

THE NEW CHINESE MIGRANTS IN THAILAND

MOBILITIES, ROLES, AND INFLUENCE OF SINO-THAI RELATIONS

泰国的中国新移民：流动、作用、对中泰关系的影响

KULNAREE NUKITRANGSAN, Ph.D.

Chinese Studies Center, Institute of Asian Studies

Chulalongkorn University, Thailand

✉ kulnaree.n@chula.ac.th

The New Chinese Migrants in Thailand

- Who is new Chinese migrant?
- Characteristics and motivations of new Chinese migrants
- Purpose of the migration
- Impacts of the movement of the new Chinese migrants on Thailand
- Role of the new Chinese migrant in strengthening Sino-Thai relations
- Challenge for Thailand

Who is new Chinese migrants?

“New Chinese migrants” referred to.....

1. Mainland Chinese who migrated after reformation and opening up of the country
(from 1978 onward)
2. Permanently reside in the countries of destination regardless of their current nationalities

Characteristics of new Chinese migrants

1. Different from the old Chinese migrants
2. Having “*hybrid culture*”
3. Being of mid-level skills or mid-level incomes

1. Different from the old Chinese migrants

Old Chinese Migrants

- ❖ Escape the hardship in their hometown
- ❖ Most of them are male
- ❖ Lack of education
- ❖ Accept cultural integrations
- ❖ Formed associations based on their hometown

New Chinese Migrants

- ❖ Seek better opportunities
- ❖ Female-to-male ratio is distinct
- ❖ More educated
- ❖ Not as emotionally bound to the countries in which they reside
- ❖ Formed associations based on variety of basis

2. Having Hybrid culture

- Means any culture that is not Chinese and cannot be specified of the exact origin

3. Being of mid-level skills & incomes

- They are educated, talented in business, and willing to take risk.
- For skilled laborers, different from Thailand's neighboring country labors (Myanmar, Laos, Cambodia)

Motivation to Thailand

1. Search of a better life
2. Search of new destination for trade and investment
3. Search of new residences

Pattern/Purpose of New Chinese Migrants

- Conduct business
- Investor
- Volunteer teacher /language teacher
- Student
- Skilled labor
- Other career worker
- Retire
- Settle with spouse

Impact on Thailand

Positive Impacts	Negative Impacts
<p>Bring skilled and quality laborers to Thailand which help decreasing skills scarcity.</p>	<p>Many Chinese migrant workers are an undocumented worker. Some do illegal entries, overstaying, or holding the wrong type of visa.</p>
<p>Economic role of the new Chinese migrants fostered community and local development by bringing in technologies, bringing about material development and urbanization.</p>	<p>Some of the new Chinese migrants unethically make their living, for instance, conducting illegal businesses, illegally possessing the land and real estate, using a Thai national as a nominee in conducting business, leading to an act of seeking benefits from the loophole in law</p>
<p>Some of Chinese investments, businesses, and entrepreneurship bring employment opportunities and income to local residents.</p>	<p>Exploitation in the areas due to a lack of consciousness in environmental protection, to illustrate, pollution, overuse of chemical substances, noise pollution</p>
<p>Investments and entrepreneurship lead to the growth of the local economy.</p>	<p>Cultural and economic conflict with local residents. For instance, (1) Chinese retailers conducting businesses in Thailand caused Thai retailers being at a major disadvantage in competing against the Chinese one. (2) Some see that the influx of the new Chinese migrants led to a job replacement, especially Chinese language-related jobs. (3) Some of the new Chinese migrants' behaviors are against Thai custom, causing behavioral conflict, e.g., talking loudly, putting their feet up in public areas.</p>

Role in strengthening Sino-Thai relations

- Social & culture
- Tourism
- Economic
- Education

Challenge for Thailand



- Decreasing cosmopolitan state?
- Proper management?