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No. 158, 2002

McNicoll, Geoffrey. "Demographic factors in East Asian regional integration," *Policy Research Division Working Paper* no. 158. New York: Population Council. ([PDF](#))

Abstract

The Remapping Asia project, to which this paper is a contribution, investigates broad spatial changes in the ways that East Asia's political and social life are organized and economies operate. Such changes are attributable to planned action of governments, firms, and other organized groups and to the unorganized but in some measure predictable behavior of myriad families and individuals. The project's particular interest is in processes of regionalization—both through the deliberate construction of political institutions and through the largely unplanned emergence of regional affiliations and identities. Demographic factors play a potentially significant part both in promoting and in impeding regional integration. Such factors include the existing population size relativities; the uneven onset, pace, and outcomes of demographic transition across the region, affecting population growth and age structure; the rapid urbanization that is underway and the emergence of urban-industrial corridors; and the rapid expansion of numbers of middle-class consumers coinciding with the persistence and sometimes strengthening of cultural identity, creating a complex layering of values and affiliations. These factors are explored from a comparative perspective, contrasting East Asia with other major world regions. Particular attention is paid to demographic aspects of the changing China–Japan relationship, a fundamental dynamic in the region, and to the tension between economy and culture as principles of regional organization.



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