CRITICAL ISSUES ON FORCED MIGRATION STUDIES AND THE REFUGEE CRISIS IN SOUTHEAST ASIA[1]

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Abstrak

Artikel ini adalah sebuah review tentang diskursus yang berkembang mengenai migrasi terpaksa di Asia Tenggara. Dengan berakhirnya periode Perang Dingin, mobilitas penduduk memasuki sebuah era ketidakpastian yang baru. Perang antarnegara telah menghasilkan para pengungsi yang sebagian mencari tempat yang aman di negara-negara tetangga atau bermukim di daerah perbatasan. Dalam kondisi keamanan semacam ini, studi-studi tentang mobilitas penduduk sudah semestinya beranjak dari kerangka berpikir dan paradigma lama, yang umumnya bertolak dari teori-teori modernisasi. Meningkatnya jumlah penduduk yang melakukan migrasi terpaksa, yang dalam banyak kasus disebabkan oleh kegagalan negara dalam menyelesaikan konflik-konflik politiknya, merupakan tantangan kritis bagi studi migrasi konvensional yang umumnya tidak menganggap penting faktor politik dan keamanan dalam analisis-analisisnya. Biasanya, secara akademis, migrasi terpaksa dibedakan ke dalam tiga kelompok, berdasarkan alasan yang menyebabkannya: konflik, pembangunan, dan bencana alam. Di Asia Tenggara, konflik internal yang melahirkan IDPs dan pengungsi, yang kemudian bermukim di daerah perbatasan atau negara tetangga, sering kali merupakan akibat dari pertentangan antara elite politik atau faksi-faksi yang berbeda dalam pemerintahan, yang kemudian mengimbas pada ketegangan masyarakat di tingkat akar rumput. Artikel ini mengemukakan bahwa diperlukan sebuah cara pandang baru yang tidak lagi bersifat Eropa sentries untuk memahami keterkaitan migrasi-pembangunan-keamanan di Asia Tenggara. Kegagalan rezim internasional dalam menanggapi isu-isu kritis dan krisis pengungsi, juga mencerminkan kegagalan kerja sama internasional dalam membangun kerangka kerja regional yang bisa diandalkan untuk menangani masalah pengungsi dan IDPs.

Kata kunci: Konflik politik, migrasi terpaksa, kerangka regional

This article reviews the recent discourse on forced migration in Southeast Asia. In the aftermath of the Cold War era, movements of people have entering a new predicament. The interstate wars have produced displaced populations that many have spill into the neighboring countries

or oscillating within border areas. In these new political circumstances, studies on population movement shall move beyond the conventional theoretical framework, derives from the modernization theories. The increasing magnitude of forced displacement, in many instances resulted from the state's failures in resolving political conflicts, critically challenges the conventional study on migration in which politics and security, often neglected. From a narrow academic perspective, displaced people is divided into three broad groups, based on the major cause of displacement: violent conflicts, development and natural disasters. In Southeast Asia, internal conflict that produced internally displaced population and refugees that fill or cross the state borders, is often resulted from elite's conflict or conflict between different factions in the national government, that in turn produce tensions in the society at the grassroots levels. This article argues that the need for a new perspective beyond Eurocentric framework is needed to analyze unfolding events related to migration-development-security nexus in Southeast Asia. The failure of existing international refugee regime to contain the critical issues and the refugee crises in the region mirror the failure of regional cooperation in Southeast Asia to develop a viable regional framework to tackle the problem of refugee and the displaced population.

Keyword: Political conflict, force migration, regional framework

MIGRATION STUDIES AND THE DISPLACED POPULATION

In the field of migration studies there seems to be a broad division between people who move in response to economics and those moving in conjunction with politics. People who move for economic reasons are normally called migrants while people that move for political reasons are called refugees, asylum seekers or simply labeled displaced people. Economic migration is also often named voluntary migration and the movement of people that is related to political reasons – which often involve violence – is called involuntary or forced migration. The categorization of migration behaviour is a product of an interaction between academics and the state and non-state institutions that are working in various areas concerned with the geographical movements of people. The distinction between economics and politics as separate realms and causes for migration however, reflects an academic simplification of the blurred and complex nature of human movements. Recently, population displacement resulting from forced migration has become the crux of public attention. The displaced population affects those uprooted; the communities that feel the impact of their arrival, governments and the international agencies which increasingly play a major role in dealing with displacement.

There is no doubt that forced migration constitutes a multi dimensional phenomenon with multifaceted development which occurred in different historical trajectories. Forced migration has attracted different views and perspectives from different scholarly disciplines and practical interests. Forced migrations have a strong attraction for state and non-state practitioners as the phenomena of displaced people

calls upon immediate humanitarian assistance to safeguard the lives and normalize the devastated livelihood of the displaced. Stephen Castles argues that forced migration as an interdisciplinary field of social sciences should be seen as an integral part of the relationship between poor and rich countries in the current context of globalization and social transformation.[2] This implies that forced migration is not just a product of internal wars and local impoverishment but is also closely linked to the fundamental economic and political structures and processes of the contemporary world. The consequence for forced migration studies, according to Stephen Castles, is therefore an urgent need to understand the relationship between the local and global in every specific displacement situation.

