



# **THAILAND MIGRATION POLICY AND POPULISM**

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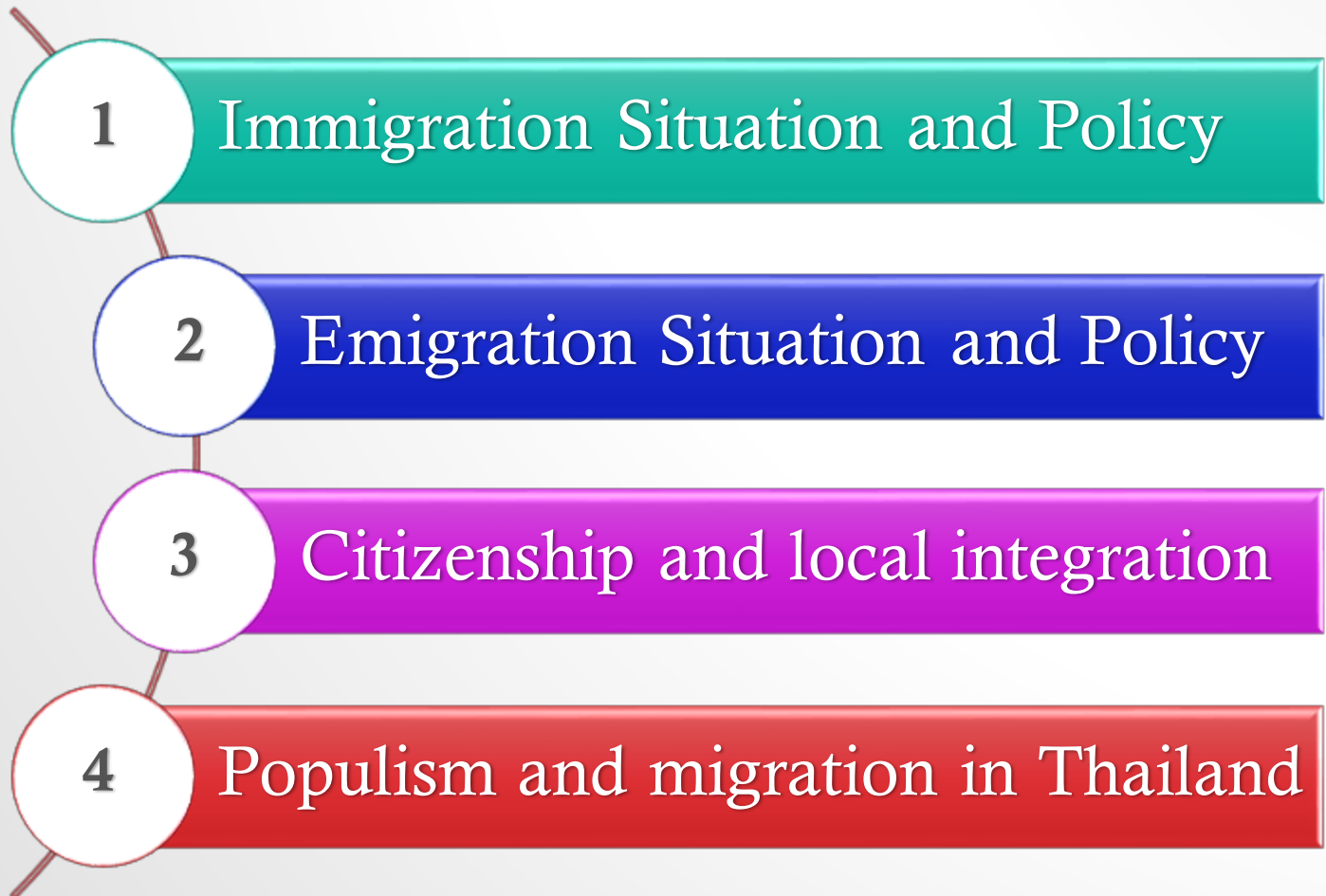
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# Outline of Presentation

- 
- 1 Immigration Situation and Policy
  - 2 Emigration Situation and Policy
  - 3 Citizenship and local integration
  - 4 Populism and migration in Thailand

# 1. Immigration Situation and Policy

## 1.1 Current situation

- Labour migration 3 million + + immigrants workers from Laos, Cambodia and Myanmar
- Estimated 1 million from PRC, Bangladesh, Pakistan, India, Srilanka, Iran, Taiwan, etc.
- 274 countries of origin in 2016

