

Keynote

The World Maps in 2100: Freedom in the Age of Great Migration

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Introduciton

We now live in the age of pandemic. I do not think there has ever been a time when the question of appropriate distance between people has been discussed so passionately. The present havoc should end sooner or later. After the present storm is over, however, we will find ourselves living in a very different world.

In this lecture, I would like to discuss first about the trend of global population change. In the past, human beings used to live in a spacious world; numerous villages were surrounded by open frontiers. Then, the human race witnessed the age of industrialisation, urbanisation, and imperial colonisation. Now in the 21st century, with a rapid increase of population in Asia, and then in Africa, people in Asia and Africa started to migrate actively in their regions, as well as globally, spreading infectious diseases from time to time.

Then, in the second half of today's discussion, I would like to think about multiculturalism as a state in which people move around, join together, split away, keep distance, and still co-exist and create a common value. I believe that finding an appropriate way of co-existence is one of the major challenges that post-covid society will face.

1. The Rise of Afrasia

To start the discussion, I propose a geographic framing of Afrasia (Figure 1). The term, Afrasia, was coined by the British historian, Arnold Toynbee, to refer to the cradle of civilisations in North Africa and West Asia. The term, Afrasian Sea, is also used to refer to the western part of

the Indian Ocean, the Swahili world, where elements of the Arabic and African cultures mixed through trade and migration in the past centuries. In this paper, I use the word, Afrasia, to refer to a combination of the whole of Africa and Asia, which occupies about a half of the total land area of world nations.



Figure 1

People of Afrasia are expected to become an overwhelming majority of the world population by the end of the 21st century. In order to present the future shape of this megaregion, I have crafted a number of maps in collaboration with engineers of geographic information system (GIS).

According to a projection released by the Population Division of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the global population will expand from 6.2 billion in 2001 (Figure 2) to 9.8 billion in 2050 (Figure 3) and eventually to 11.2 billion in 2100, the final year of the 21st century (Figure 4). These figures show the increase of population through the expansion of the area, and the most conspicuous feature of these cartograms is the massive growth of the people living on the African continent.