While movements of people have existed for as long as human beings, the meanings and implications have been constantly redefined following the way human beings are organized and reorganized. In a thought provoking address the Association for Asian Studies (AAS) President, David Ludden, succinctly illustrated how human movement is often perceived in relation to the changing construction of modern nation-states.[3] According to Ludden: *Modernity consigned human mobility to the dusty dark corners of archives that document the hegemonic space of national territorialism. As a result, we imagine that mobility is border crossing, as though borders came first, and mobility, second. The truth is more the other way around.* As we see today, the State borders are no longer meant to be a fortress to protect us from external threats or to exclude invading armies but more to keep out economic migrants from stealing our peaceful life and exclusive welfare.

There are three dimensions involved in the act of human movement, namely its spatial, social and temporal dimensions. The spatial dimension is related to the territorial boundaries that are crossed. In modern times, these have taken the form of politico-administrative boundaries (villages, districts, provinces, prefectures, counties, states, countries, nation-states, regional groupings of nation states, i.e. EU, ASEAN, APEC, NAFTA) or political, economic and cultural constructions of geographical space (poor and rich countries, south and north countries, east and west, socialist and liberal democratic countries, developing, developed and industrial countries, Pacific Rim countries, etc). A distinct migratory pattern can be designated based on the period of time in particular groups of countries that constitute a combination of sending and receiving countries that at a certain stage of development have established a distinctive migration system. Several categories have been created in conjunction with the characteristic of the boundary that is crossed. Conventionally, movements within a particular country are categorized as internal migration, whilst movements that cross the boundaries of nation states are categorized as international migration.

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[2] Castles, Stephen 2004, Introduction to the Study of Forced Migration in *Collection of Global Course Syllabi Relating to Internally Displaced Persons.* The Brookings-SAIS Project on Internally Displaced Persons.
[3] David Ludden 2003, 'Presidential Address: Maps in the Mind and the Mobility of Asia'

Castles, for example, introduces the idea of migration systems to integrate factors in an overarching conceptual framework, which facilitates analysis of the interactions which shape each specific migratory process.[4] Such an approach implies a notion of the embedding of migration in broader processes of economic, demographic, social, cultural and political changes. Migration in this view can be seen as an integral part of globalization and social transformation. The key indicator of globalization is the rapid increase in *cross-border flows* of all sorts: finance, trade, ideas, pollution, media products and people. The key organizing structure for all these flows is the *transnational network*, which can take the form of transnational corporations, global markets, international organizations, global criminal syndicates or transnational cultural communities. Flows of capital and commodities are generally welcomed by the holders of economic and political power, but immigration and cultural differences are seen as potential threats to national sovereignty and identity. Yet the reality is that population mobility is inextricably linked to other types of cross-border flows. An example of the migration system is the movement of labour – mostly female domestic workers - from South and Southeast Asian countries to the Middle East. The migration system that occurs between the rich countries in Europe and the sending countries in Africa, the Middle East and South Asia can be different from the migration system in East Asian countries where economic factors seem more important than politics as underlying reasons for migration behaviours. The contemporary migration in the Americas also has different characteristics from the European and East Asian systems.[5]

The social dimension is always embedded in the act of human movement because migration in itself is a social behaviour that concerns an act of a human being within his or her social environment. The social environment of migration is interpreted broadly as involving economics, politics and culture. An act of human movement is therefore always a movement within the economic, political and cultural environments. The last dimension of migration is a temporal dimension. Every movement is always a movement in a particular time in history. Although the act of movement tends to be confined into human movement within a geographical space, it could imply a movement

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[4] Castles, Stephen 2000, 'Migration as a factor in social transformation in East Asia', paper resented to a Conference on Migration and Development, Princeton University, 4-6 May 2000.
[5] Under the auspices of the International Union for the Scientific Study of Population, Douglas Massey et.al., produced a comprehensive study on international migration in 1998. In this study a number of migration experts were appointed to review both the theories and evidence in all regions. The study could be seen as representing the latest state of the arts of migration studies from the conventional approaches of locating migration from the spatio-geographical perspectives. Douglas S. Massey et.al 1998, *Worlds in Motion: Understanding International Migration at the End of the Millennium.* For a recent view on international migration see the Report published at the end of 2005 by the Global Commission on International Migration (GCIM) that covers whole continents and several strategic issues, see www.gcim.org. International migration and human movements at the global level and other recent world development reports, such as the 2005 Human Development Report by the UNDP and World Social Development by the ILO; all pointing to the importance of global interconnections in which cross-border movements have significantly been taking a leading role.

that might not involve the notion of space in a geographical sense but in a socio-cultural sense. In the last ten years or so migration studies have significantly been influenced by post-modernist approaches that look at migration as social constructions that evolved within the process of globalization. In this new research direction – mostly advocated by human geographers, sociologists and anthropologists – migration studies are no longer isolated in their conventional spatial location but located in the wider perspective of the politics of space.[6] In conjunction with these new perspectives on the study of migration, the globalization of human movement has been considered as one of the important elements in the process of de-territorializing the world - those circumstances that are sometimes popularly called 'a borderless world.' Other important new terms in the globalization literature resulting from the significant role of human movement in the process of transcending nationalities and different cultures are trans-nationalism and cosmopolitanism in which the post-Westphalian notions of the state and its sovereignty are perceived as obsolete.[7]

A new perspective beyond the conventional Eurocentric framework and approach should therefore be explored and formulated to explain the increasingly interconnected migration-security-development issues that are unfolded in the Asian region. As migration is a multidimensional notion, it is not surprising that it is a subject that has been studied in many academic disciplines, most notably, demography, geography, sociology and economics. The literature on migration is therefore spread across many fields. It is thus important to bear in mind that migration can be perceived in an eclectic mode that goes beyond any single discipline. Yet we should also make very clear that specific disciplinary studies of migration are very useful in our understanding of this crucial human behaviour that any efforts in this field should not be discouraged. Migration essentially remains very much the exception rather than the rule of human behaviour. An overwhelmingly higher number of people stay at home than those who migrate.