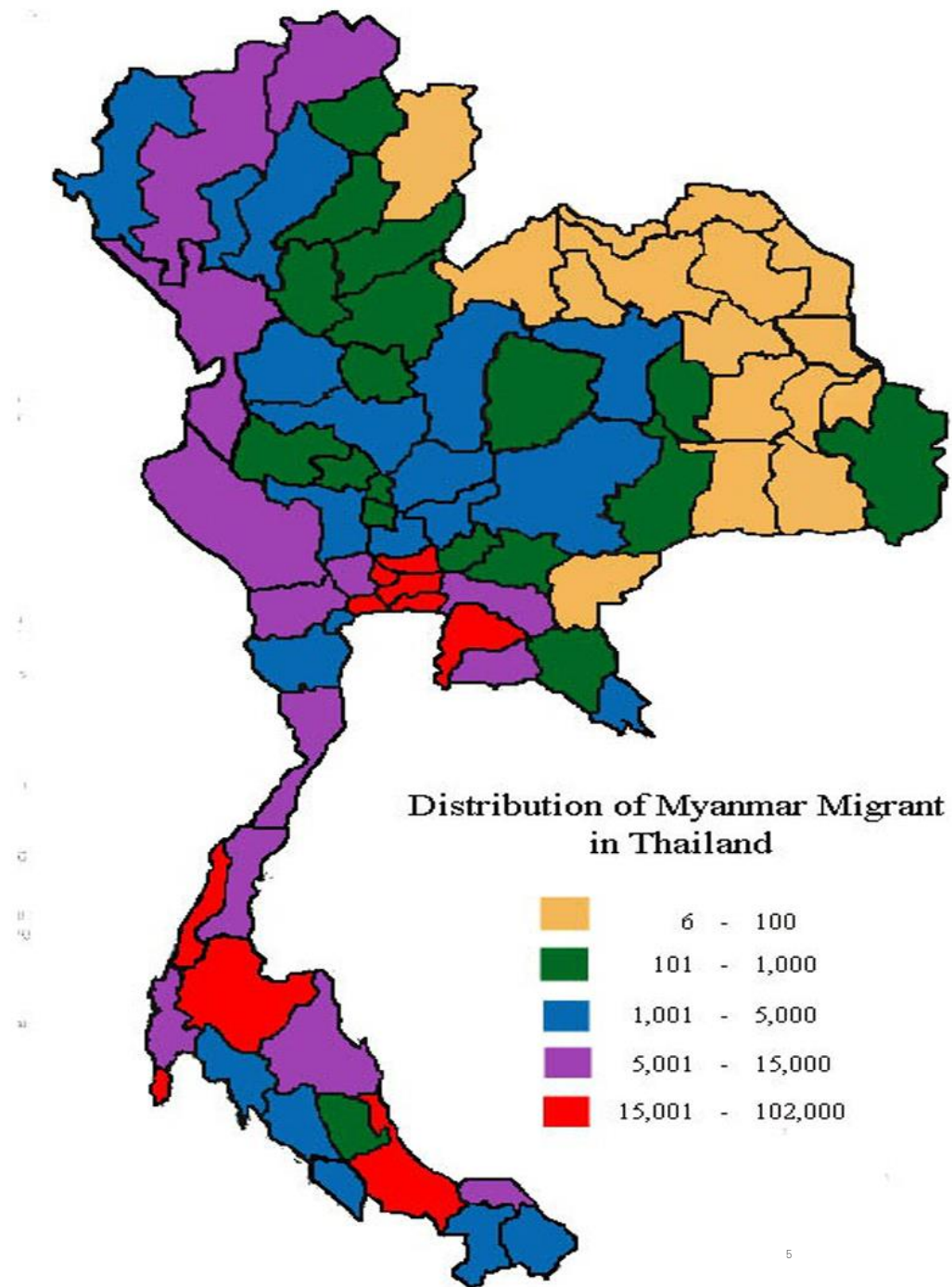
# 1. Immigration Situation and Policy

- **Registered Migrant Workers from Laos, Cambodia and Myanmar**

2016

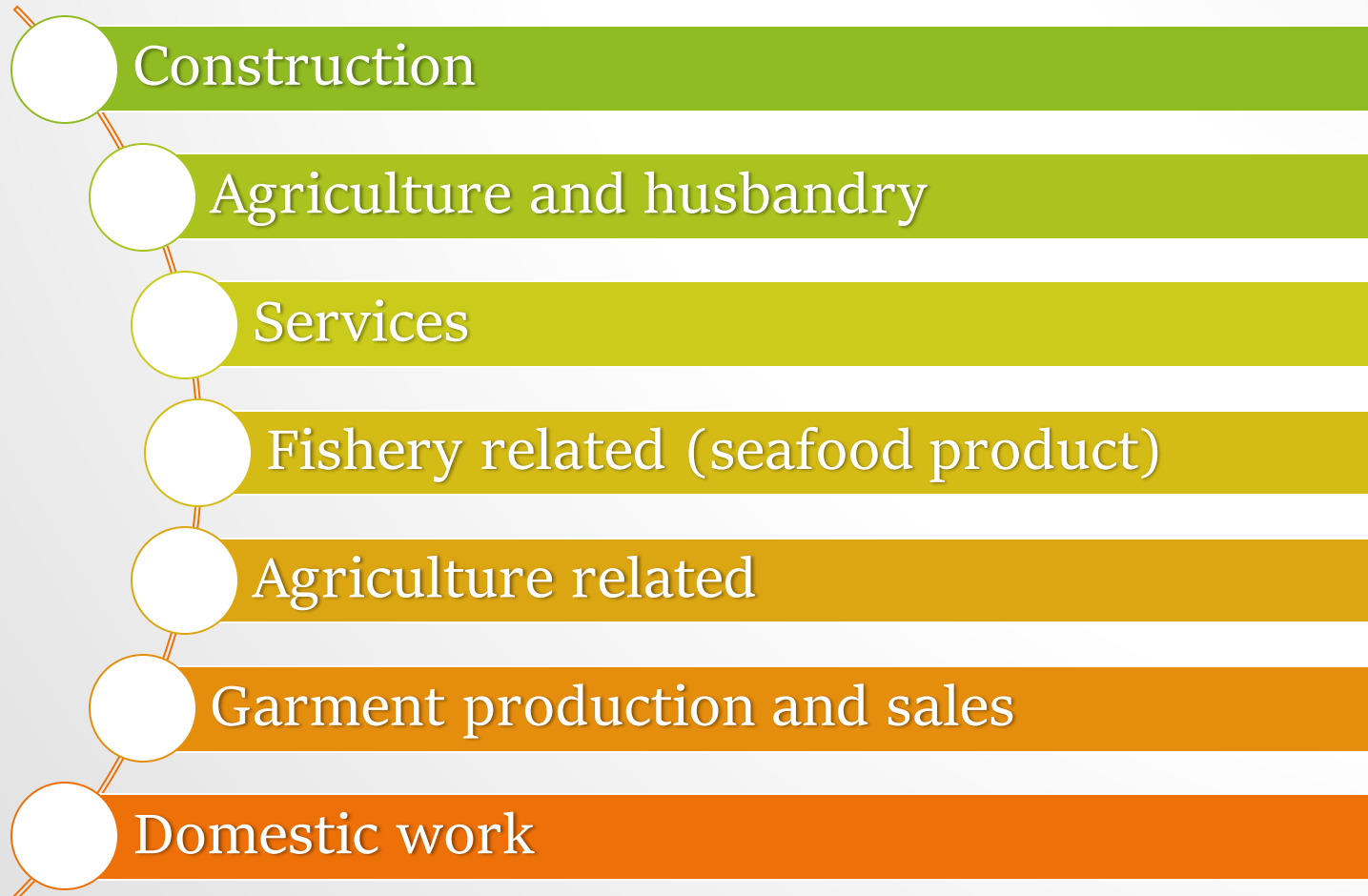
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# 1. Immigration Situation and Policy