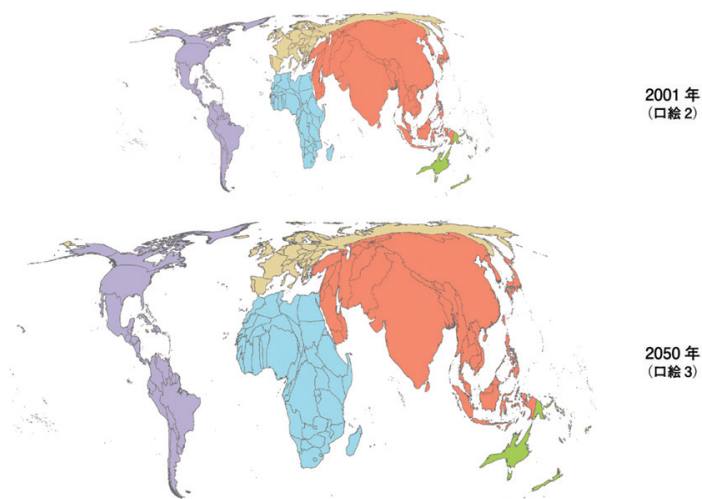


Figure 2, 3

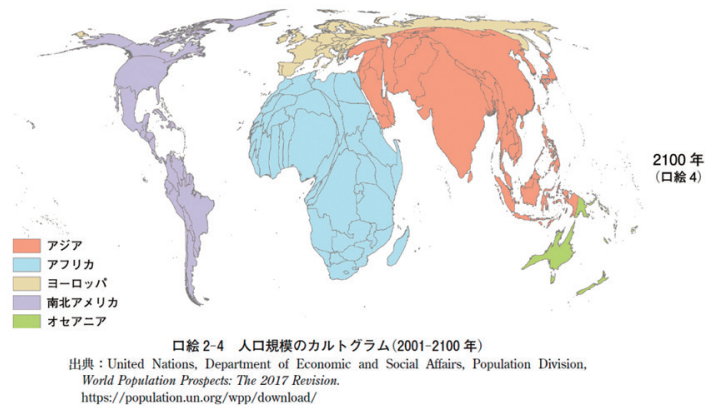


Figure 4

The African population is projected to increase five times in the 21st century. This means that, by 2100, the population density of Africa will become almost the same as the population density of Asia. The areas of Africa and Asia are almost equal, and the population size will also become similar by 2100 (Figures 5 and 6). Therefore, the population densities of the two regions will become almost the same by the end of this century. You can see the noticeable change in the population density of Africa.

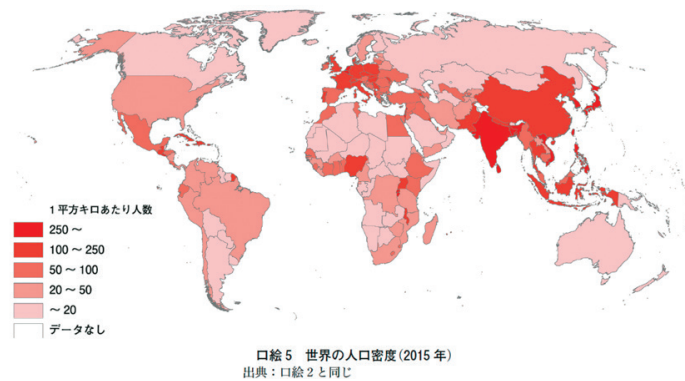


Figure 5

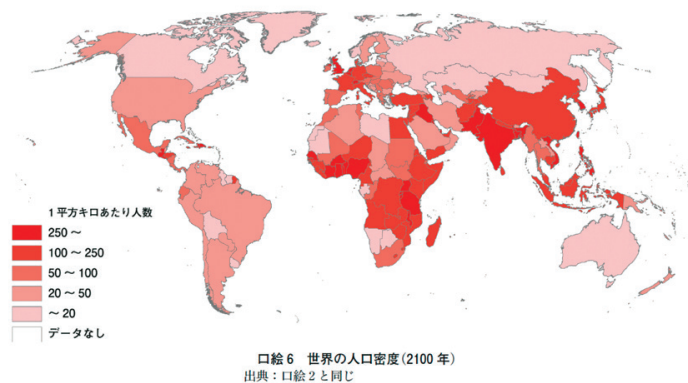


Figure 6

In 2100, the total population of Asia and Africa will constitute about 83 per cent of the world population. Afrasian people will become an absolute majority of the world population quite soon. If we look at nations, in terms of population size, by 2100, China will be overtaken by India and followed by Nigeria. The share of the European population in the world will be

reduced from 12 per cent to 6 per cent. And, the share of the East Asian population (China, Korea, Japan and Mongolia) will also decrease from 24 per cent to only 11 per cent.

What will happen to the wealth of nations, given such a global demographic change? The cartogram of Figure 7 illustrates the concentration of world GDP in three major economic centres of the world: East Asia, Western Europe and North America. Africa's GDP share is meagre. However, the future story may be completely different. Figure 8 shows that Africa will be the only region that enjoys a substantial demographic dividend, a ratio of the economically active population to the total population, in the latter half of this century. In the coming decades, Africa will abound in young population and have much fewer elderly people. The continent will not be facing an ageing problem in contrast to East Asia.

