

Immigrants - who are they and how should we look at them?

Department of Economics

TU 101

15.9.2017

Dr. Jesper Kulvmann
Department of Social Administration
Thammasat University

Thailand migration Profile

Middle income country

- Agricultural to a labour-intensive export-orientated country
- Destination of large numbers of international migrants
- Victims of trafficking
- Transit for asylum seekers
- Internal migration

Introduction

Immigrants

- Foreign born.
- Foreign national.
- Stay for more than one year (UN definition).



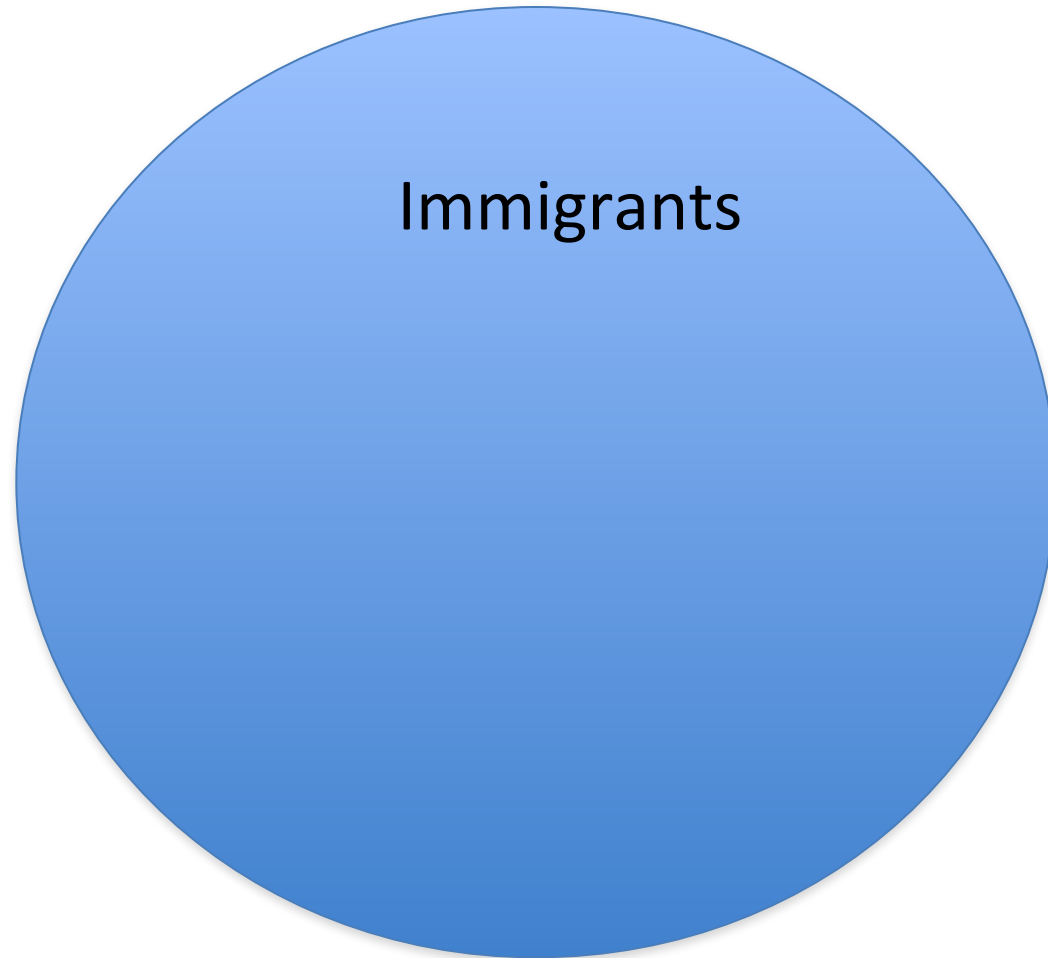
Introduction

Migrant

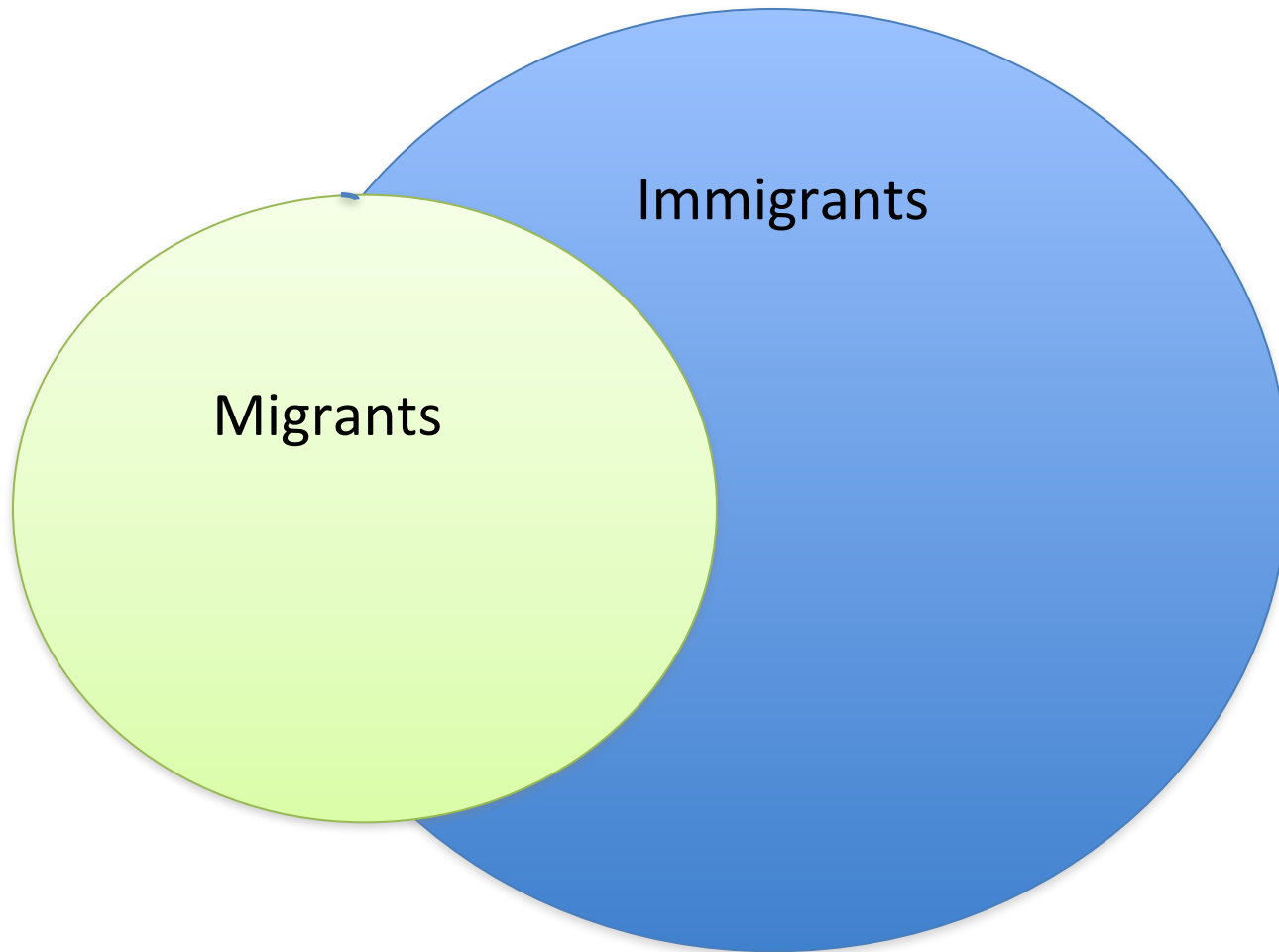
- A person who moves from one place to another
 - Looking for work
 - Inside a country
 - Across borders
 - Unspecific period of time