Why then does international migration suddenly loom so large on the international policy agenda? According to Kathleen Newman, the Director of Migration Policy Institute in New York, much of the answer lies in the domestic politics of migrant-receiving countries.[8] A contributing factor is the abrupt demographic transition that

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[6] Emerging topics such as diasporas, citizenship and transnational communities are very prominent, e.g. Van der Veer, Peter (ed) 1995, The Politics of Space in the South Asian Diaspora and Portes, Alejandro 1995, 'Transnational Communities: Their Emergence and Significance in the Contemporary World-System' in Faist, Thomas 1999, *Transnationalization in International Migration: Implications for the Study of Citizenship and Culture*.

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[8] Newman, Kathleen 2003, 'Migration as a Factor in Development and Poverty Reduction', *Migration Information Source*, 1 June 2003.

the major countries of destination are going through while another element is concerned about the consequences of human-capital flight. These and other factors add up to a heightened consciousness about the importance of studying migration as a force of globalization and economic change.

The movement of people across geographical space whether individually or collectively can be self-motivated (voluntary) or a result of particular circumstances that forced them to move. In migration literature an act of involuntary movement is also known as forced migration. The circumstances that prompt an act of forced migration can be ecological, social, economic or political. Political reasons for migration are particularly relevant to security issues as traditionally conceived by the field of refugee and security studies. A body of knowledge established under the rubric of refugee studies partly resulted from the need to find viable solutions to the burgeoning numbers of dislocated people after the end of World War II – particularly in Europe. According to Newman (2003: 5-6) the convention relating to the status of refugees was initially a temporary arrangement established in the context of Cold War politics that centred on a Western manoeuvre to undermine the Communist State by assisting people seeking refuge from the Communist countries. A conceptual challenge to the conventional understanding of refugees, which is confined to people forced out of their countries for political reasons, is the increasing number of people who are displaced within their own countries – the so called 'internally displaced people' or IDPs – that greatly outnumber refugees and asylum seekers.

The critical issues brought about by the plight of the IDPs, while humanitarian in nature, have further implications in relation to the legal systems that operate at the international level, especially concerning the mandate of the UNHCR. As Castles[9] also notes, since the 1980s, there has been a dramatic increase in the frequency and severity of humanitarian crises in many parts of the world. Such developments have led to criticisms of the arrangements that exist at the international levels to deal with forced migration. The international refugee regime developed in the context of the post-1945 mass population displacement and the beginnings of the Cold War. There has been considerable change in the post-Cold War period and critics argue that some of the basic assumptions and structures no longer meet current needs. This has led to constant debates about the need for reform. According to Castles the international refugee regime consists of a set of *legal instruments*, a number of *institutions* designed to protect and assist refugees and a set of *international norms* concerning the treatment of refugees. The core of the regime is the 1951 United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, which defines who is officially a refugee and what rights such people should have. The most important institution is the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) but many other international organizations also play a part. Many intergovernmental agencies are involved, including the World Food Program (WFP), the United Nations Development Program (UNDP),

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[9] Castles, Stephen 2004, 'Global Perspectives on Forced Migration'.

the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). In addition, hundreds of NGOs play a key role. These include, for instance, the Save the Children Fund, OXFAM, the International Rescue Committee and Médecins Sans Frontières. States and their appropriate agencies as well as national humanitarian organizations may also be seen as part of the regime.

Recently, another kind of forced migration is entering the migration literature: Migration where movement is a result of development programs or 'development induced displacement' or DID's. The argument proposed for the inclusion of the so-called 'development induced migration' is most clearly articulated by Michael Cernea, who joined the World Bank in 1974 as its first in-house sociologist and worked as the Bank's Senior Adviser for Sociology and Social Policy until 1997. His books, among others, *Resettlement and Development* (1998) and *The Economics of Involuntary Resettlement: Questions and Challenges* (1999) are the most comprehensive references on this topic. This perspective represents the World Bank's response to criticisms about the destructive impact of its population resettlement projects under which people have been displaced by World Bank-funded development of big dams in developing countries. The World Bank and the IMF are the most important financial organisations that represent the interest in the rich Western industrialised countries to provide financial and technical-economic assistance in many developing countries. It is through these financial organisations that 'globalization' has a clear and direct impact on most of the Third World population and in turn in the making of the burgeoning numbers of displaced people in this part of the world.

IMPOSING SECURITY AND MIGRATION-DEVELOPMENT NEXUS

Approaching the 21st century the vast changing global political context has produced new challenges to the conventional notion of state sovereignty in the forms of non-traditional security threats. These threats operate both globally and regionally. They range from terrorism and arms smuggling to human and drug trafficking.[10] They threaten individuals and societies, as well as states. At present, security has apparently fused intricately to migration and development in a way that the magnitude and repercussion perhaps have no historical precedent. Security provides a setting and context in which migration and development are being conceptually reframed. State sovereignty is no longer perceived as a viable framework through which to respond to the new challenges embedded within the process of globalization. In the last decade a

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[10] The spread of diseases, such as HIV/AIDS, SARS, Mad Cow Disease and Bird Flu, across nation-state boundaries particularly through human movements could be considered as one of the non-traditional security threats. Richard Holbrook, former US Ambassador to the UN, in his article in *The New York Times*, 10 February 2004, provocatively argues that AIDS will be the ultimate weapon of mass destruction if its vast spread cannot be properly checked.

discussion on the need to shift the centre of security discourse from the state and the military to the notion of human security has seriously emerged. This reflects the on-going negotiation between scholars and policymakers as well as newly emerging transnational advocacy networks in developed countries in search of a new response to the challenges of the post-Cold War period.