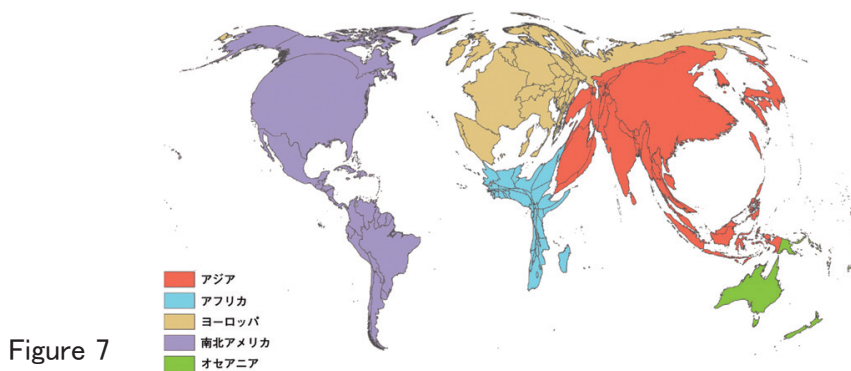


Figure 7

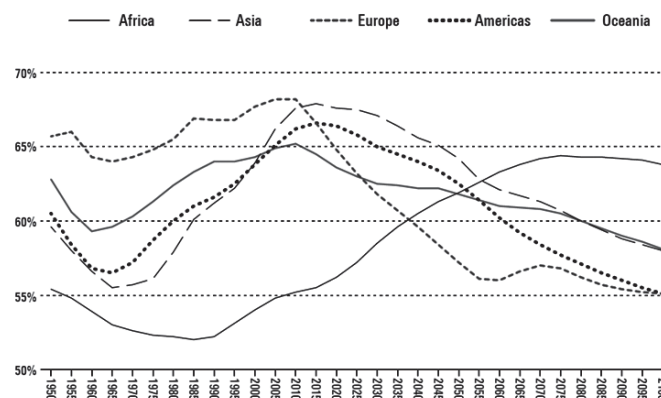


Figure 8

There are only three factors that determine demographic transition: fertility, mortality and migration. The most important factor among them is fertility, the entry of new generations into society. According to Thomas Malthus, without moral checks, population increases exponentially, while agricultural production grows only arithmetically. The dramatic rise in African population projected by the UN demographers may give an impression that the African population continue to grow to the point of collision with the environmental constraints (Figure 9).

However, Malthusian scenario conceived in the late 18th century has proved to be wrong; the population did not keep growing exponentially in any society, and the agricultural production

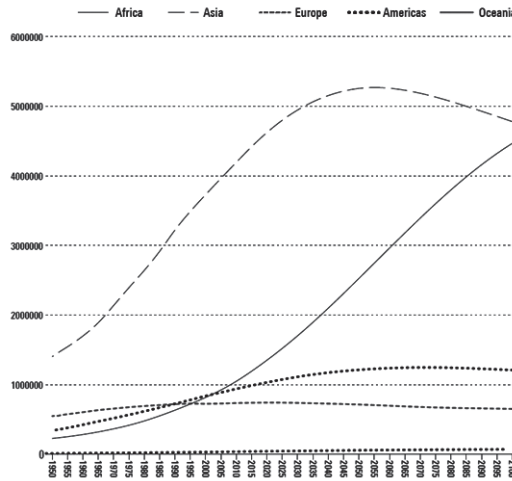


Figure 9

has grown steadily to accommodate the aggregate needs of the global population at least until today. There is much evidence to show that women’s education and their involvement in economic employment outside the home tend to lower the fertility rate. The fertility rate is the average number of children a woman in a society is expected to have in her lifetime. Rising costs of childbearing, urbanisation, as well as the spread of contraception, also contribute to the decline of fertility. In short, the evidence shows that the Malthusian catastrophe of population explosion is avoidable through the empowerment of women.

The UN population projection is based on the assumption that the fertility rate declines in all regions and nations. As shown in the right side of Figure 10, the fertility rate of African women has already started to decline in the 1980s. As long as the fertility remains as high as four and five, the absolute size of the population in Africa will continue to expand. However, in future Africa just as in the rest of the world, the fertility rate is expected to drop gradually and settle down to the replacement level, two. The UN projection, therefore, predicts that Afrasia’s ‘80 per cent majority’ situation in the early 22nd century will be a sort of “stationary state”, an equilibrium, rather than one stage in an endless population explosion.

