

*Special Theme:*  
*Resources and Human Mobility*

**Editorial**

**Human Mobility: The Role of Resources in Focus**

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Resources serve both as a basis of production and as an origin of conflict and crisis. The scarcity of tangible resources such as water, land, and other forms of natural resources often result in territorial disputes among states, inter-ethnic violence, and marginalization and dislocation of the people. Likewise, intangible resources such as ideas and capitals, including human capital, would be sources of creation, innovation, and wealth, but would also risk conflict and humanitarian crises if the flow of such resources is mismanaged. The sheer number of contemporary humanitarian crises can be understood as dynamics revolving around resource scarcity and human mobility, or the complex interplay of the two. For instance, refugees and migration often flow from economically resource-poor countries or regions to resource-abundant ones (Zuru, 2015). In other cases, political resources such as citizenship and safety are the core pull factors behind a decision to migrate (UNHCR, 2017). These flows of humans could create a crisis when migrants or refugees become the target of segregation and discrimination due to their nationality, religion, or ethnicity, or when ineffective authority fail to protect the migrants from human traffickers. The flow of ideas and humans across borders may incite challenges against the existing states.

The Center for Relational Studies on Global Studies, Chiba University, and Mahidol University International College (MUIC) co-hosted an international conference “Resources and Human Mobility” at MUIC on December 2-3, 2019, sponsored by the Relational Studies on Global Crises Project (Japanese Grant-in-aid [KAKENHI], 2016-

2021). The conference approached conflicts and crises emanating from resource scarcity and human mobility in Asia and the world. Through cross-regional and cross-disciplinary research presentations and discussions, the conference successfully addressed the contemporary crises towards unpacking the dynamic and complex relations between resources and human mobility. This Special Issue of the *Journal of Population and Social Studies (JPSS)* is a selection of papers presented or submitted in connection with the conference, as mentioned earlier. Given the importance of human mobility, the theme in this issue is key features of the linkage between ‘resources,’ with various implications, and ‘human mobility.’

Yamao (pp. S1-S26) takes up the ‘political resource’ in the context of the global refugee crisis in 2015 and addresses the nature of threat emphasized by the major Arabic newspapers regarding the global refugee crisis. The paper makes a quantitative text analysis on three levels utilizing articles from three Pan-Arab newspapers. The quantitative text analysis found that threat framing could differ based on the newspaper, refugee status, timing, issue of the article, and geographical factors. Furthermore, the threat level captured by the analysis continued to rise over time and reached the highest point during the crisis period. It also found that the Pan-Arab newspapers tended to emphasize threats associated with terrorism and crime, rather than social issues (i.e., housing, labor, and culture). When geographical variables were added to the analysis, the newspaper articles were more likely to perceive refugees as a cultural threat if they were predominately associated with the Middle East.

Moshammer’s article (pp. S27-S48) focuses on the role of ‘technological resources’ in connection to human mobility, and develops a socioethical reasoning scheme that highlights dilemmas in juxtaposing resources and mobility. Offering an ethically guided perspective on value-driven policy-making, the article features the definition and implementation of a moral baseline regarding health, happiness, and human fulfillment, the rationalization dilemma of moral cost trade-offs, the scoping of common and public goods, and the weighing of externalities, particularly in light of technological promises. It argues in favor of the stipulation of an inclusive notion of Pareto efficiency that explicitly recognizes marginal utility, and rights and entitlements as limited resources for promoting social mobility.

The article by Sakulsri (pp. S49-S65) addresses the role of ‘political resource.’ This paper, based on semi-structured interviews with migrants, examines the challenges of labor migrants to Thailand in the context of bilateral agreements for the employment of workers in the Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS). Then data were analyzed by employing a rights-based approach to migration issues, the obstacles migrants face in seeking legal work in this region. It points out that the governments of Thailand and neighboring countries have attempted to legalize and promote the flow of migrant workers, that the roles of both migrant-sending and migrant-receiving countries have to be made clear in terms of how to cooperate in safe migration, and how to consistently exchange information about standard practices and decent working environments for migrant workers.

Kinoshita's paper (pp. S66-S82) seeks to clarify how the major online media reports Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Questioning or Queer (LGBTQ) issues in contemporary Indonesia. The LGBTQ issues are a dividing factor within the Muslim community of contemporary Indonesia. Major debates about Indonesian LGBTQ issues in precedent literature are from the anthropological perspective in the paper. This paper aims to clarify the tones of online media about LGBTQ issues among four major online media news agencies in Indonesia. The quantitative analysis shows that it is not only Islamic media or national media fueling the negative reporting tone of LGBTQ issues, but also online media with the largest number of readers and visitors among Indonesians.

The paper by Perez-Amurao (pp. S83-S105) features Filipino educators working as migrant workers in Thailand, in connection to religion and its role. The paper covers their migratory experience, which demonstrates that in addition to the influence of the usual factors that play out in their mobility, religion also plays an important role in their eventual participation in international migration. It was found that Filipino teachers utilize instrumental and transnational practices to provide avenues to achieve their goals and enrich their migratory lives. Through the Filipino teachers' affiliation with their churches, the paper points out, religion benefits as well from this relationship as the latter are able to exercise their regulatory functions, helping shape the former's migration routes and experiences.

Ogawa's paper (pp. S106-S125) examines the translation and appropriation, and discusses its implications of the trafficking discourse in Japan. The paper, using government documents, particularly police and immigration reports, as well as annual reports on trafficking, found that the formation of trafficking discourse represents a shift from perceiving migrant women as 'criminals' to seeing them as 'victims of trafficking.' The paper stresses that since the associated domestic institutions are embedded within abolitionist and criminal justice approaches, the agency of migrants has not been taken into account. Then it concludes that trafficking must be situated within the labor migration continuum, and a safe, orderly migration corridor must be established, especially in Japan.

All in all, the collection of papers in this special issue address the intricate causal nexus between 'resources' in various forms, and human mobility, with a focus on how 'resources' facilitate or hinder human mobility. While ensuring protection and equal treatment for migrants and refugees, and providing remedies for human rights violations and discriminations against the migrants should be addressed globally, even though necessary regulatory frameworks are partially provided nationally. Idiosyncratic as these papers might be in terms of their issue areas and geographical coverages, this special issue is expected to contribute to discussions and establish a common regulatory framework to address, as well as redress, this all-important global phenomenon of marginalizing minority migrants and refugees.

## References

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