

Immigration and Integration Policy Singapore

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Speaker's Profile

Md Mizanur Rahman is Senior Research Fellow at the Institute of South Asian Studies (ISAS), National University of Singapore. He has a PhD in Sociology from National University of Singapore. He was awarded Social Science Research Council (SSRC-USA) Fellowship during his PhD candidature. Dr Rahman was Postdoctoral Fellow at the Asia Research Institute and Research Fellow at the Department of Sociology, NUS. He was a visiting scholar at the Department of Sociology, University of Western Ontario, Canada and Graduate School of Policy Science, Ritsumeikan University, Kyoto, Japan. He was commissioned to write reports on international migration issues in the Middle East, South Asia and Southeast Asia by Ford Foundation, IOM and UNIFEM. He is editorial review board member of *Migration Letters - An International Journal of Migration Studies*, *South Asian Journal of Global Business Research*, and *Global Journal of Quantitative Science*. His area of expertise includes migration studies with a focus on East and Southeast Asia, the Middle East, and South Asia. He has published 18 articles from international peer-reviewed journals such as *International Migration*, *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, *Asian Population Studies*, *Canadian Journal of Development Studies*, *Journal of International Migration and Integration* and *Middle Eastern Studies*. Of these 18 journal articles, 13 articles are published in ISI impact factor journals. His four journal articles are rated among the top ten cited and/or downloaded articles in four international journals. Dr Rahman has recently published two co-edited volumes with Palgrave Macmillan (Basingstoke-UK and New York). He is now working on several book projects that are under contracts with some leading academic publishers such as Routledge (London and New York), Springer, and Oxford University Press (under consideration).

Abstract

Singapore, a country built on immigrants and blessed with stability, good governance, and a vibrant economy, has historically relied on cheap and disposable foreign labour for economic development. This economic choice eventually mutated into a demographic compulsion as the country has faced two troubling trends since the 1990s: a rapidly ageing population and an

extremely low reproduction rate. With the gradual shrinking of local population, immigration and integration policies have become a key strategy to tackle the demographic challenge and to ensure the continued economic prosperity in the country. Against this backdrop, this research examines the policies that Singapore pursues to select, admit, retain and integrate foreigners into the Singapore society. Firstly, this paper addresses immigration policy that involves immigration control or regulation policy (the rules and procedures governing the selection and admission of foreigners). Secondly, it deals with integration policy that defines inclusions of foreigners and overseas Singaporeans into the different spheres of the society. The paper demonstrates how two sets of policies involving immigration and integration complement each other in order to form a vibrant and diverse workforce and create a thriving society with its multicultural character. This paper suggests that Singapore's approach to immigration and integration sets an example for other wealthy countries that are experiencing ageing population and low fertility rate in the region and beyond.