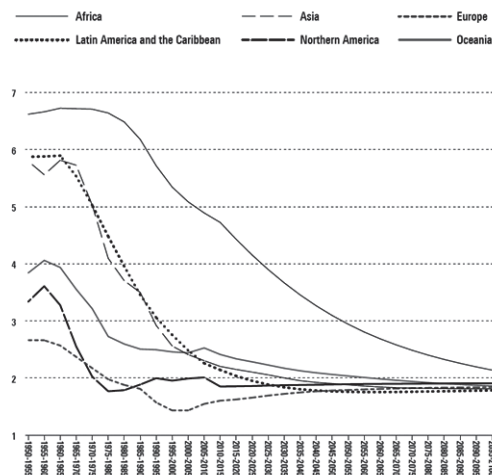


Figure 10

2. New Migration Patterns

In the 22nd century, people from Africa and Asia will be an absolute majority of the global population. This population growth in Africa and Asia will have a number of consequences, but one of the most impactful will be the accelerated migration of people. As the growth centre shifts and the population pressure increases especially in rural Africa, more and more people are expected to decide to leave their home villages and towns to cities, and from some cities to others. In the second part of this lecture, I will discuss the prospects of people's movement across Africa and Asia and the potential of co-existence between new-comers and old citizens.

Figure 11 shows that the major pattern of migration is shifting from South-North to South-South. An increasing number of researches is being conducted about the new waves of migration between Africa and Asia, such as Chinese in Africa or Africans in China. In the age of imperialism and colonialism, a massive number of people were displaced and forced to move, but this option of organised migration is not realistic in our time. Domestic relocation of surplus population to land-abundant areas is not feasible in most countries though there have been some experiments in places like Indonesia and Ethiopia.

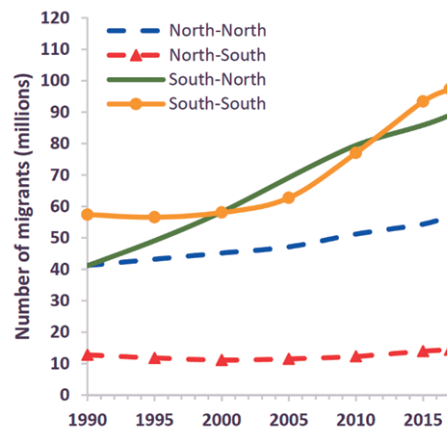


Figure 11

Free movement of people across borders is not allowed in the modern world where land and people are captured, measured, counted and registered by a central authority. Travel is the act of a person to move by free will.

But, if the endpoint of the movement is different from the starting point, the person will be re-registered at the destination. This is the rule of modern society. Despite such limitations, in our time, people still move on, just as fishermen in Southeast Asia sailed to different islands. For example, international students may form new families and settle down in the country they have studied in; they may be disappointed and return to their home countries or head for a new land to start over, and so on. The directions vary, but the movement of people across borders is increasingly becoming a phenomenon in the South, not necessarily between the South and the North.

3. Multiculturalism in the West

Under these circumstances, encounters between new migrants and citizens in host countries occur in various places. To control the relationship between hosts and guests, many Western countries paid attention to a policy principle called multiculturalism. Perhaps the most systematic advocate of this principle was the Canadian political scientist, Will Kymlicka, though his prescription was not as tolerant as we might imagine from the word. Kymlicka argued that people who voluntarily left their country of origin should be gradually integrated into the society and culture of the host country. These minorities were not entitled to demand public education in their own ethnic languages. The host country is not obliged to inject public money into projects for the consolidation of partial ethnic identity, because they abandoned their home nation at their own will.

In his framework, a high degree of autonomy will only be considered in case of a large national group within a federal framework such as the French-speaking community in Canada. Some cases involving African Americans and Native Americans require moral prudence and historical justice, but for those who crossed the boundaries voluntarily, full integration into the host society should be the default option.

