Introduction

Is There an East Asian Model of Immigrant Incorporation?

I got permanent residence because my wife is Japanese. Of course, when I was interviewed – when I married her, there was an interview – they were asking me, "Are you trying to be citizen?" they were asking me. So I said, "No." And the immigration officer asked me, "Why did you say no?" "Because I can't be Tanaka," I told him. So what does it mean, [to be] Tanaka? . . . In Japan, unless your blood is Japanese, you are not recognized by society as a Japanese citizen even if you have a piece of paper [passport]. It's meaningless.

–Ethiopian focus group interview in Japan, April 24, 2010, Tokyo

I've never thought of it [naturalization]. I don't want to even think of it. We are Mongolian. I will think about it only if Korean blood flows in my body. We want to live as Mongolian.

–Mongolian focus group interview in South Korea, June 27, 2010, Seoul

A lot of people don't care whether you have a Taiwanese ID, but look at your accent, and think you're a foreigner or a Taiwanese citizen. Some TASAT [TransAsia Sisters Association in Taiwan] sisters get judged because of their skin color and their appearance.[1]

–Vietnamese focus group interview in Taiwan, January 20, 2013, Taipei

Since 2005, Japan, South Korea (hereafter "Korea"), and Taiwan have competed with each other – and with a handful of other Asian countries including Singapore and Macau – for the less-than-desirable distinction of having the world's fastest-aging population, lowest birthrate, and most rapidly shrinking workforce. In a 2001 report on replacement migration,

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[1] A Taiwanese identification card is equivalent to Taiwanese nationality.

the United Nations Population Division estimated that Japan would have to admit approximately 647,000 immigrants and Korea 129,000 immigrants annually in order to alleviate labor shortages and the fiscal burdens of rapidly growing elderly populations.[2] Based on similar population projections, Huguet (2003) estimates that Taiwan would need to admit approximately 43,000 immigrants annually. None of the three countries, however, has opened its borders to immigration at the level necessary to alleviate labor shortages. In 2017, foreign residents made up only about 2 percent of the total population in Japan, 3 percent in Taiwan, and approximately 4 percent in Korea, which is well below the recommended 30 percent outlined in the UN report.

Despite labor shortages from the 1980s and impending demographic crises in all three countries, immigration levels in Japan, Korea, and Taiwan are extremely low relative to each country's level of development.[3] They are thus often described as negative cases in comparative studies of immigration and citizenship (Bartram 2000; Seol and Skrentny 2009). To be sure, Japan, Korea, and Taiwan are traditional immigrant-sending countries that, until recently, had emigrant populations well exceeding their immigrant populations. Compared to their European counterparts that have experienced heightened immigration since the mid-1960s and 1970s, the three countries' recent encounters came much later, with the lion's share arriving from the late 1980s from other parts of Asia. Despite the continuing growth of foreign populations in each country, all three maintain highly restrictive immigration policies that prohibit or discourage the permanent settlement of foreign workers. Unlike North American and Western European countries with significant immigrant populations, no East Asian country grants family reunification rights to migrant laborers. All three countries, likewise, have descent-based citizenship policies that require native-born generations of immigrant descendants to undergo the formal process of naturalization in order to gain citizenship status, regardless of generation. In Japan and Korea, the extension of such descent-based policies has resulted in the growth of native-born foreign residents across six generations. And, as the quotes at

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[2] See United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, "Replacement Migration: Is It a Solution to Declining and Ageing Populations?" U.N. Doc. ST/ESA/SER.A/20, www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/publications/ageing/replacement-migration.asp.

[3] Because this book focuses on industrial democracies in East Asia, I will not include China in my analysis but the chapters that follow examine the significance of China's position as the major immigrant-sending country in Northeast Asia.

the beginning of this chapter highlight, nationality in each of these countries continues to be closely associated with ethnocultural identity.

