migration was
a policy measure aimed at deflecting some of the foreseeable catastrophes that demographic transformations might bring about, such as an acute shortage of labour in the 3-D and SMI sectors and brides for the rural and urban poor. Whether planned or unplanned, the overarching migration pattern of the three countries in our study does not pose a palpable threat to their socio-political or socio-economic status quo. The majority of migrant workers and foreign brides are culturally and ethnically similar groups of Chinese (in Korea and Japan) and Vietnamese (in Taiwan). Furthermore, all three countries accept a large number of migrants of their own ethnic descendance from China (Korea and Taiwan) and South America (Japan). Therefore, it stands to reason that policy-makers prefer the assimilationist policy with a mixture of passive multiculturalism. Policies designed to implicitly foster assimilation, rather than hastily spread the morals of multiculturalism, reflect the perception that international migration could be managed better through absorption than through changing the mindset of the majority population.

Despite the governments’ assimilationist stance, the overall situation in East Asia shows increasing ethnic diversity and a rising level of contestation over migration governance. Japan’s situation demonstrates conflicting stories of progress and regression in regard to its diversity policy. Public idols like Yû Darvish, who represented Japan in the 2008 Olympics and the 2009 World Baseball Classics, enjoy a high degree of fame and wealth despite the fact that, in Yû’s case, his biological father is Iranian. However, a Mongolian sumo champion, Yokozuna Asashoryû, faced the cold shoulder from the hosting Japanese, despite his high level of linguistic and cultural assimilation into the mainstream. Yokozuna’s fate was to rise to the pinnacle of sumo wrestling, but be obliged eventually return to Mongolia after retirement. This alone makes it difficult for us to predict that Korea and Taiwan will fare better than Japan in terms of assimilation or political empowerment among new migrant groups. Falling short of government expectations, even co-ethnics from China (Korea and Taiwan) and South America (Japan) fail to assimilate culturally; thus the contested governance over international migrants is expected to continue into the foreseeable future.

**Conclusion**

This article has compared Japan, Korea and Taiwan in order to explore some of the theoretical and policy implications of their rapid demographic change and the attendant policies pertaining to international labour and marriage migrants. Ageing, fertility decline and sex imbalances have progressed simultaneously over the last three decades, with Japan the leader in setting the trend. We have dealt carefully with the thorny issue of whether these demographic transformations were linked to the subsequent migration explosion in East Asia in the last 20 years. Again, Japan paved the way for international marriages and labour migration. We found that the shortage of labour in the 3-D and SMI sectors was exacerbated by rapid changes in ageing and fertility. We also found that the bridal shortage was particularly salient among the
rural and urban poor, a pattern which was also aggravated by ageing and fertility decline.

We then put these findings into theoretical and policy contexts to determine how these demographic changes and migration patterns might have influenced policies of diversity in this region. We found that Japan, Korea and Taiwan exhibited differences in diversity policy and are still struggling to cope with troubling cases of human rights abuse, trafficking and racism in their efforts to institutionalise multiculturalism. We conclude that the new ethnic composition in East Asia after migration still favours assimilationist policies, because the main axis of new migrants is ethnically and culturally close to local hosts.

Future studies could implement both quantitative and qualitative research on the relationship between ethnic composition and policies of diversity. They could measure the impact of ethnic and cultural distance on policies of diversity and attempt to forecast the magnitude and degree of contestation against migration governance. We recognise that there is a clear need to address the problem of identifying factors which impede or facilitate mitigation during the process of assimilation or transition to multiculturalism between similar ethnic and cultural groups on the one hand and different ones on the other.

Acknowledgements

We thank Emiko Hatayama, Will Brett and Joon Kim for valuable assistance and suggestions.

Notes


[2] ‘3-D’ refers to those ‘dirty, dangerous and difficult’ jobs in manufacturing, agricultural and service sectors which native workers generally shun. The SMI sector is defined by the number of workers and the volume of production and capital. Asian Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) member-countries established slightly varying standards for each country in each industry. For Korea, manufacturing companies with fewer than 300 workers are considered to be small and medium businesses. Japan and Taiwan have similar standards.

[3] According to the Korea National Statistical Office (2008), France took 115 years—from an ageing society in 1864—to become an aged society in 1979. Italy took 61 years, Germany 40 and Japan 24; the US is projected to take 73 years (see Kim 2009).

[4] The Korean government increased penalties for doctors convicted of performing foetal sex detection and suspended the medical licences of eight physicians. The law was further strengthened in 1994, allowing the revocation of medical licences and even prison terms (East-West Center 1995).

[5] Low wages and inadequate labour protection were the key issues. In order to address flaws in the system, the Japanese government established the Japan International Training Cooperation Organization (JITCO) in 1991 and launched the Technical Internship Training Program.
for Foreigners (TITP) in 1993. These systems were temporary guestworker programmes based on the principle of rotating workers every two to five years.

The high divorce rate among middle-aged Japanese couples due to extramarital relationships, the husbands’ long-term foreign assignments and other socio-economic reasons has also boosted the trend of second marriages between divorced Japanese men and young foreign brides (Takeshita 2000).

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