However, this sort of framework came under fierce attack in North America and Europe after September 11. The argument was that multiculturalism spoiled minorities and embolden religious fundamentalists who eventually attempted to destroy the democratic social order. The minority side generally did not try to defend a paternalistic multiculturalist order either. At the beginning of the 21st century, multiculturalism was rejected by the conservatives as well as by the progressives, and its power as a social norm quickly withered.

4. Multiculturalism without Seeking Integration

Multiculturalism as a policy principle may be over. Still, I wonder if it is not possible to envision multiculturalism without seeking integration. The dream is to have multicultural conviviality as a 'state' rather than a 'goal' in which cultural groups, large and small, co-exist and respect each other. I came up with such an idea when I was living in a downtown of Tokyo with my family. Judging by the words passers-by uttered, I surmised that Japanese were about two-thirds of the people walking around the shopping area, though more or less one-third were probably Filipinos, Nepalese, Pakistanis, Chinese, Koreans, Europeans and others. Aside from shopping, there was no sign of active interaction between the locals and the foreign residents. The same appeared true of the interaction among foreigners who hailed from a variety of places and settled in the same town. Still, there was no sense of hostility among people, even though they were not very interested in each other. As the boisterous samba floats paraded through the shopping street at a local festival, people looked on curiously in places a little away from the scene. The feeling of something resonating with each other while keeping the distance was unexpectedly pleasant for me.

In *Colonial Policy and Practice* published in 1948, British colonial officer J. S. Furnivall characterised Southeast Asian society as a plural society. Majority locals (such as Malays) and minorities (such as Indians and Chinese) exchange goods and money in the marketplace, but do not attempt to nurture a national unity from the bottom up. As cited often, ‘They mix but do not combine’. The convention of co-existing while living apart can still be seen in multi-ethnic urban societies of today’s Southeast Asian countries.

There are a significant number of Chinese migrants living on the African continent today. Both Africans and Chinese speak ill of each other often in private circles, but the mutual distance usually does not develop into confrontations. In the first place, Chinese shops have local customers, which is why their business can be established in Africa. I am often surprised to see Chinese traders living in slums and villages in African countries, without speaking local languages, nor English. Conversely, African merchants who travel to Chinese cities to purchase IT gadgets and commodities are also becoming prominent. The Africans are often angry at the discriminatory behaviours of local Chinese, but they want to continue trading, and their business is also thriving.

5. Aloof Co-existence

The era of multiculturalism in the West may be over, but in Afrasian countries, there are spaces in which ‘aloof co-existence’ prevails. The notion of governance based on the social contract of abstract individuals is a product of thought experiments in the West. By contrast, there seems no grand social theory of co-existence in the non-Western world. The government sometimes threatens to expel those who do not comply, but, maybe not. The state of co-existence in those countries can be a fragile equilibrium. Decisions on whether to promote peaceful co-existence or take coercive measures are haphazard.

Here is a question. Though it may sound ironic, can such a state of equilibrium not be presented as an ideal situation? In other words, is it possible to propose a system of society in which people can freely enter an association and exit from it, keeping in mind real persons with diverse orientations?

6. The Liberal Archipelago

People move and settle. If a conflict arises or is expected to arise, they walk away. There is no institutional barrier that prevents people’s exit and entry. Chandran Kukathas, the philosopher born in Malaysia as a citizen of Indian descent, portrayed something close to this natural state, once envisioned by the French philosopher, Jean-Jacques Rousseau.

The premise of *The Liberal Archipelago: A Theory of Diversity and Freedom* (2003) by Kukathas is to acknowledge human diversity – diversity as a fact rather than a value. Because of the real diversity of human beings, the liberal idea of non-interference in the affairs of others becomes essential. At the root of liberalism lies the principle of freedom of association, which

involves freedom of dissociation and mutual tolerance between groups. According to Kukathas, freedom of association is necessary because of freedom of conscience. A person should not be forced to act in the same way as others if her course of action in accordance with her conscience is different from those of others. This means that people should be able to act differently. This is why diverse people form diverse associations. They are not forced to ‘cohere’ but should acknowledge their differences, and try to ‘co-exist’. Thus, the liberal society that guarantees freedom to its members takes a form of an ‘archipelago’ made up of multiple competing and overlapping authorities.