Until the early 2000s, Korea, Japan, and Taiwan shared restrictive immigration policies, descent-based citizenship policies, and exclusionary practices toward immigrants. These analogous policies and practices, however, generated dramatically divergent patterns of immigrant incorporation from the mid-2000s. In Korea, the arrival of migrant labor generated centralized rights-based movements and, eventually, national-level rights-based legislation. In 2004, Korea opened its borders to unskilled workers with the implementation of the Employment Permit System (EPS) that gave foreign workers the same protections and rights as native Korean workers. In 2006, Korea became the first Asian country to grant local voting rights to foreign residents and, in 2010, Korea's National Assembly passed an unprecedented dual nationality bill. None of these developments occurred in Japan or Taiwan. Instead, in Japan, decentralized grassroots movements and partnerships between local governments and civil-society organizations generated an assortment of local services and programs for foreign residents that range from Japanese language classes, multilingual information distribution, and cultural exchange programs to consultation services, housing and employment assistance, and foreign resident assemblies. Although few structural reforms followed the arrival of recent immigrants, social welfare provisions for foreign residents already settled within Japan are among the most generous of industrial democracies. Finally, while Taiwan was the first among the three countries to implement a guestworker program in 1989, it has been the slowest in addressing immigrant rights and welfare, labor protections for migrant workers, and local support services for foreign residents.

How do we explain divergent patterns of immigrant incorporation in Japan, Korea, and Taiwan given the similarities between each country's immigration and citizenship policies, their overlapping immigrant populations, and their common dilemmas of accommodating social diversity while adhering to liberal democratic principles? Because Japan, Korea, and Taiwan maintained highly restrictive immigration policies throughout the 1980s and 1990s, immigrants within their borders were, for the most part, populations to be returned or expelled, not incorporated. Patterns of immigrant incorporation until the early 2000s, therefore, were not the products of deliberate decision-making by the Japanese, Korean, or Taiwanese states to manage immigrant *settlement*. While the dominant scholarship on immigrant incorporation has focused

on domestic political elites, international norms, and culture, this book shows the important role of civil-society actors – including migrants themselves – in giving voice to migrant interests, mobilizing migrant actors, and shaping public debate and policy on immigration.

This book explores how civil-society actors drew on existing ideas, networks, and strategies previously applied to incorporate historically marginalized populations – what I call *civic legacies* – to confront the challenges of immigrant incorporation in the absence of official immigrant incorporation programs at the national level. Rather than determining the paths available to later generations, civic legacies shape how civil-society actors make claims to the state, sway public opinion, organize activists, and build networks between and among state and non-state actors. We should thus expect to find that civil-society mobilization and advocacy for noncitizens mirror those applied to preceding generations of citizen women, workers, minorities, and others who have been historically denied full citizenship status and/or rights. In order to understand immigrant incorporation in a given country, we need to understand how previously excluded populations were incorporated into the body politic. As the first English-language monograph comparing three countries that represent a single model of immigrant incorporation in East Asia, this book proposes to shed light on the gaps between policy intent, interpretation, and outcomes.

Comparing three East Asian industrial democracies with overlapping citizenship and immigration policies, this book examines three levels of variation: (1) *cross-regional* differences between immigration and citizenship regimes in East Asia and those in Western industrial democracies; (2) *cross-national* variations between three countries with descent-based citizenship policies that are conventionally characterized as exclusionary in their policies toward immigrants; and (3) *intra-national* variations between immigration and citizenship policies and practices among different migrant sub-categories.

UNEARTHING OUR ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT IMMIGRANT INCORPORATION

The central goals of this book are three-fold. First, this book seeks to move the field of migration and citizenship studies forward by unearthing our assumptions about immigrant incorporation and citizenship and disentangling them from Eurocentric frameworks. Although I use the term,

"immigrants" to refer primarily to the first generation, "immigrant incorporation" can refer to policies and practices pertaining to multiple generations of foreign residents. Incorporation is thus equivalent to neither full legal membership as national citizens nor socio-cultural assimilation (see Chung 2010c: 677). And, as Hochschild and Mollenkopf (2009: 25) point out, this process is not necessarily "linear or temporally predictable," as it can be subject to reversal, or disincorporation. Examining immigrant political incorporation in countries with descent-based citizenship policies, moreover, forces us to take a more nuanced approach to understanding political incorporation. Because citizenship acquisition is neither procedural nor automatic at birth, these countries necessarily produce non-national residents who are multiple generations removed from their immigrant ancestry, thereby providing insights into political incorporation across generations. This book uses the terms "foreign residents" and "migrants" to refer generally to members of the foreign community, which may include native-born generations of immigrant descendants. Although the term "immigrant" is infrequently used in Korea, Japan, and Taiwan, I will use it as a heuristic tool to discuss the comparative scholarship on immigrant incorporation and immigrant advocacy groups.