# 1. Immigration Situation and Policy

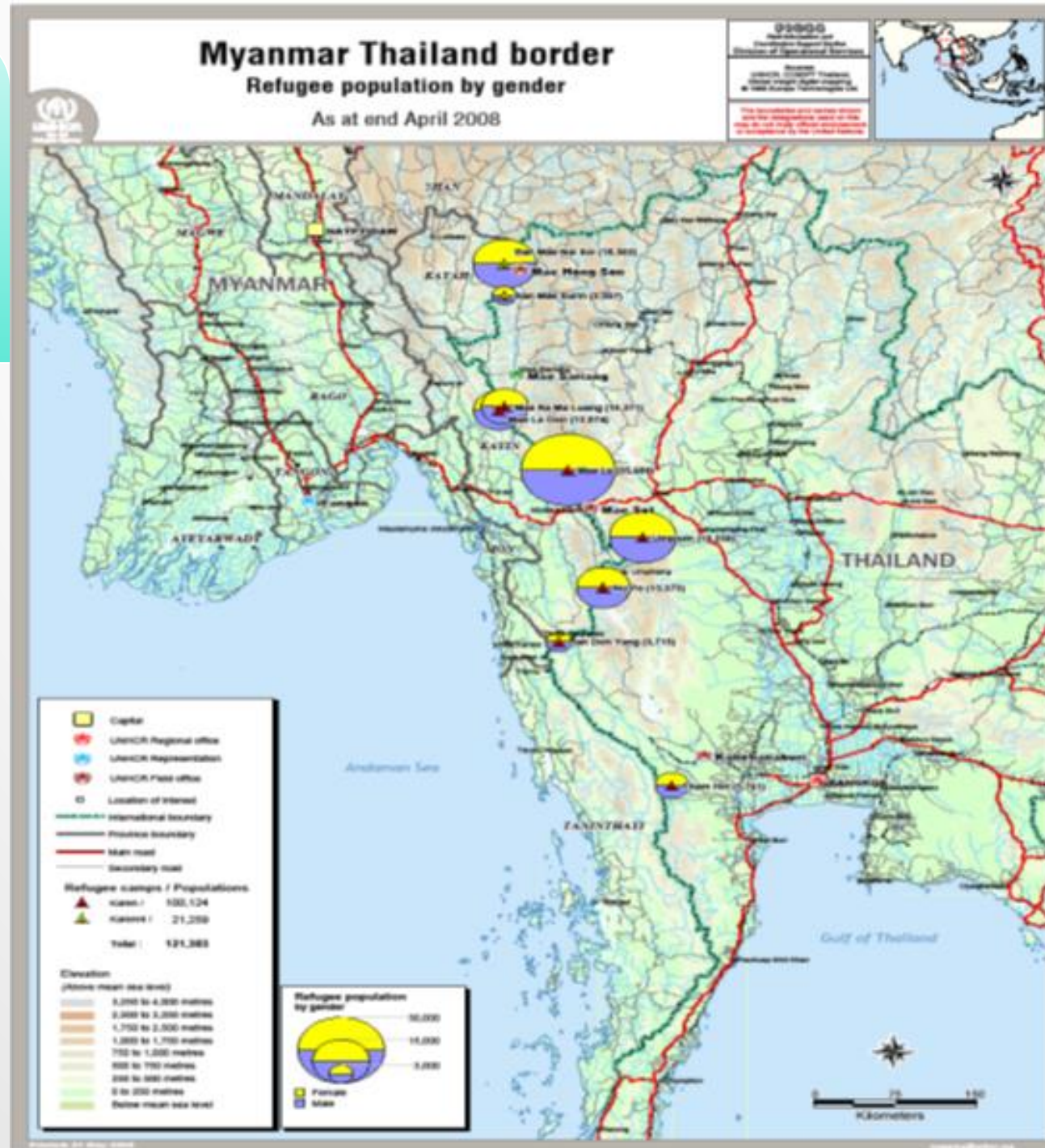
- **Major sector of employment**





# 1. Immigration Situation and Policy

- Refugee and Asylum Seeker



# 1. Immigration Situation and Policy

- **Refugee and Asylum Seeker**





# 1. Immigration Situation and Policy

Refugee



# 1. Immigration Situation and Policy

- **International Tourists**
  - 32.5 million tourists in 2016
  - 8.9% increase from 2015

# 1. Immigration Situation and Policy

- Major countries of origin (million)

|          |      |
|----------|------|
| PRC      | 8.75 |
| Malaysia | 3.53 |
| Laos     | 1.41 |
| India    | 1.19 |

|        |      |
|--------|------|
| Japan  | 1.44 |
| Korea  | 1.46 |
| Russia | 1.09 |
| U.K.   | 1.00 |

Source: Ministry of Tourism, 2016

# 1. Immigration Situation and Policy

- Immigrant by nationality 2016 (in thousand)

|           |       |
|-----------|-------|
| Myanmar   | 750.0 |
| India     | 734.5 |
| Russia    | 631.3 |
| U.S.      | 596.7 |
| Vietnam   | 579.7 |
| Singapore | 557.6 |
| Germany   | 513.2 |

|             |       |
|-------------|-------|
| Australia   | 488.9 |
| Hongkong    | 455.9 |
| Indonesia   | 349.7 |
| Philippines | 286.6 |
| Sweden      | 213.1 |
| Italy       | 145.1 |
| Switzerland | 130.3 |