As we enter the twenty first century, we are witnessing an alignment of security, development and migration issues in a more transparent and dynamic way than before. The terrorist attack on the World Trade Center on 11 of September 2001, while certainly a very tragic event, has no doubt provided a galvanising impetus for scholars working on security related migration issues – in particular, in the field of refugee studies – to seek a better and new understanding of the dynamics in the relationship between migration and security. The conventional conception of security, concerned mainly with the security of the state, is largely a political construct based mainly on Western European experience.[11] This heavily state-centred construction is currently under challenge as the architecture of the world order changed profoundly following the end of the Cold War. This new structure is marked by the explosion of violent ethnic conflicts in fragile and failed states, the Israel-Palestine dispute, the Gulf War, and Al Qaeda attacks on US embassies, the WTC and the Pentagon which prompted the declaration of a War on Terrorism and the following military attacks and occupation of Afghanistan and Iraq by the United States and its Western allies.

Power relations are a crucial underlying determinant in the bipolar world order of the Cold War era. Modernization theories became mainstream ideology in the social sciences and humanities in the 1960s, while flowing into the poor countries through developmental aid packages delivered by the rich Western-liberal countries in order to stop those poor countries from falling into the hands of the Socialist-Communist bloc. In this bipolar world, development as an ideology as well as developmental aid packages can be seen as part of the security strategy framework of the Western liberal countries. Chimni[12], an International Law Expert, critically views the power relations between rich and poor countries by framing the policy regimes in the migration-development discourse into three 'policy logics'. By 'policy logic', he means the assumption underlying sets of interrelated interventions by migrant-sending countries, migrant-receiving countries and international organizations, which in aggregate may be designed as

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[11] Among the recent material on this theme is a publication by the United Nations University Press 2003, Refugees and Forced Displacement: International Security, Human Vulnerability, and the State. This book is directly focussing the analysis on the posssible role of refugees and forced displacement – two forms of involuntary human mobility – on state and international security. A chapter on the discussion of human security by Astri Suhrke represents a new discourse on the security studies that attempts to shift the conventional security discourse from the state to the people, is particularly interesting.

[12] Chimmi, B.S 2002, 'Aid, relief and containment: The first asylum country and beyond', Expert Working Paper, prepared for the Centre for Development Research study Migration-Development Links: Evidence and Policy Options, Copenhagen, Denmark.

'migration-development regimes'. The emerging policy regimes challenge the existing separation of policies and lack of policy coherence. Policymakers recognize that migration and development are linked but maintain the separation between the migration policy and the development policy. Under this logic, aid, is, and should be, directed only to the explicit objectives of poverty reduction, democratization, sustainable development and gender equality. Interventions towards these goals take no account of the impact on migration, whether positive or negative. At the same time, migration policy takes minimal account of the development needs of migrant-sending countries, though there might be some recognition of the impact of the brain drain and the needs related to repatriation, for example. Interaction between development and migration policy is therefore limited to where the interventions associated with them overlap, as in the case of highly skilled migrant and refugee outflows from poor countries in conflict.[13]

Security is basically a state of being in which an individual or a community – or even a country – feels free from any fear or threat. Feelings of security - or insecurity - are related both to the physical as well as the psychological well being. According to Johan Galtung, security is one of the basic human needs, like food, air and freedom.[14] As a basic need, security is therefore essential for the existence of human beings. Communities and countries also need security in order to function effectively as human organizations. As a state of being, security both for an individual and a community can be achieved by various means - migration and development among them. Development or migration, however, can also create insecurity for the individual or community. The term 'development-induced migration' is used to describe situations in which people are evacuated and resettled as the impact or the consequence of a development project, such as the construction of a big dam. This is a clear example of how development can create insecurity in people and communities.[15] While people's security might not be in danger in this situation, compared to violent conflict situations, insecurity can be experienced because relocation is not always carried out in a peaceful manner. In many instances, unfair compensation for land and property left behind creates distrust and a feeling of being exploited, which lead to open conflict with government officials.

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[13] According to Chimmi, the three migration-development regimes and related policy logics are: 1. Closure and containment, aimed at control of migrants and refugees; 2. Selectivity towards immigrati on and development support; and 3. Liberalisation and transnationalism in the fields of labour mobility, diaspora activities and refugee protection.

[14] Galtung provided a thought provoking talk in a workshop on 'Human Security and Area Studies', organised by the Research Institute of Languages and Cultures of Asia and Africa, in Tokyo, 10 January 2004. According to Galtung the discussion on human security in fact started when the UN introduced the concept of basic human needs but this concept has lost its significance as many states are not interested in moving toward more fancy concepts, such as sustainable development and later to human security. Yet, this human security concept, according to Galtung, is again made irrelevant in the wake of the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq that reflects the fragility of human security in the face of violence committed by strong states towards people in weak states.

[15] Michael Cernea terms the people affected by development projects as 'development oustees', Cernea, M 1996, 'Bridging the Research Divide: Studying Development Oustees'.