Building on Tilly's (1996) transactional model, I define citizenship as a contested institution and cluster of practices negotiated by state and non-state actors that demarcate formal membership in a nation-state and its accompanying rights, statuses, and obligations. Viewed in this way, citizenship is more than a formal set of rights and privileges granted by the state; it is also a constantly changing, interactive, and local process that is contingent on formal paperwork, informal institutions, and everyday practices. References to "citizenship" and "citizen" in this book are based on this multifaceted definition; the terms "nationality" and "national" are used to refer exclusively to legal juridical membership in a nation-state.[4]

The dominant English-language scholarship on citizenship and immigration is based on case studies of advanced industrial democracies in North America and Europe and generally takes as a given that (1) citizenship policies and practices are consistent with basic liberal democratic

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[4] For simplification, I refer to policies and procedures pertaining to national membership as citizenship policies, citizenship attribution, citizenship acquisition, and so forth. I also use the terms "naturalized citizens," "non-resident citizens," and "dual citizenship" according to their commonly understood legal references.

tenets such as transparency, equality, individual rights, and universality; and (2) immigrant incorporation consists of a unidirectional process by which states integrate immigrants into the polity, with the assumption that naturalization is the primary indicator of political incorporation especially in the United States. The scope of citizenship in East Asia, however, underlines its relative, or contingent, character in contrast to the idealized universality of liberal citizenship. That is, the Marshallian (1950) trilogy of civil, social, and political rights reflects multiple struggles between the state and civil society rather than a universally bundled category. Japan, Korea, and Taiwan are late developers that underwent rapid economic growth from the ruins of war, transforming them, respectively, into the third (formerly second), eleventh, and twenty-first largest economies in the world (as of 2019). As I discuss in Chapter 2, the timing and context of their political economic development shaped the construction of their citizenship regimes that prioritized collective obligations toward the nation/state over individual rights to carry out the goals of modernization and rapid industrialization. Consequently, the rights associated with liberal democratic citizenship are not necessarily guaranteed for nationals in East Asia.

Second, an intra-regional comparison of countries with similar immigration and citizenship policies draws attention to the intermediary variables that facilitate or inhibit immigrant political incorporation and participation. While comparative studies of citizenship and immigration policies identify important differences between so-called ethnic, civic, and multicultural immigrant incorporation models (Brubaker 1992; Favell 1998; Howard 2009; Castles, Haas, and Miller 2014), scholarship on immigrant incorporation has found significant gaps between policy intent and social outcomes (Ireland 2003; Freeman 2004; Koopmans et al. 2005; Messina 2007; Hochschild and Mollenkopf 2009; Maxwell 2012; Koopmans and Michalowski 2017). Cross-national variations in patterns of immigrant incorporation between three seemingly similar cases, moreover, cannot be adequately explained by the central variables identified by the dominant scholarship – culture, political elites, and international norms.

The East Asian cases point to the significant roles played by meso-level organizations in shaping paths for immigrant incorporation and political empowerment, which raises questions about the conventional approach to understanding immigrant incorporation as a two-way relationship between the state and individual immigrants. This book defines "immigrant incorporation" as the process by which immigrants and their

descendants shift their status from sojourners to political participants who make claims as permanent members of their receiving societies. Because this book focuses on political incorporation, I pay special attention to how immigrants and their descendants move from being the objects of political mobilization and policymaking to political agents (see Messina 2007: 233). This book thus focuses on four areas to analyze immigrant incorporation: (1) immigrant self-identification and understandings of their membership in their receiving society; (2) immigrant claims-making; (3) immigrant incorporation policies, programs, and services as well as state-institutionalized rights; and (4) policy reforms.

