BOOK REVIEW

Social History of Immigration Policy: "Border" Controls in Postwar Japan

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In the 1950s, with the collapse of the Japanese Empire following its defeat in World War II, Asia progressed in its restructuring through colonial independence and the escalation of the Cold War. With the collapse of the Japanese Empire and the loss of its colonies, the number of Koreans and Taiwanese living under Japanese rule decreased sharply. As a result, Japanese elites began to view postwar Japan not as a multi-ethnic empire but as a homogenous nation (Oguma 1995; 1998; Gayle 2003). Under such a change, a new institutional and conscious "border" between "Japanese" and "foreigners" was created.

However, such a "border" was not limited to the discourse of Japanese elites. Against the backdrop of Japan's defeat in the war and colonial independence, many people experienced cross-border migration, and the power to create "borders" was at work. This book focuses not on the discourse of the elites, but on local communities "regions," and examines the process through which Japan implemented its immigration control policy in local communities, and by which the country established the "borders" of people, nationality, and movement.

This book consists of three pillars: (1) the conflict between boundaries "from above" and "from below" in the field of border control, (2) the role played by practitioners such as local governments and private organizations, and (3) the correlation between the development of immigration policy and the reaction of local communities.

The following are the book's contents:

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Three points summarize the substance of this book. First, it clarifies the process by which "borders" are created in the field of administration. Alien registration in the early 1950s primarily targeted former colonials who had resided in Japan. At that time however, with the collapse of the Japanese Empire, a large-scale movement of people was seen. Such circumstances caused a blurring of the border between "foreigners" and "Japanese" in the administration of alien registration immediately after the war, which presented a complicated situation. Officials in the field were not sufficiently aware of the clear and absolute line between "foreigners" and "Japanese" envisioned by the state. Also, the municipalities that were responsible for foreigner registration had been unable to allocate sufficient personnel for the massive work required. As a result, they had no choice but to fumble their way through their work, leading to frequent "improprieties" in the applications. Local governments asked the Ministry of Justice for instructions, which then addressed inquiries from each prefecture. Such responses from the Ministry of Justice became a directive and a set of guidelines, and policies for managing the residence and status of "foreigners" were uniformly stipulated.

Second, this book explains the roles played by local residents and private organizations in crackdowns on "smuggling" and projects to release prisoners from the Omura camp. At first, repatriation was relatively gradual and voluntary, but people's movement from the former colonies was gradually regarded as irregular, and they were uniformly deported from Japan, following the logic of exclusion. Besides their original responsibilities, the national and local police had to assume coast guard and immigration control duties, which often required civilian cooperation. In addition, some people were given provisional release or special residence permits in Japan after South Korea refused to accept some inmates of the Omura POW camp. "Special residences," which were initially granted as an exceptional measure at the discretion of the Minister of Justice, eventually became a way of accepting people with ambiguous affiliations and implied a reorientation of the relationship between the state and non-Japanese people. At that time, private organizations such as the Japan–Korea Affinity Association, the Japan–Korea Cultural Association, and the Zenrin Koseikai were in charge of guaranteeing the identities of those released from the Omura camp. These groups utilized the human and political resources they inherited from prewar colonial rule-dominated relations. Specifically, the life histories of members of these groups in the colonies before the war were the driving force behind efforts to address the problem.

Third, this book sheds light on how the local community viewed the Omura POW camp through essays by local children surrounding the camp and movies set in the local community. Children in Nagasaki Prefecture mentioned "illegal immigrant" and "capture" fragmentarily in their essays. In addition, socially oriented filmmakers, the Nagasaki Prefectural Teachers' Union, and teachers of the central elementary school enthusiastically produced a film titled *Children of Japan*, which depicts interactions between children and detainees. The film was created as an evaluation of postwar democratic education and adopted the perspectives of documentation and education. However, the relationship depicted in the film merely maintained a clear standing position between the "self" and the "other." The essays and the film generally created an "illegal" image in which "illegal immigrant" was inevitably inherent and drew a clear line against "inmates." The circumstance of an "illegal immigrant" was portrayed as something to be "comforted."

In contrast to existing research that has mainly discussed the policymaking process, the significance of this book lies in its focus on the relationship between the government and people in the field where policies were implemented. A functional policy requires officials who will implement it and private citizens who will cooperate with such implementation. From studies on the national image of and nationalism in postwar Japan, including the discussion of Oguma and Curtis introduced at the beginning, I recall those focusing on the discourse of the Japanese side. However,

these studies did not examine the actual reality of “exclusion.” This book unearths the anguish and conflict actually experienced by the victims, which is the reality that was not considered in the policymaking process and gives this book its charm. Particularly, this book deals with the period in which Japan formed its postwar immigration control policy and postwar national image, which were also constructed through trial and error. Therefore, the complex events described in this book were confirmed to have occurred and were recorded.

Based on the above points, I will discuss two issues surrounding this book. The first concerns a clarification of the significant trauma that the state’s institutional control inflicted on the people. In the prologue (p. 6), the author mentions the emergence of two aspects through the delineation of immigration control: (1) the gap between the institutional level and the field level, which involves the “border” construction process, and (2) the deep wounds caused by the state’s institutional control on people’s consciousness and identity, which pertains to the effects of the “border” construction. The first aspect is discussed centrally and persuasively in Chapters 1 and 2, while the second aspect is mentioned through the inmates’ descriptions of their release from the Omura camp. However, the second aspect is not mentioned in a more cohesive form and is only a general suggestion. This is one limitation that results from the author mainly focusing on administrative documents, that is, materials on the governing side. Governmental power acts on the interior of individuals. If the author is to depict the aforementioned deep wounds, they must dig deeper at the individual level. As long as it is mentioned in the introduction, I think it would have been better if the description focused on (2) in the final chapter.

The second issue involves clarifying the relationship between “border” and “region.” The author positions “region” as a methodological perspective for understanding the multilayered nature of immigration control (p. 21) and a special space with opportunities to disturb relationships with others (p. 202). Chapters 1 and 2 examine on-site exchanges, Chapter 3 deals with residents who cooperate with crackdowns, and Chapter 5 discusses the community surrounding the Omura camp. “Region” can be interpreted as a concept derived from a series of analyses.

However, the relationship between “borders” and “regions” varies from chapter to chapter. While “region” in Chapters 1 and 2 is depicted as containing elements that are different from policy principles in policy enforcement, “regions” in Chapter 4 help maintain “borders.” “Regions” in the film described in Chapter 5 are not portrayed as something that ultimately disturbs “borders.” Of course, as this book points out, the film was made as an educational film and showed gaps in terms of the actual situation in the region. Cross-regional comparisons are mentioned as an issue, and problems associated with the concept of “region” persist throughout the book. Even so, in what situation does “region” become a factor that disturbs “border” and, conversely, a factor that stabilizes it? I think it would have been better if this book’s summary went one step further from the description in the final chapter, for example, in the form of some pattern analysis.

From a sociological reviewer’s standpoint, the themes of the book connect with different studies, including discussions of governmental power (Foucault 2004) and analyses of street-level bureaucracy (Lipsky 1980). The author’s specialty is clearly history, and this book is a historical study focusing on field interactions and people in regional communities. Although a connection with sociological research is not the main purpose of this book, I read it as a work that offers many suggestions on such a wide range of themes and research areas while leaving some issues to be addressed. I hope that it will be read by researchers from many different research fields.

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