Additionally, the new settlement is often not properly prepared, creating feelings of uncertainty amongst relocated people about their future.[16] This 'development-induced migration' is perhaps the clearest example of the nexus of migration, development and human security that occur within a sovereign state.

An important feature in Security Studies is the perception of threat that arouses feelings of insecurity. These threats can be real or imaginary. In most cases the perceived or imaginary threats – that bring with them potential or probable consequences – can be immediately transformed into real threats when the impact of the threat is felt or experienced. The task of security analysis is to assess the probability of the transformation of perceived threat into real threat. The notion of perception is becoming very important in security assessment, because what is perceived as a security threat very much depends on the various factors that influence the perception. This can be different from one person, a group of people, a community or state to another. They can be related to differences in individual characteristics or personal preferences and interests, such as age, sex and education; or differences in the features of the communities such as economic structures and class, political ideologies, social norms and values, religion and faith, historical experiences and with differences in cultural backgrounds in general.

Security is conventionally understood as the security of the state or country in relation to the real or perceived threat from another state or country.[17] Recently, the vocabulary of security has been greatly expanded to include human security and homeland security as well as territorial security. So-called traditional security threats have been added to by new forms of threats that are defined as non-traditional in nature. While Asian scholars and governments move toward these new security discourses and practices, governments of Western industrialized nations tend to be preoccupied with conventional notions of security, including the influx of refugees and asylum seekers which they see as threatening the tranquil and affluent life of their citizens. Yet as the process of globalization has simultaneously eroded the state's sovereignty and fostered an emerging awareness of global citizenship, scholars have begun to seriously question the fundamental principles of various policies and regulations concerning refugees and asylum seekers that are knocking at the door of the rich-industrialized countries. Mervyn Frost, for instance, strongly argues from the ethical

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[16] The development of big dams in India (Narmada Valley), Indonesia (Kedung Ombo) and China (Three Gorges) funded by the financial loans from the World Bank are cases in point. *The Economist*, 19 November 1999, 'Water power in Asia: The dry facts about dams'. Also a recent article by W. Courtland Robinson, 'Minimizing Development Induced Displacement', *Migration Information Source*, published by MPI (Migration Policy Institute), January, 2004. Another scholar, Stephen Castles (2003) calls the people who were displaced by development as 'development displacees'.

[17] For useful reference on the impact on globalization on security in East Asia before the event of 11 September, 2001 see among others, Peter Van Ness 'Globalization and Security in East Asia', in *Asian Perspective*, vol. 23, no. 4, 1999: 315-342.

point of view, that migrants (ranging from tourists to asylum seekers) have the right to move about globally.[18] He also argues that migrants who have had their citizenship eroded in their home states ought to be seen not as supplicants deserving charity but as people *whom we need to establish as citizens in democratic free states in order to secure our freedom*. Significantly, Frost's arguments highlight the ethical flaws underlying the assumptions of most Western countries' current policies and regulations on immigration. However, it is still beyond imagination that his arguments will be adopted in the near future because national interests still prevail in most developed countries.

It is very interesting therefore, to observe the policy direction of many Asian countries that quickly adopted the so-called non-traditional security concept. The political gestures of the governments of Asian countries reflect their eagerness in realizing their new security approach, for example, the joint declaration of Chinese Premier Zhu Rongji and ASEAN leaders on cooperation in the field of non-traditional security issues during the Sixth China-ASEAN Summit in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, on 4 November 2002. This change reflects the responses of security experts towards the changing architecture of international as well as transnational relations particularly after the Cold War and the Al Qaeda attack on the US on 11 September 2001. It is very clear that the 11 September attacks have drastically shifted the American conception of national security, a change which has had a profound impact on the perceived architectures of world or global security, shifting further away from traditional or conventional perceptions of security and threat.[19]

The discourse on security is closely related to the discourse about violence and therefore also about peace. Peace is the ultimate state of being where insecurity and violence are absent. In his discourse of violence, Johan Galtung differentiates between what he calls personal and structural violence. According to Galtung, we should refer the type of violence where there is an actor who commits the violence as personal or direct, and to violence where there is no such actor as structural or indirect. There may not be any person who directly harms another person in the structure. The violence is built into the structure and shows up as unequal power and consequently as unequal life chances.[20] Galtung's conception of violence as an indication of the absence of

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[18] Frost, Mervyn 2003, 'Thinking ethically about refugees: A case for the transformation of global governance', in Edward Newman and Joanne van Selm (eds.), *Refugees and Forced Displacement: International Security, Human Vulnerability, and the State*, United Nations University Press, Tokyo: 109-129.

[19] The change in American perceptions and attitudes towards security has meant that threat assessment, proactive law enforcement and risk management have been augmented so as to eliminate as much vulnerability as conceivable. This new, expansive philosophy began to take shape immediately after the September 11 attacks and has culminated in the creation of the Department of Homeland Security. Stevenson, Jonathan 2003, 'How Europe and America Defend Themselves', *Foreign Affairs*, March-pril 2003: 78. The 9/11 terrorist attack apparently forced the return of heavily state centred security approaches as clearly shown by the US on various new regulations related to the war on terror.