Building on recent scholarship on East Asian industrial democracies, this book prioritizes the role played by civil society in immigrant incorporation. Applying Gellner's (1995: 32) definition, this book understands civil society as "that set of diverse non-governmental institutions, which is strong enough to counterbalance the state, and, whilst not preventing the state from fulfilling its role of keeper of the peace and arbitrator between major interests, can nevertheless prevent the state from dominating and atomizing the rest of society." While adhering to definitions that situate civil society between the state and the private sphere – and, more specifically, "sustained, organized social activity" that is voluntary in nature, organized in groups, and autonomous from the state and the market (Pharr 2003: 318; Schwartz and Pharr 2003: xiii) – this book does not abide by conceptions that make a democratic polity a precondition for civil society or that exclude protests from civil-society activity (see Kumar 1993; Koo 2002; Howard 2003). Instead, I consider the role played by civil-society organizations during democratic transitions, consolidation, and revitalization operating both inside and outside a bounded legal order (cf. Diamond 1994; Ekiert and Kubik 1999).

Rather than assume a unified response from either the state *or* civil society to current immigration challenges, I argue that immigrant incorporation patterns are the products of interaction between recent immigration and the civic legacies of previous struggles for democratic inclusion in a given polity. Civic legacies can serve as invaluable sources of moral authority, networks, and strategies for migrant advocacy but can also pose major constraints depending on the *fit* between the content of migrant claims and past or ongoing struggles for democratic inclusion, the *relationship* between pro-migrant advocates and vanguard groups in civil society, and the *timing* of migrant advocacy vis-à-vis the organization of vanguard groups in civil society and their level of penetration in the

state (see also Abers and Keck 2013; Fishman 2017; Arrington and Moon 2020).

Finally, this book sheds light on intra-national gaps between exclusionary policies and inclusionary outcomes, on the one hand, and intra-national variations in patterns of immigrant incorporation among different subcategories of migrants, on the other. Contrary to what we would expect to find in cases that are characterized as representing exclusionary models of immigrant incorporation, citizenship rights for specific categories of foreign residents in East Asian democracies are relatively generous and, in some areas such as local voting rights in Korea and foreign resident assemblies in Japan, surpass those in industrial democracies with more liberal immigration and citizenship policies. Indeed, as debates about the viability of multiculturalism have intensified in Europe, North America, and Australia, multiculturalism – as a catchword and as a series of policies and programs – has gained increasing popularity among policymakers and the public alike in East Asian democracies. Nevertheless, the *differentiated* incorporation of specific migrant categories – for example, migrant workers, co-ethnic migrants, and so-called marriage migrants – has created hierarchies of noncitizens, each with their own sets of rights, privileges, and duties. Examining subnational variations in countries where noncitizens range from migrant workers ineligible for permanent settlement to native-born foreign residents who are generations removed from their immigrant ancestry complicates our understanding of immigrant incorporation. Not only is the process of incorporation non-linear but, depending on the terms of the migrant's legal status and/or visa category, it may also be permanently static – in the case of visas that are non-renewable and/or do not allow for changes in legal statuses – or subject to reversal when migrants can no longer fulfill their duties (for example, due to divorce for female migrants who entered as spouses of a national). When visa categories are attached to specific identities and/or ascriptive criteria, the process of incorporation may be circumscribed to the visa status itself instead of to the receiving society such that marriage migrant visa holders are "incorporated" when they have become "proper" Korean wives and mothers, for example. In some cases, "incorporation" may simply refer to a legal status that is not (relatively) precarious (Chung 2019a).

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this project is to provide a critical account of how state policies and mediating institutions shape choices for immigrant political

incorporation and empowerment. Examining three industrial democracies in Northeast Asia with overlapping immigration and citizenship policies, immigrant populations, and immigration histories, this book offers insights into the gaps between state policies and immigrant political behavior across similarly situated countries. In addition to comparing policy reforms, state-institutionalized rights for migrants, and immigrant incorporation policies, programs, and services, this project seeks to better understand the *process* of political incorporation through the lens of migrants themselves.