Source: Immigration Bureau, 2017



# 1. Immigration Situation and Policy

## 1.2 Immigration Policy

Different policies for different groups

Positive towards tourist and professional,  
negative towards refugee and TOC and  
ambivalent towards less skilled migrant worker

Economic benefits and national security are  
major drivers of policy

# 1. Immigration Situation and Policy

## Tourist

Exemption of visa

Visa on arrival

Length of stay

Target high-end tourist

# 1. Immigration Situation and Policy

Foreigners who are being effected by recent flood in the southern of Thailand will not be charge with overstaying fine and penalty if leaving the country by January 31, 2017 in accordance to section 54 of the Immigration Act, B.E. 2522 and the letter No. 0503(๔)/13080 dated 1st August B.E. 2522 of Litigation Division,RTP

posted on 19 Jan 2017

[continue-->](#)

# 1. Immigration Situation and Policy

## Refugee

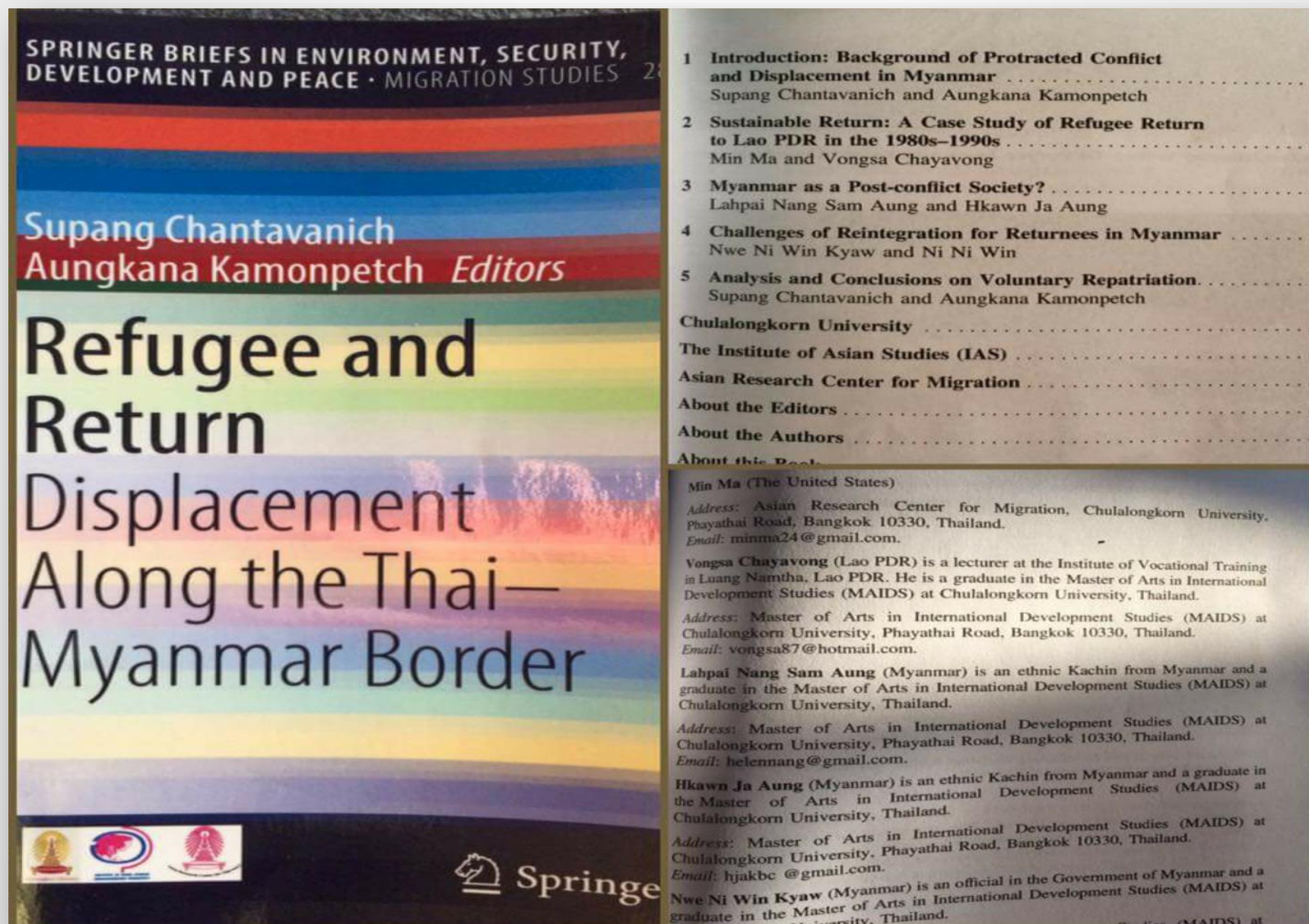
Encourage resettlement and repatriation

Limited local integration

Longterm stay and non-regoulement policy



# 1. Immigration Situation and Policy



# 1. Immigration Situation and Policy

## Migrant worker

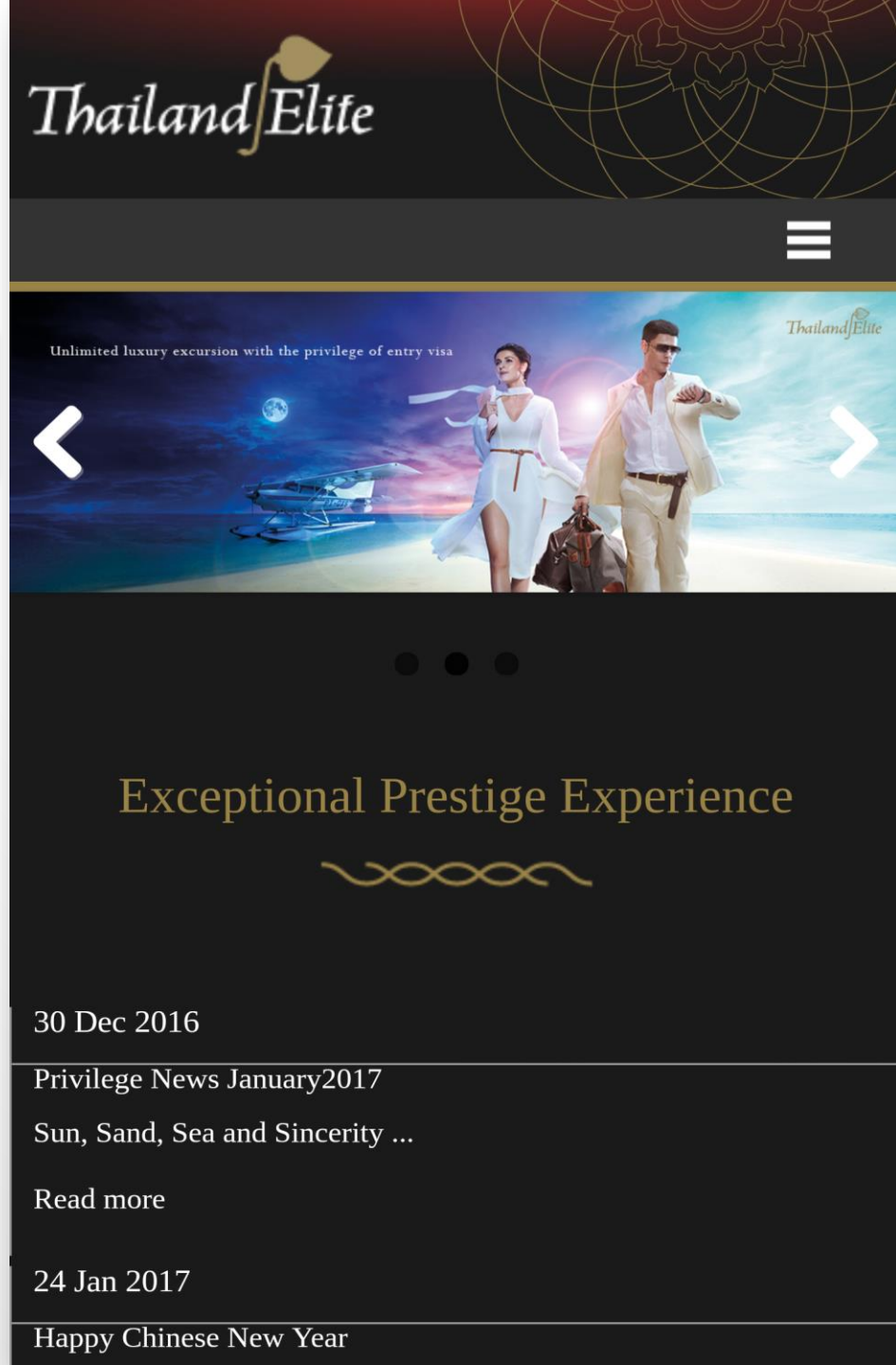
### Thailand's immigration policy

| Year                            | Activities  |
|---------------------------------|---|
| Early registration<br>1992      | Permission to hire Myanmar migrants in 4 border provinces   |
| 1996                            | National registration of 3 nationalities:<br>Cambodia, Lao, Myanmar   |
| Open registration<br>2001       | Setting up Committee on Illegal Migrant workers<br>administration<br>Registration permission in all provinces,<br>all labour jobs |
| 2003                            | Signing MOU Thailand-Myanmar on labour issue<br>Revision of yearly registration   |
| NV & formal recruitment<br>2004 | Registration of migrant dependents  |
| 2009 - present                  | Formal recruitment of Myanmar migrant<br>Nationality verification   |