[20] Galtung, Johan 1969, 'Violence, Peace, and Peace Research', *Journal of Peace Research* 6,: 170-171.

peace is useful in relation to a conception of security that is more people-centred. In this regard, the new jargon of human security does not in fact provide any new understanding as far as the concept of violence and peace is concerned. In a very useful discussion on human security, Astri Suhrke persuasively argues that as a social construct 'human security' is open to multiple interpretations and those promoting it are still struggling to formulate an authoritative and consensual definition.[21] Suhrke suggests that if the aim is to build a normative and policy-oriented model that places the interest of the displaced population at the centre, a better starting point is 'vulnerability' that does not evoke the same conflicting connotation as 'security'.[22]

REFUGEE CRISIS AND THE FAILURE OF REGIONAL COOPERATION IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

In a criticism of the conventional approaches to the study of Southeast Asia, Jan Aart Scholte (1997: 29) argues that this region should be seen within a context of world relations.

... [G]lobalization has been a primary fact of contemporary history in insular Southeast Asia, deeply affecting the politics, economics, culture, psychology, and ecology of the population. The growth of global networks of social relations has been most pronounced in recent decades, but the trend can be traced back at least to the middle of the nineteenth century. The Malay-Indonesian world, for example, does not today exist, and indeed has never existed, apart from wider world interconnections. The student of Modern Island Southeast Asia, therefore, faces a task of discovering and assessing the interlinkages between international, national, and local circumstances that have shaped the course of social history in this region. Scholte (1997: 30) who further argues:

This blind spot in the study of island Southeast Asia appears to reflect the power of one of the main structures of contemporary global social relations: namely the nationality principle. As noted earlier, concurrently with the trend of globalization over the past century and more, social life in this region, again taking an example of the Malay-Indonesian world, has also become heavily nationalized. That is, at the same time that global interconnections have intensified

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[21] Suhrke, Astri 2003, 'Human security and the protection of refugees', in Edward Newman and Joanne van Selm (eds.), *Refugees and Forced Displacement: International Security, Human Vulnerability, and the State*, United Nations University Press, Tokyo: 100.

[22] It should be noted that the concept of human security was first introduced by a task force led by the Canadian Foreign Affairs Minister that focused on the freedom from fear but since 1997 has been re-conceptualized – mostly by Asian countries – into the freedom from want. The idea of human security rapidly attracted many interpretations and there was practically no consensus on its fundamental conception. Among the good reviews on the contending perspectives of human security can be seen, for example, Kanti Bajpai's 'The Idea of Human security' in *International Studies*, February 2003 and Roland Paris' 'Human Security: Paradigm Shift or Hot Air?' in *International Security*, vol. 26, no. 2 (Fall 2001: 87-102.

in the region, national units with boundaries of previously unknown rigidity have also emerged, in the form of 'Indonesia' and 'Malaysia'. Nationality has become a key ordering principle of world politics (e.g. in terms of national state), world economy (in regard to national currencies, national taxes, etc.), world culture (in regard to pervasive national symbols and invented national traditions), world geography (in terms of national territories), world psychology (with notions of 'national character') and so on. The two tendencies, globalization and nationalization, are perhaps not as contradictory as they may seem at first. From a world-historical perspective, the pursuit of nationhood might be appreciated as a means by which people have attempted to maintain a sense of identity, community, and control of destiny in a globalizing social circumstance that has tended to undermine pre-existing frameworks of collective identification and communal solidarity.

Wang Gungwu (2001: 19) in a different vein also laments the need to see the region as an integrated area rather than separating it into different entities:

> With very few exceptions, the scholars avoided portraying the local reality as integral parts of the unique border-less maritime world of the Malay Archipelago. In that world, people were mobile and migratory to a greater extent than we realized. It was a world of commerce, including trade over long distances. The trade was not only among the Malays themselves, but one that, continuously and for centuries, attracted maritime neighbouring peoples from the west and the north, including those from mainland Asia.

Wang Gungwu certainly is not alone in longing for new light to be shed on studies of this region. As Benedict Anderson (1998: 7) from a different angle argues:

> No other region of the world-not Latin America, not the Near East, not Africa, and not South Asia-had this kind of alarming profile. The new hegemon was determined that it not be 'lost' like China. Out of this, in 1954, came SEATO (the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization), formed in American Manila, and later headquartered in Bangkok, which was designed to save the whole postcolonial region from the communist spectre. In the following decade, two different attempts were made by local governments in Southeast Asia to create regional organizations less wholly dominated by outsiders; both proved abortive. Only in 1967, after Sukarno had been driven from power in an orgy of mass murder, was a more permanent institution created: the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) which recently – after a thirty-year interval-admitted Vietnam, Burma, Laos, and will probably incorporate Hun Sen's Cambodia and Xanana Gusmao's East Timor one day.

Anderson's comment on the politics of modern Southeast Asian history is a reminder of how the region will always be an arena for global powers and their interests.

The nation-states in Southeast Asia emerge from a combination of nationalist movements and negotiations among the former colonial powers strongly influenced by

the United States as the major super power after the Pacific War. Following the contestations between the super powers in the Cold War clearly manifested in the Vietnam War; perhaps the first major cause of forced population displacement in Southeast Asia through which many Vietnamese decided to leave their country to seek refuge in other countries. The forced migration event epitomized by the so-called 'boat people', can be seen as the beginning of the refugee crisis in Southeast Asia. The flows of Vietnamese refugees to their neighbouring Southeast Asian countries provoked the international agencies and Western countries to deal with this major humanitarian issue. Again, the north-rich countries played a major role in solving the refugee crisis in Southeast Asia, resembling the experience of solving the problem of displaced people in Europe after World War II. While the experience of the Vietnamese boat people shows the critical role of the West in solving the Vietnamese refugee problems in Malaysia and Indonesia by assisting resettlement in Western countries (USA, Canada, Australia) the Vietnamese, the Cambodians and the Lao that were displaced and taking refuge on the Thai borders remain unresolved until today. This displaced population is almost unprotected by any state and therefore very vulnerable to various external threats and manipulation. Human trafficking is one of the major problems experienced by these displaced people. Forced migration constantly lingers in the lives of the people that took refuge in the Thai-Vietnam-Cambodia-Laos border regions.[23]