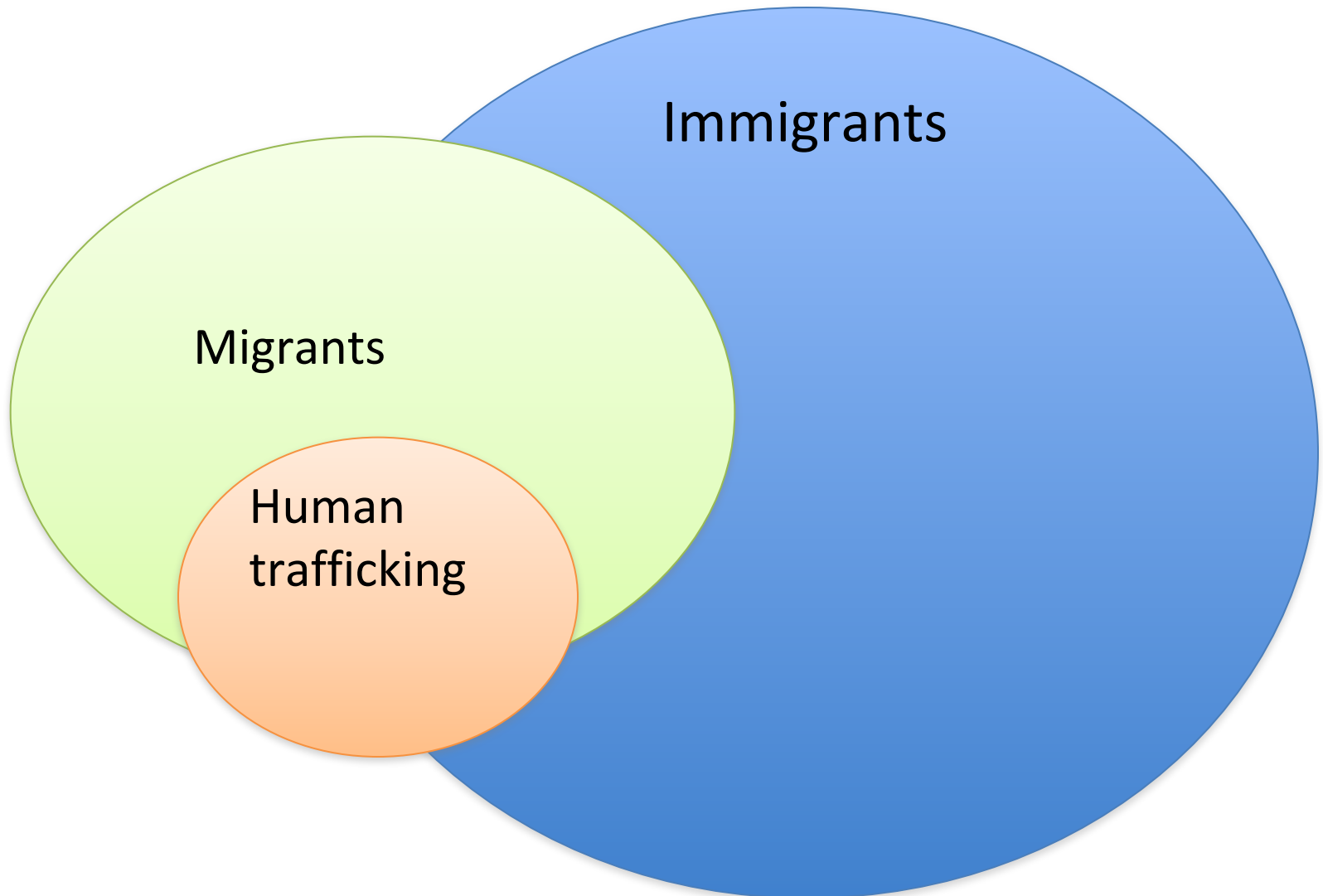
Types of immigrants



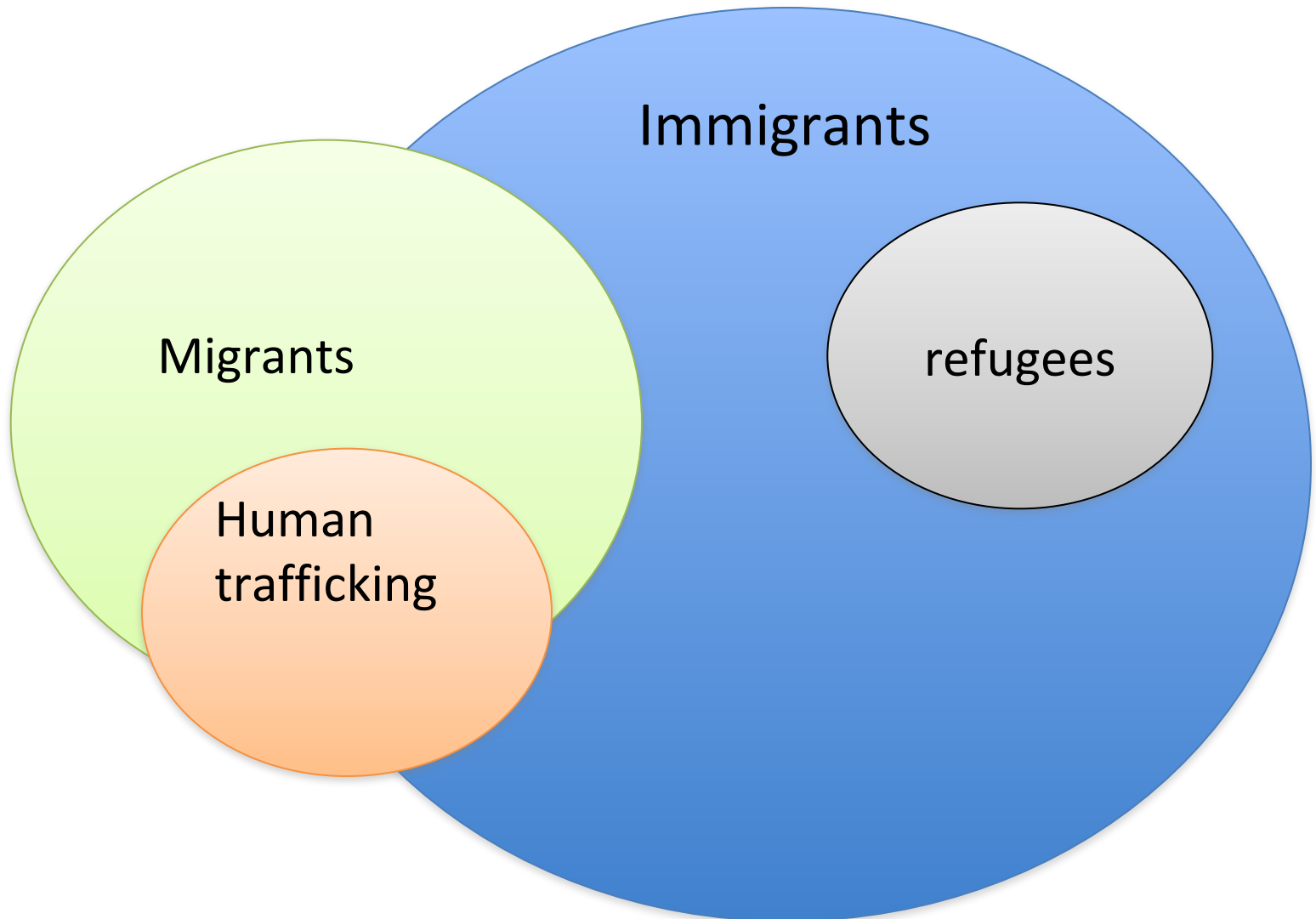
Types of immigrants



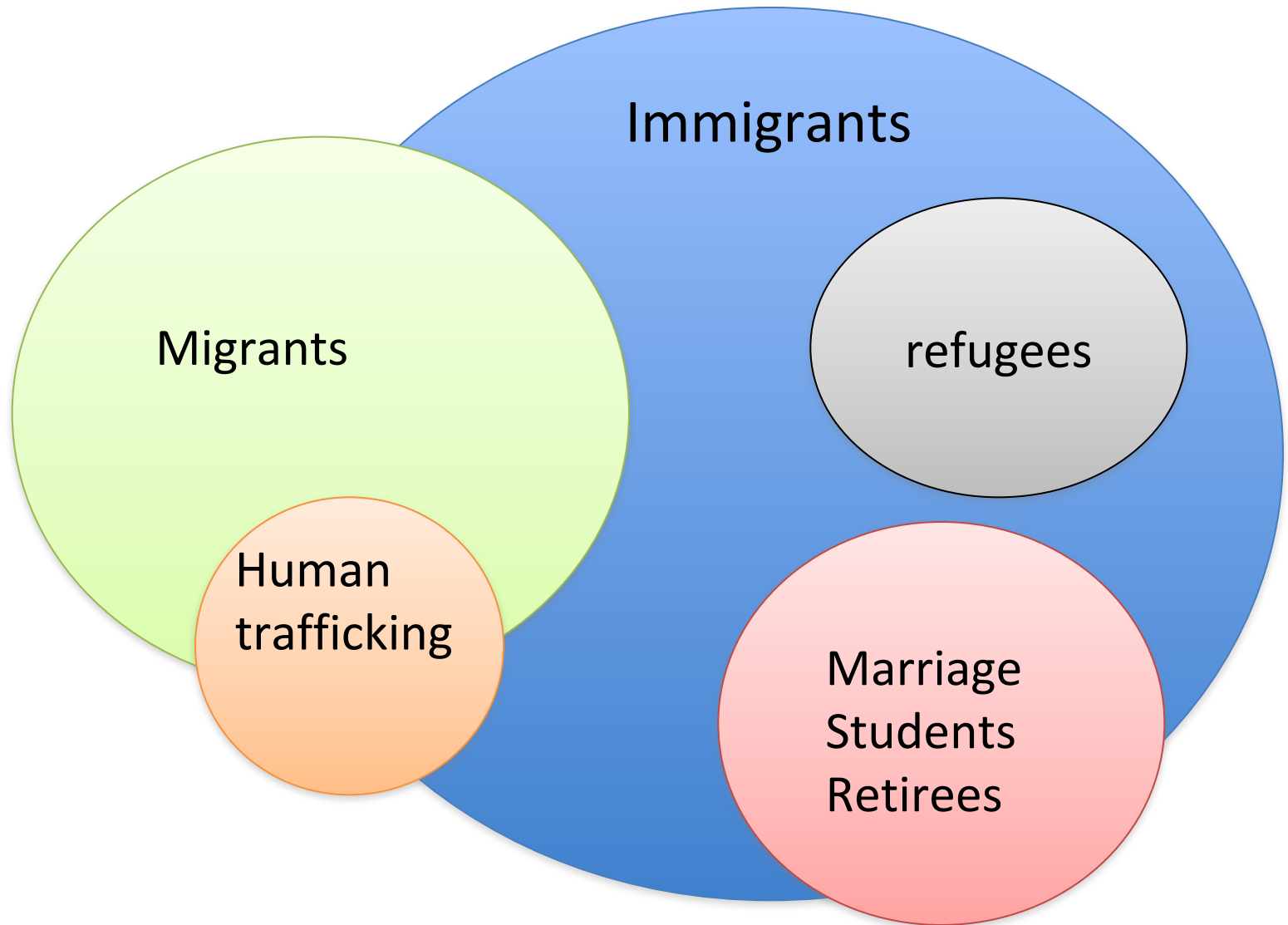
Types of immigrants



Types of immigrants



Types of immigrants



Outline of lecture

1. Immigration policies
2. Western immigrants
3. Immigrants/migrants from Southeast Asian (ASEAN)
 - Push and pull factors
 - Living and working conditions
 - Legal/illegal status
 - Human trafficking
 - Benefits and costs of migrant workers
4. Refugees
5. Students activities

Immigration policies

Thailand for Thais

- Thailand discourages permanent residence.
 - Average stay of immigrants: 5.5 years
- Residence permits granted on annual basis.
 - Including persons married to a Thai.
- Foreigners cannot own land.
- Allow only skilled migration (Westerners)
 - Work permits to Southeast Asians for low paid jobs

Estimated foreign population residing and working in Thailand, approximately end of 2009

CATEGORY	STAY	STAY AND WORK
Professional, skilled and semi-skilled		106,486
Temporary stay	232,175	
Other regular		579.350
Refugees	141,076	
Migrants Cambodia, Lao PDR and Myanmar		
• Documented (2010)		1.010.941
• Undocumented and family members		1.444.803
Subtotal		2.455.744
Total	373,251	3.141.580
Overall total	3.514.831	

Development of migration in Thailand

- Registered Migrant workers
 - 1992: 102.000
 - 2010: 1.010.941
- Labour Force (2016)
 - 5% migrant workers
- Work permits to low skilled workers
 - Only to workers from Cambodia, Lao PDR and Myanmar.
 - Work and residence permit for one year
 - 240.000 employers requested non-Thai migrant workers in 2006.