# 1. Immigration Situation and Policy

## Example of some immigration policies

- Thailand Elite with exclusive benefits, mainly for tourist purpose
  - Privilege entry visa 5 years
  - Length of stay 1 year
  - Membership fee THB 500,000 (USD 1,700)
  - With family (2 members 800,000 + 300,000)



The image shows a screenshot of the Thailand Elite website. At the top, the 'Thailand Elite' logo is displayed in white on a dark background, with a traditional Thai umbrella icon. To the right is a decorative golden mandala. Below the logo is a dark navigation bar with a white hamburger menu icon. The main banner features a couple in white resort wear walking on a beach at night, with a private jet in the background. Text on the banner includes 'Unlimited luxury excursion with the privilege of entry visa' and 'Exceptional Prestige Experience' in gold. Below the banner are three dots and a gold infinity symbol. The bottom section lists dates and news items: '30 Dec 2016', 'Privilege News January 2017', 'Sun, Sand, Sea and Sincerity ...', 'Read more', '24 Jan 2017', and 'Happy Chinese New Year'.

Thailand Elite

Unlimited luxury excursion with the privilege of entry visa

Exceptional Prestige Experience

30 Dec 2016

Privilege News January 2017

Sun, Sand, Sea and Sincerity ...

Read more

24 Jan 2017

Happy Chinese New Year



# 1. Immigration Situation and Policy

Example of some immigration policies

- **Personal Identification and Blacklist Information Control System (PIBICS) by Immigration Police**



The poster features a map of Southeast Asia with arrows indicating connectivity between Thailand and its neighbors (Myanmar, Laos, Cambodia, Vietnam, Malaysia, Singapore, and the Philippines). The title 'PIBICS' is prominently displayed at the top, with the subtitle 'Personal Identification and Blacklist Information Control System' below it. The text 'PIBICS AIMS TO ASEAN' is written in a stylized font. A Thai Garuda emblem is on the left, and a CDG logo is on the right. The bottom section shows a train, a boat, and several Thai passport books. A Thai text box in the center describes the system's purpose.

