THAILAND MIGRATION POLICY AND POPULISM

Prof. Dr. Supang Chantavanich
Asian Research Center for Migration
Institute of Asian Studies
Chulalongkorn University
E-mail: Supang.C@chula.ac.th
chansupang@gmail.com
Website: http://www.arcmthailand.com
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, Sri Lanka, Iran, Taiwan, etc.
- 274 countries of origin in 2016
1. Immigration Situation and Policy

- Registered Migrant Workers from Laos, Cambodia and Myanmar

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>2.68</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1. Immigration Situation and Policy
1. Immigration Situation and Policy

- **Major sector of employment**
  - Construction
  - Agriculture and husbandry
  - Services
  - Fishery related (seafood product)
  - Agriculture related
  - Garment production and sales
  - Domestic work
1. Immigration Situation and Policy

- Refugee and Asylum Seeker
1. Immigration Situation and Policy

• Refugee and Asylum Seeker
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)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Million</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PRC</td>
<td>8.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malaysia</td>
<td>3.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laos</td>
<td>1.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>1.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>1.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Korea</td>
<td>1.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russia</td>
<td>1.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.K.</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Ministry of Tourism, 2016
1. Immigration Situation and Policy

- **Immigrant by nationality 2016 (in thousand)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Immigrants (in thousand)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Myanmar</td>
<td>750.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>734.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russia</td>
<td>631.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S.</td>
<td>596.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vietnam</td>
<td>579.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Singapore</td>
<td>557.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>513.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>488.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hongkong</td>
<td>455.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>349.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philippines</td>
<td>286.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>213.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>145.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>130.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*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
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(ง)/13080 dated 1st August B.E. 2522 of Litigation Division, RTP

posted on 19 Jan 2017
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 Introduction: Background of Protracted Conflict and Displacement in Myanmar
Supang Chantavanich and Aungkana Kamonpetch

2 Sustainable Return: A Case Study of Refugee Return to Lao PDR in the 1980s–1990s
Min Ma and Vongsa Chayavong

3 Myanmar as a Post-conflict Society?
Lahpai Nang Sam Aung and Hkawn Ja Aung

4 Challenges of Reintegration for Returnees in Myanmar
Nwe Ni Win Kyaw and Ni Ni Win

5 Analysis and Conclusions on Voluntary Repatriation
Supang Chantavanich and Aungkana Kamonpetch

Chulalongkorn University

The Institute of Asian Studies (IAS)

Asian Research Center for Migration

About the Editors

About the Authors

About this Book

Mia Ma (The United States)
Address: Asian Research Center for Migration, Chulalongkorn University, Phayathai Road, Bangkok 10330, Thailand.
Email: minma24@gmail.com.

Vongsa Chayavong (Lao PDR) is a lecturer at the Institute of Vocational Training in Luang Namtha, Lao PDR. He is a graduate in the Master of Arts in International Development Studies (MAIDS) at Chulalongkorn University, Thailand.
Address: Master of Arts in International Development Studies (MAIDS) at Chulalongkorn University, Phayathai Road, Bangkok 10330, Thailand.
Email: vongsa87@hotmail.com.

Lahpai Nang Sam Aung (Myanmar) is an ethnic Kachin from Myanmar and a graduate in the Master of Arts in International Development Studies (MAIDS) at Chulalongkorn University, Thailand.
Address: Master of Arts in International Development Studies (MAIDS) at Chulalongkorn University, Phayathai Road, Bangkok 10330, Thailand.
Email: helemnang@gmail.com.

Hkawn Ja Aung (Myanmar) is an ethnic Kachin from Myanmar and a graduate in the Master of Arts in International Development Studies (MAIDS) at Chulalongkorn University, Thailand.
Address: Master of Arts in International Development Studies (MAIDS) at Chulalongkorn University, Phayathai Road, Bangkok 10330, Thailand.
Email: hjkabc@gmail.com.

Nwe Ni Win Kyaw (Myanmar) is an official in the Government of Myanmar and a graduate in the Master of Arts in International Development Studies (MAIDS) at Chulalongkorn University, Thailand.
Address: Master of Arts in International Development Studies (MAIDS) at Chulalongkorn University, Phayathai Road, Bangkok 10330, Thailand.
Email: hjakbc0@gmail.com.
1. Immigration Situation and Policy

Thailand’s immigration policy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Early registration 1992</td>
<td>Permission to hire Myanmar migrants in 4 border provinces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>National registration of 3 nationalities: Cambodia, Lao, Myanmar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open registration 2001</td>
<td>Setting up Committee on Illegal Migrant workers administration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Registration permission in all provinces, all labour jobs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>Signing MOU Thailand-Myanmar on labour issue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NV &amp; formal recruitment 2004</td>
<td>Revision of yearly registration, Registration of migrant dependents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009 - present</td>
<td>Formal recruitment of Myanmar migrant Nationality verification</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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
1. Immigration Situation and Policy

Example of some immigration policies

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

![Graph showing the increase in use of social security benefits for migrant workers from 2012 to 2015.](image)
1. Immigration Situation and Policy

Example of some immigration policies

- Major benefits claimed
  - sickness
  - child delivery
  - children’s allowance
  - unemployment
  - death
  - sickness
1. Immigration Situation and Policy

Example of Medical Services for Foreigners

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Procedure</th>
<th>Price (US$)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sex change</td>
<td>1,625</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orchietomy</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tummy tuck</td>
<td>1,250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breast enlargement</td>
<td>1,125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Mammoplasty with Mentor/ES protheses included)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liposuction</td>
<td>625</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facelift (Rhytidectomy)</td>
<td>875</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Browlift (Forehead lift)</td>
<td>625</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eyelids surgery</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(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)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>(Million)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. East Asia</td>
<td>5.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(ASEAN mainly Laos &amp; Malaysia)</td>
<td>3.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Europe</td>
<td>0.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. North America</td>
<td>0.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. South Asia</td>
<td>0.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>6.79</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Ministry of Tourism, 2016
2. Emigration Situation and Policy

2.1 Current situation

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Destination</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Gulf countries</td>
<td>8,455</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Asia (Korea, Singapore)</td>
<td>46,311</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Europe and North America</td>
<td>10,886</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Australia, Oceania and South America</td>
<td>2,765</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Africa</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>68,417</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Thailand Overseas Employment Administration (TOEA)
2. Emigration Situation and Policy

2.1 Current situation

- **Remittances** (in million THB)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Remittances (in million THB)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>114,581</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>100,480</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>117,466</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>116,223</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>116,719</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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
### Naturalization 1995

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Naturalizations</th>
<th>Rate per 1,000 foreign population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>114,757</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>227,720</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S.A.</td>
<td>445,853</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>14,104</td>
<td>10/1,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>31,885</td>
<td>5/1,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Castles and Miller, 1998 p. 239.
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

- 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 $\rightarrow$ migrant worker
  - refugee $\rightarrow$ migrant worker
  - migrant worker $\rightarrow$ refugee leading to “mixed flows”
THAILAND MIGRATION POLICY AND POPULISM

Prof. Dr. Supang Chantavanich
Asian Research Center for Migration
Institute of Asian Studies
Chulalongkorn University
E-mail: Supang.C@chula.ac.th
chansupang@gmail.com
Website: http://www.arcmthailand.com