For this mechanism to work well, it is necessary that freedom to leave an organisation is guaranteed and that there exist other organisations that are willing to accept individuals who have quit the original group. Kukathas argues that sovereignty is a matter of degree, as the government is also just one of many associations. Let us assume that all migration control were removed in international society. The state of the world would be closer to the normative liberal society that the Kukathas envisions like this:

International society is an archipelago – a sea with numerous islands. Each island is a separate domain, cut-off from others by waters which are indifferent to its circumstances or to its fate. The majority are inhabited by people most of whom are there by chance rather than by intention... The people who populate these islands differ in aspiration and in temperament. Some are content where they are..., and would not dream of risking a venture onto the ocean; while others are restless and anxious to leave the most paradisaical surrounds for unknown opportunities across the water. Each is at liberty to leave, and the sea is thus dotted with vessels, some moving along established routes, others wandering into uncharted areas... (Kukathas, *The Liberal Archipelago*, Oxford University Press, pp. 28-9).

The free oceanic world in the ancient past may have looked like this. It is amusing to dream of the emergence of a totally free world such as this Kukathas’s metaphor describes. You wander around the world like you travel in your country and find your new home somewhere.

The problem is that such freedom of movement, association and dissociation is not ensured in many parts of the world. The minority Rohingya in Myanmar are expelled from their villages where they were born. Palestinians living in Gaza are confined to the over-populated strip and fall victim to merciless shelling. At the same time as I witnessed the aloof co-existence in downtown Tokyo, there were xenophobic street campaigns against Koreans in parts of Tokyo. Those who cannot move are driven out, and those who want to move are locked in. Moreover, there are underground networks of human trafficking across the world. The right of voluntary movement is denied often, and this fact underscores the critical importance of this very right.

Conclusion: Living Apart, Living Together

The Western experiments with multiculturalism may have broken down, but it is too early to give up the idea entirely. Let us turn to the experiment of co-existence in the Afrasian world with as much curiosity as we turn to the Western experiments.

In Tanzania in East Africa, it has been an unspoken rule for Christians and Muslims to rotate the presidency since 1964. In apartheid South Africa, Christians, Muslims and Jews took to the streets together in protest of institutional racism. Turning to Southeast Asia, Malaysia's Bumiputra policy has gained widespread attention as a systematic affirmative action to improve the status of majority Malay citizens. Malays are overwhelmingly Muslim, and the minorities are Buddhists, Taoists, Christians and Hindus. However, the government's preferential treatment of the relatively poor Malays has not provoked notable backlash. On the other hand, in the Philippines where Christians are the clear majority, the Muslim-led autonomous government is being established in the south of the country, Mindanao.

In Afrasia, there is a very rich history of experiments and practical knowledge that would promote the co-existence of people of diverse origins. These modalities of co-existence were not brought in from outside but developed locally and internally. Rather than by valuing diversity per se, these modalities have developed through the experience of adapting to given situations and working out differences between people with diverse backgrounds. As Asians and Africans are becoming the majority of the world's population, we enter an era of cross-border migration throughout Afrasia. The question is how to transform the encounter of various cultures into a peaceful co-existence. Peace cannot be forced from outside either. It is time to learn from the wisdom of Afrasian co-existence rather than look to the outside world for a universal model.

The French philosopher, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, once traced the origin of human language to passions, emotions, and affections. "All the passions tend to bring people back together again, but the necessity of seeking a livelihood forces them apart. It is neither hunger nor thirst but love, hatred, pity, anger, which drew from them, the first words" (*On the Origins of Language*). We live separately for survival but are bound together by affections. That is why language was born.

I hope that this gathering today will be an opportunity to promote communication among the peoples of East Asia in Afrasia and in the wider world. It is communication with words, not force, that binds us together. Such lively communication is really indispensable as we prepare for the post-Covid era.