**PIBICS**  
Personal Identification and Blacklist Information Control System

**PIBICS AIMS TO ASEAN**

ระบบสนับสนุนและรองรับการกิจของ สตม. บนพื้นฐาน  
ด้านความสะดวก รวดเร็ว ถูกต้อง แม่นยำ ครบถ้วน  
และเชื่อถือได้ เพื่อมุ่งสู่ประชาคมเศรษฐกิจอาเซียน

**CDG**  
CDG Systems Ltd.

บริษัท ซีดีจี ซิสเต็มส์ จำกัด  
เลขที่ 202 อาคารสีฉวีรัตน์ ถนนบางเขน แขวงคลองบาง  
พระอินทร์ กรุงเทพมหานคร 10120  
โทรศัพท์ : 02-678-0978 โทรสาร : 02-678-0321-3  
<http://www.cdgs.co.th>



# 1. Immigration Situation and Policy

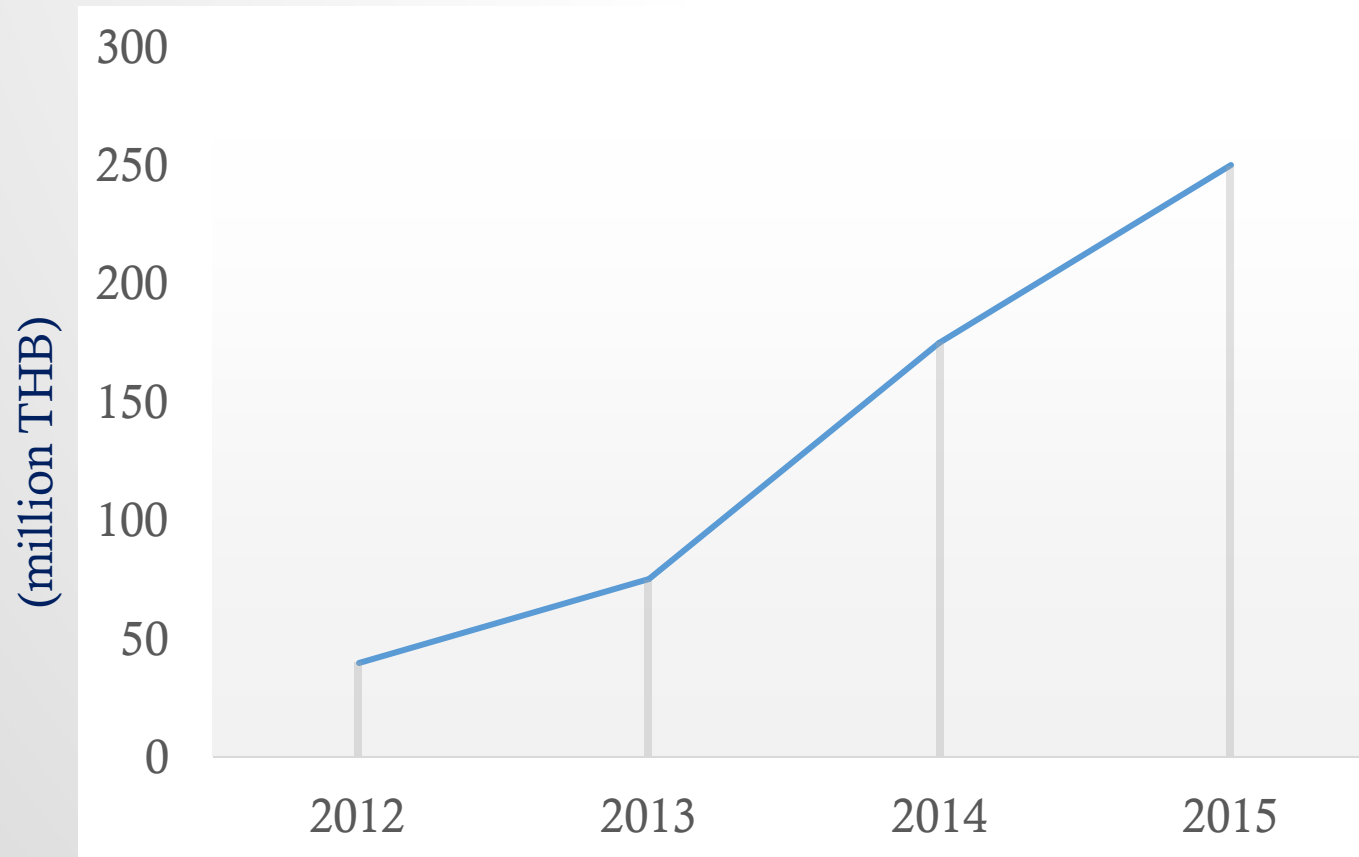
## Example of some immigration policies

- Expansion of nationality: hiring Vietnamese migrant workers in the sea fisheries sector