Thailand seems to enjoy being a nation-state that has not experienced Western colonialism and now its eastern and northern border regions have become the sanctuary for people fleeing from persecution – most notably from Burma. The unresolved internal political problems stemming from the unsettled nation building process in Burma have become the source of protracted conflict between the military junta and the opposition group led by Aung San Suu Kyi and the secessionist minority ethnic groups basing

their armed struggle in the border areas with Thailand. At present, thousands of displaced people reside in the Thai-Burma border areas constantly calling for both humanitarian assistance and political solutions. The Muslim Rohingas also escape and take refuge in Malaysia from political persecution in their home country, Burma. The Malaysian government seems more tolerant toward Muslim refugees, especially the Rohingas, and to a lesser extent the Acehnese and Patanis. The unfinished project of nation building in the post-colonial states of Southeast Asia also flare up in the Southern Philippines' Mindanao areas, Indonesia's West Papua and Aceh, and in southern Thailand. These conflict hot spots have produced both refugees and internally displaced people that strongly reflect the failure of Southeast Asian states in dealing with their own domestic politics and their interstate issues especially with regard to the problem

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[23] *Uprooting People for Their Own Good? Human Displacement, Resettlement and Trafficking in the Greater Mekong Sub-Region 2004,* and Anh Dang Nguyen 2004, 'Forced Migration in Vietnam: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives'.

of cross border forced population movement.[24] The Southeast Asian border areas now represent a spectre of forced population displacement arenas where various refugee related issues such as of the stateless, citizenship, human trafficking and identity politics are calling for more rigorous academic understanding and viable policy actions.

The discourse on the so-called 'internally displaced population' in the region is relatively new. In the Indonesian and Filipino languages, for example, the term that is used is 'pengungsi' (Indonesia) and 'bakwit' (Philippines) or 'refugee' if we translate into English..[25] While in the international communities the term refugee constitutes a totally different meaning from 'internally displaced population', in the Indonesian context, it is used interchangeably. 'Pengungsi' is a very common usage in Indonesia, meaning people that are taking refuge in a (temporary) safe place as they were forced to move from their usual residence. The reasons for their move ranging from natural disasters (earthquakes, volcanic eruptions) to man made disasters (floods, development projects, local government eviction from public areas, communal conflicts and war). The force of circumstances that instigate the movement constitutes the main characteristic of the 'pengungsi' phenomena. Looking from this broader understanding of causes of the movement, the so-called 'internally displaced population' could be something that is nothing new in Indonesia (before and since independence).[26] The sense of newness invoked in the recent discourse on 'internally displaced populations' is perhaps related to something alien in the region. Certainly the introduction of the term 'internally displaced population' or 'internally displaced people' or IDPs in short, is closely related to the intervention by international agencies, particularly the UN offices in state capitals, concerned about the vastly increased numbers of 'pengungsi' resulting from political conflicts In these UN circumstances, the governments in the region have begun to be perceived by the international communities as those of countries

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[24] The incident in mid January 2006 concerning the arrival of 43 (36 adults and 7childrens) West Papuans by boat in Far North Queensland seeking asylum in Australia is a case in point. Australia, as the signatory of the 1951 Convention and the 1967 Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees, is obliged to process the future refugee status of these people. Papua is likely to be the most conflict prone region in Indonesia as sensitive issues such as migrants vs locals; Christians vs Muslims; will be increasingly used by the Papuan political elite as well as the Papuan separatist group to press their demand to the national government for more power and independence. If open conflict erupts we will witness the flow of both IDPs and refugees from Papua. For detailed studies on Papua's conflict, see Gibbon (2004), Widjojo (2006), and the ICG Report (2008).

[25] On the 'bakwit' and the displaced population in Mindanao, The Philippines, see the interesting study by Canuday, 2004.

[26] See Hugo's (1981) types of conflict initiating refugee movements, with examples from Southeast Asia (mainly Indonesia). According to Hugo there are nine types of conflict initiating refugee movements: 1. independence struggles; 2. Ethnic conflicts with autonomy/separatist dimensions; 3. internal ethnic conflict not related to separatist/autonomy struggles; 4. class conflict; 5. inter-elite power struggles; 6. state-intervention conflicts; 7. international wars; 8. religion-based conflicts; and 9. colonial-based conflicts.

that need international humanitarian assistance so at the beginning of 1992, Frances Deng was appointed as a Special Secretary on IDPs to the UN Secretary General.