Accordingly, this project is based on a combination of over 150 in-depth interviews with migrants, pro-migrant activists, and government officials; twenty-eight focus groups with the major migrant communities in each country; and archival research conducted over a thirty-one-month period from 2009 to 2016 in the greater Tokyo, Seoul, and Taipei metropolitan areas, where the largest proportion of the total foreign population in each country resides. As large metropolitan areas with established foreign communities, each of these sites has combinations of mainstream institutions and NGOs/NPOs that address the needs of recent immigrants as well as ethnic organizations that have historically represented the interests of established foreign and/or ethnic communities. In Japan, the focus groups consisted of migrants from the Korean peninsula, mainland China, the Philippines, Brazil, Peru, Bangladesh, and Ethiopia; in Korea, participants were nationals of mainland China, Taiwan, Vietnam, the Philippines, Mongolia, and Myanmar; and, in Taiwan, participants consisted of migrants from Vietnam, Indonesia, Thailand, and the Philippines (see Appendixes C and D). Further details about the project's methodology are discussed in Appendix A. To my knowledge, no other study has utilized original focus group data of multiple foreign communities in Japan, Korea, and Taiwan.

The Immigrant Incorporation in East Asian Democracies (IIEAD) Project, archived by the Johns Hopkins University Data Management Services, contains the original transcripts and English translations of 16 focus groups from the study: eight conducted in Japan and eight in Korea.[5] The focus group transcripts from Taiwan are not included in the IIEAD

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[5] See Erin Aeran Chung, et al. 2015. Immigrant Incorporation in East Asian Democracies (IIEAD) Project: Focus Group Interviews in Japan [collection]. Version 1. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Data Archive. http://dx.doi.org/10.7281/T1PN93HH; Erin Aeran Chung, et al. 2015. Immigrant Incorporation in East Asian Democracies (IIEAD) Project: Focus Group Interviews in South Korea [collection]. Version 1. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Data Archive. http://dx.doi.org/10.7281/T1JW8BSS.

collection due to their sensitive nature.[6] In order to ensure the confidentiality of the focus group participants, all personal identifiers have been removed from the transcripts in the IIEAD collection, including participants' names, self-introductions at the beginning of the focus groups, and informal conversations that either contained personal information or that were between participants and not meant to be directed at the group.

The focus groups were important for identifying patterns of political mobilization, political socialization, and attitudes about the state and local communities across immigrant generations, national origin groups, gender, age, and legal status. The method is especially useful for stimulating deep discussion of various concepts and opinions through critical engagement, elaboration, and debate. In a small group setting, participants can build upon one another's responses with their own questions and concepts, in their own vocabulary (Barbour and Kitzinger 1999; Bloor et al. 2001; Barbour 2007; Carey and Asbury 2016). As Barbour and Kitzinger (1999: 4) point out, focus groups are not simply group interviews because group *interaction* is part of the method: "Instead of asking questions of each person in turn, focus group researchers encourage participants to talk to one another: asking questions, exchanging anecdotes, and commenting on each others' experiences and points of view." The interaction between participants helps researchers to pinpoint shared understandings and controversial areas and illuminates the ways that social interaction shapes individual perceptions and opinions.

Each focus group (except for those in Taiwan as I explain in Chapter 4) was made up of four to eight participants and ran for one to three hours. Whenever possible, we conducted the focus groups in the respective organization's office or community space. All of the focus group interviews were conducted either in the native languages of the target migrant groups or in the dominant language of the country of residence.

OVERVIEW OF THE BOOK

The chapters to follow explore the interaction between recent immigration in East Asia and the civic legacies of previous struggles to

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[6] Many of the focus group interviews in Taiwan were conducted with caregivers who were not able to take time off from their employment in order to participate. We thus conducted a number of informal focus group interviews at parks and hospitals in the presence of the elderly and/or convalescent patients for whom they were responsible. See Chapter 4 for more details.