# 1. Immigration Situation and Policy

## Example of some immigration policies

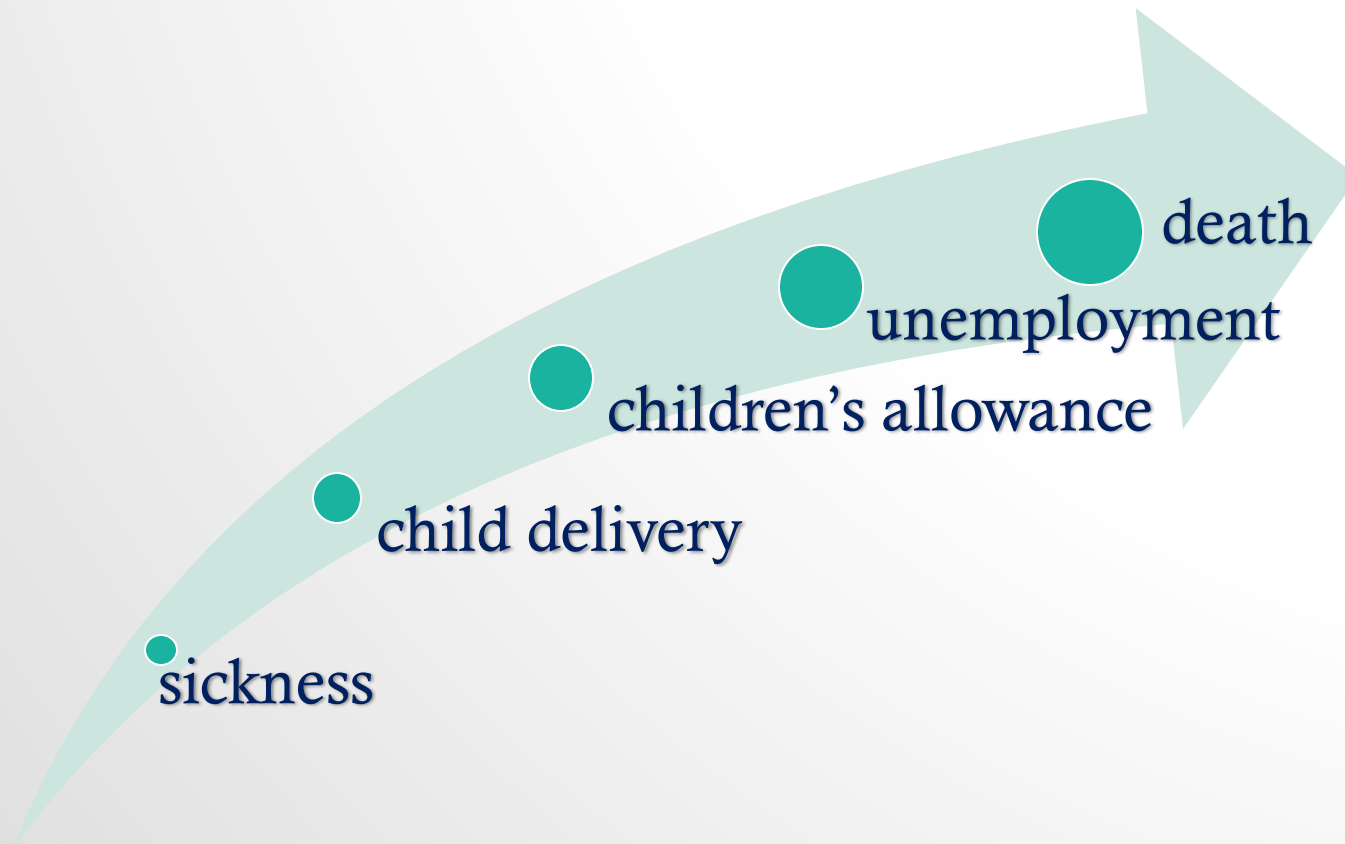
- Migrant workers access to social security: use of benefits



# 1. Immigration Situation and Policy

## Example of some immigration policies

- Major benefits claimed



# 1. Immigration Situation and Policy

## Example of Medical Services for Foreigners

|  |                   |
|--|-------------------|
| <b>Sex change</b>                                | <b>1,625 us\$</b> |
| <b>Orchiectomy</b>                               | <b>125 us\$</b>   |
| <b>Tummy tuck</b>                                | <b>1,250 us\$</b> |
| <b>Breast enlargement</b>                        | <b>1,125 us\$</b> |
| (Mammoplasty with Mentor/ES prostheses included) |                   |
| <b>Liposuction</b>                               | <b>625 us\$</b>   |
| <b>Facelift</b> (Rhytidectomy)                   | <b>875 us\$</b>   |
| <b>Browlift</b> (Forehead lift)                  | <b>625 us\$</b>   |
| <b>Eyelids surgery</b>                           | <b>200 us\$</b>   |

(1 US\$ = 40 Bht) Prices vary with daily exchange rate

All prices include medicine, anesthesia etc.

Foreigners are charged as same as Thais



## 2. Emigration Situation and Policy

### 2.1 Current situation

- **Thai tourists abroad by destination (2015)**

|                                | (Million) |
|--------------------------------|-----------|
| 1. East Asia                   | 5.71      |
| (ASEAN mainly Laos & Malaysia) | 3.60      |
| 2. Europe                      | 0.54      |
| 3. North America               | 0.06      |
| 4. South Asia                  | 0.13      |
| Total                          | 6.79      |

Source: Ministry of Tourism, 2016

## 2. Emigration Situation and Policy

### 2.1 Current situation

- **Flows of Thai Migrant Workers by Destinations (2016)**

|   |               |
|---|---------------|
| 1. Gulf countries                       | 8,455         |
| 2. Asia (Korea, Singapore)              | 46,311        |
| 3. Europe and North America             | 10,886        |
| 4. Australia, Oceania and South America | 2,765         |
| 5. Africa                               |               |
| <b>Total</b>                            | <b>68,417</b> |

Source: Thailand Overseas Employment Administration (TOEA)

## 2. Emigration Situation and Policy

### 2.1 Current situation

- **Remittances (in million THB)**

|      |         |
|------|---------|
| 2016 | 114,581 |
| 2015 | 100,480 |
| 2014 | 117,466 |
| 2013 | 116,223 |
| 2012 | 116,719 |

Source: MOL, 2016

## 2. Emigration Situation and Policy

### 2.2 Emigration Policy

No major policy to send workers abroad, but facilitate migration and seek new labour market

Emphasis on protection at pre-departure and during overseas employment

Create formal recruitment through government and IOM mechanisms (Korea and Israel)

Role of private recruitment agencies (deception and overcharge)

Encourage Thai tourists to travel more locally

Facilitate remittance transfer

## 2. Emigration Situation and Policy

### 2.2 Emigration Policy





### 3. Citizenship: Migration and local integration



Law on citizenship (B.E. 2508) and Ministerial Decree implemented by M01

Foreign spouse of Thai national can apply for citizenship

Children born from Thai and foreign parents can apply

Foreign national with Thai household registration can apply

# Citizenship: Migration and local integration

## Immigration, Nation – State and Citizenship

### Naturalization 1995

|           |         |                                 |
|-----------|---------|---------------------------------|
| Australia | 114,757 | 74 per 1,000 foreign population |
| Canada    | 227,720 | n.a.                            |
| U.S.A.    | 445,853 | n.a.                            |
| Japan     | 14,104  | 10/1,000                        |
| Germany   | 31,885  | 5/1,000                         |

Source: Castles and Miller, 1998 p. 239.