Since then IDPs have quickly entered into public discourse as various institutions, both foreign and local, began to follow the UN steps in 'capitalizing' the plight of 'displaced people' that also flourished as communal conflicts became one facet in the wider canvas of 'political transition toward democracy'. In Indonesia, IDPs (in the international usage) or 'pengungsi' (in local or national usage) have attracted 'development practitioners' both from within and without 'official circles' adding to a long list of so-called vulnerable groups that have long been part of the vocabulary in the development discourse and practice in the country. Again, in this context we have noticed the development of a particular term that is closely related to the internationalization of the concept and the interconnected events which occurred at the global level.[27] Yet, we have also noticed the strong connotation of bureaucratic tones embedded within the concept and the terminologies that are used. Such circumstances should therefore be critically analyzed, as the programmatic approaches that follow can actually be remote from what is genuinely needed by the displaced people.[28] The displaced people, regardless of the causes that force them to migrate are basically people that live in vulnerable economic, social and political circumstances. The displaced population – judging from their label category - reflects the process of forced geographic movement. The critical feature in this event however, is the process of how human beings are compelled to be dispossessed of their material as well as their social and cultural belongings. The dispossession process, in fact, is the heart of any form of forced displacement.

While the pressing needs of the displaced people always have to be given immediate priority, such as for their safety, their need for shelter and other basic needs; yet there are several more fundamental matters that should be given serious attention both by scholars and practitioners if long-term and viable solutions are sought in dealing with displaced populations caused by conflict in Southeast Asia. The circumstances of force that produce displaced populations should be seen as part of the longer processes of yet unfinished and perhaps failed nation-state building whereby some groups of people are firstly dispossessed and secondly displaced. As the displaced constitutes a dispossessed group of people, the more fundamental issues are therefore related to the needs in recovering what has been lost: their political rights, their property rights and their cultural rights. Looking from this broader perspective of the displaced people's rights as citizens then what we should envision is perhaps an approach that could genuinely provide room to convey the creation of these displaced people's own

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[27] Indonesia is one of the countries to which the UN gave special attention, Report on the Seminar on 'Internal Displacement in Indonesia: Toward an Integrated Approach', co-organised by the UN and several national and international organisations, June 26-27, 2001.

[28] On the critical analysis of the dominant official discourse on internally displaced people, Sorensen (2002) provides a useful example based on her anthropological study of the displaced population in Sri Lanka.

perspectives. In order to facilitate the creation of such a perspective the discourse on refugees and displaced people in the Southeast Asian region should be critically assessed and shifted from the current heavily adopted programmatic approaches. As Nordstrom and Martin (1992: 15) correctly note, 'social scientists, no matter what their field of study, will in all likelihood confront some instance of sociopolitical violence in the field' and they need 'viable field methodologies and theoretical frameworks' if they are to understand the processes that involve them as possible victims as well as observers.[29]

CONCLUDING REMARKS

In an aftermath of the Cold War, movement of people has entered a new predicament. The interstate wars have produced displaced populations of whom many have spilled into the neighbouring countries or are oscillating within border areas. In these new political circumstances studies on population movements can no longer be based on the narrow conventional theoretical framework emanating from modernization theories and approaches. The increasing magnitude of forced displacement as people escape from violence that in many instances results from the state's failures in conflict resolution, critically challenges the conventional study on migration that generally neglects politics and security issues. The previous studies on forced migration that are mainly devoted to refugee issues also critically challenge the displaced population within the state borders mostly occurring in the poor-south countries. While the movement of people from the south to the rich-north countries constitutes a combination of forced and economic migration it has become more complex as the identity politics become entrenched. The increasing terrorism, targeting America and its allies, from Al Qaeda and other Muslim radical groups, reflect a complex mixture of global migration, inequalities based on different cultural identities and security. The tightening state border control and the intensifying surveillance of immigrant groups and foreign workers, constitute a new complex nexus of migration, security and global politics.

From a narrow academic perspective, the displaced population is divided into three broad categories. The categorization is based on the major causes that result in forced displacement. First, it is related to the violent conflicts; Second, it is caused by state development policies and programs; and Third, it is the result of massive natural disasters. Although different labels are applied differently to different categories these people are basically representing forced migrant populations that are taking refuge in a safe place outside their habitual residence. In Southeast Asia, internal conflict that produced internally displaced populations and refugees that fill or cross the state borders often mirrors the conflict between local elites or different factions in the national government that is further implicated in the tensions at the grassroots levels. The involvement of state security apparatus in the conflict areas shows that the state is in

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[29] Quoted from Shanmugaratnam et.al. 2003, *In the Maze of Displacement.*

fact part of the problem or even the major source of the problem. This situation makes the resolution of conflict very problematic, as the state will not be able to distance itself from the problem. In this regard the role of a third party or regional and international organizations, become instrumental in solving the problem. The successful peace agreement between the Aceh rebels (GAM) and the Indonesian government mediated by the former Finnish president Maarthi Athisarii is a case in point.

In many parts of Southeast Asia refugees and displaced people mostly represent the victims of state failure to provide security for its people. The recent securitization of migration clearly indicates the continuation of prevailing state-centred security hegemonic discourse that will further increase human vulnerability. The establishment of regional cooperation in the form of ASEAN only serves the need of the ruling elites of the ASEAN member states to sustain their power in the region but fails to provide security for their own people that live in the border areas where conflicts occur. The current dominant perspective and hegemonic discourse on the study of forced displacement, refugee protection and humanitarian assistance are institutionalized in the UN system, international and national NGOs and government organizations. These perspectives and discourse have directed the way the treatment is carried out and the perception toward the displaced people as social problems and security threats is constructed. The need for a new perspective beyond a Eurocentric framework to explain the unfolding events related to migration-development-security nexus in Asia – particularly in Southeast Asia – not only reflects the failure of the existing international refugee regime to contain the critical issues and the refugee crises in the region but more importantly mirrors the failure of regional cooperation in Southeast Asia to develop a viable regional framework to tackle the problem of refugees and displaced populations.

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