# Citizenship: Migration and local integration

## Immigration, Nation – State and Citizenship

### Naturalization Thailand 2015

- Total 177 persons
- Nationality of origin (18+1 stateless)
  - 1) Laos, Cambodia, Myanmar, Vietnam
  - 2) Philippines, Indonesia
  - 3) People's Republic of China, Taiwan, India, Pakistan, Japan, Iran
  - 4) Finland, France, Russia, Australia, New Zealand, Canada
- People's Republic of China highest number

Source: Ministry of Interior, 2015

# 4. Populism and migration in Thailand

Rise of Populism and Right Wing Politics

Xenophobia against immigrant in Western societies

Factors: economic insecurity and cultural backlash (Inglehart and Norris 2016. American Political Science Association)

Cases of Brexit and Trump



# 4. Populism and migration in Thailand

## economic insecurity

- Workforce transformation in post-industrial economies due to influx of labour migration
- Unemployment and deprivation among locals
- Blaming on immigrants

# 4. Populism and migration in Thailand

## Cultural backlash

- Progressive values among young population
- Conservative reaction from older generation, leading to preference for Right-wing politics
- **Xenophobia against Islamism**

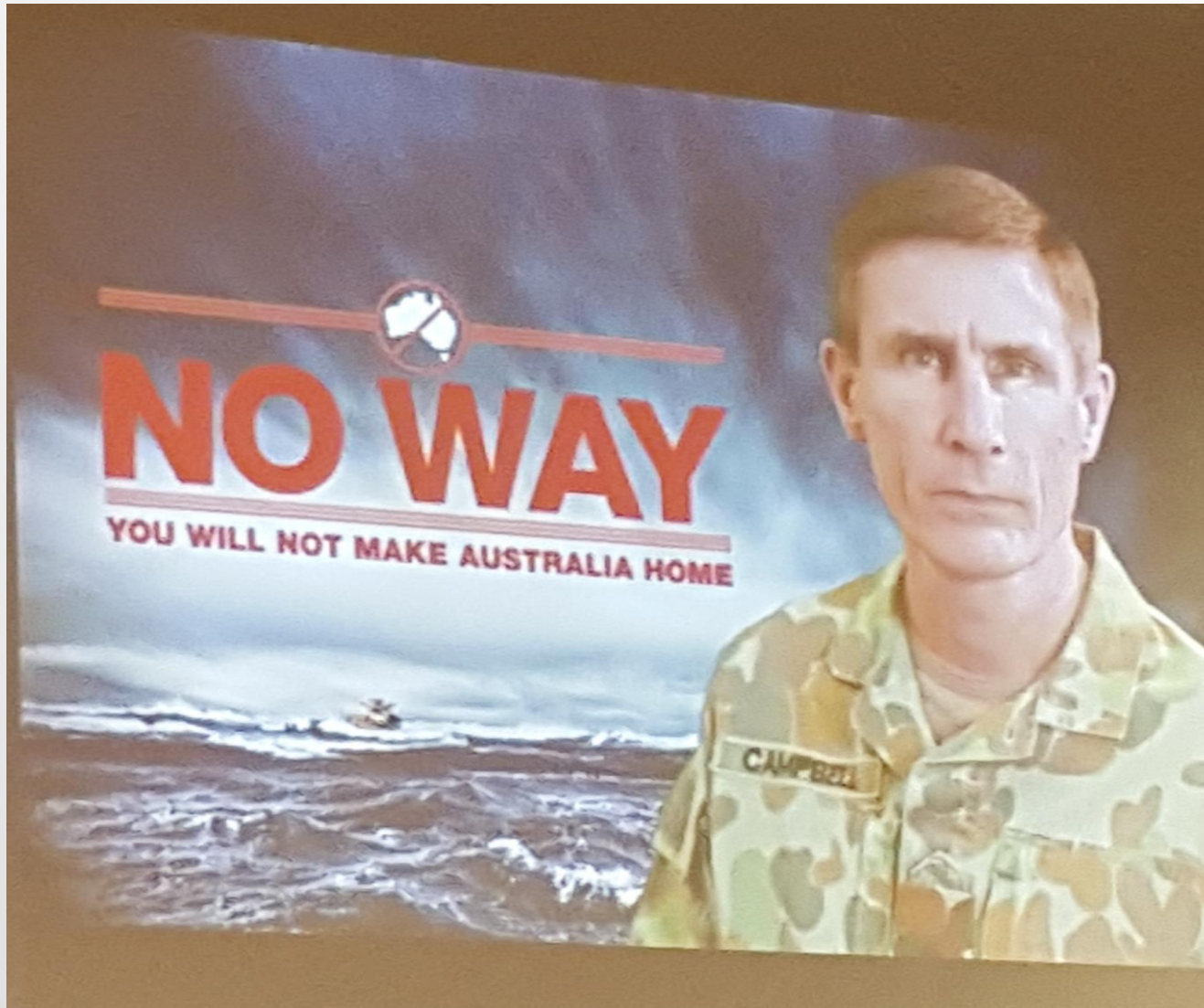
# 4. Populism and migration in Thailand

## Populism in Thailand

- None of the populist factors is applicable to Thailand immigration and emigration policy.
- Prevalence of discontentment against some tourists
- Local politics: from elected government to military
  - Same policy direction
  - Increase emphasis on security and law enforcement against irregular migration
- Role of CSO: strong and helpful to immigrant and emigrant
- Social security especially healthcare and education will be challenges in the future (cf. Obama Care)

# 4. Populism and migration in Thailand

## Populism in Thailand





# 4. Populism and migration in Thailand

## Populism in Thailand (cont.)

- Negative opinion against migrant worker and refugee according to ILO survey
- Employment sectors in bad needs of migrant worker are sea fisheries, agriculture, construction
- Transformation of migrant status
  - tourist → migrant worker
  - refugee → migrant worker
  - migrant worker → refugeeleading to “mixed flows”



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