Western immigrants



Immigrants/migrants southeast Asia



Immigrants/migrants southeast Asia

Source of living for migrants from:



Unskilled construction workers,
fishing industry.



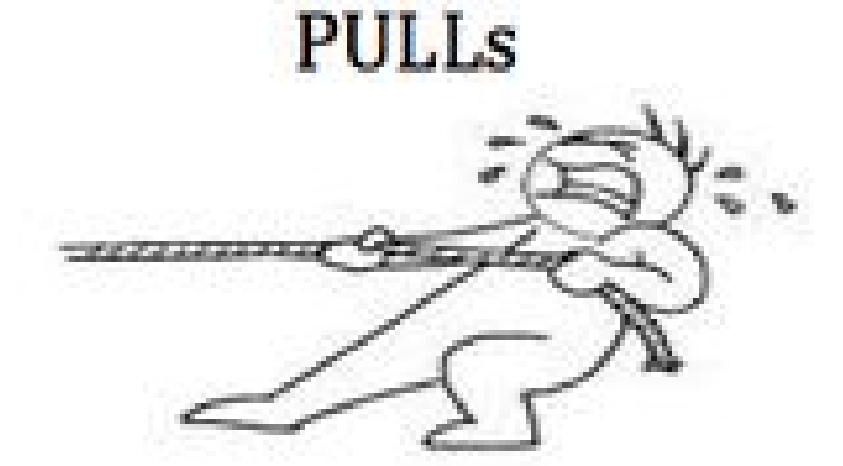
Rice paddies.



Domestic and factory work.

Pull factors

- Thailand's dual economy
- Wage differences
- Diversity of risk
- Remittance
- Demand for “3D labourers”
- Demographic dynamics
 - Thailand aging society
 - Neighbouring countries population growth



Push factors

- Poverty
- unemployment
- Lack of opportunities
- Poor education
- Political instability
- war



The three “Ds”.

- Dirty jobs.
- Dangerous jobs.
- Demeaning (humiliating, shameful) jobs.
- The lowest paid jobs.

Maids

- 90% of 250.000 house maids in Thailand are from Laos, Myanmar or Cambodia.
- Hidden away from the public
 - No legal rights
 - No payment for overtime
 - Underage maids common
 - No specific documentation
 - Sending home remittance



Youngsters: deprived of education



Child poverty

Child work

- Forced to work
 - Collecting things in the street.
 - Child prostitution.
 - trafficking
- 20.000 children living in in the street in the big cities in Thailand.

(Humania, 2016)



Housing condition



Limited Health Provision

- 30 bath scheme only for Thai nationals.
- Health scheme for registered migrants
 - Language barriers
 - Discrimination
 - Employers hold back health certificates
- Outcome
- Poor health condition
- Higher risk of infectious diseases
 - Tuberculosis: 4% of migrant workers
2% of Thais

Illegal immigrants

- No legal protection.
- Vulnerable to exploitation
 - Work place
 - Housing market
 - Authorities
- “Invisible” in society



Why illegal?

- No passport
- Cannot afford to register legally
 - Workers must pay recruitment fees
- Registered workers bound to same employer and area.
 - Limited uptake of “amnesty”
 - Limited rights
- Working conditions, including pay, is better at big exporting industries.

Why? _____

Fishing industry: hard working conditions



Long hours



Low pay

trafficking

Harcadous working conditions



Hazardous working and living conditions



Health provision: no coverage



Human trafficking

- Trading of humans for the benefit of traffickers or others. Commonly for forced labour or sexual exploitation.

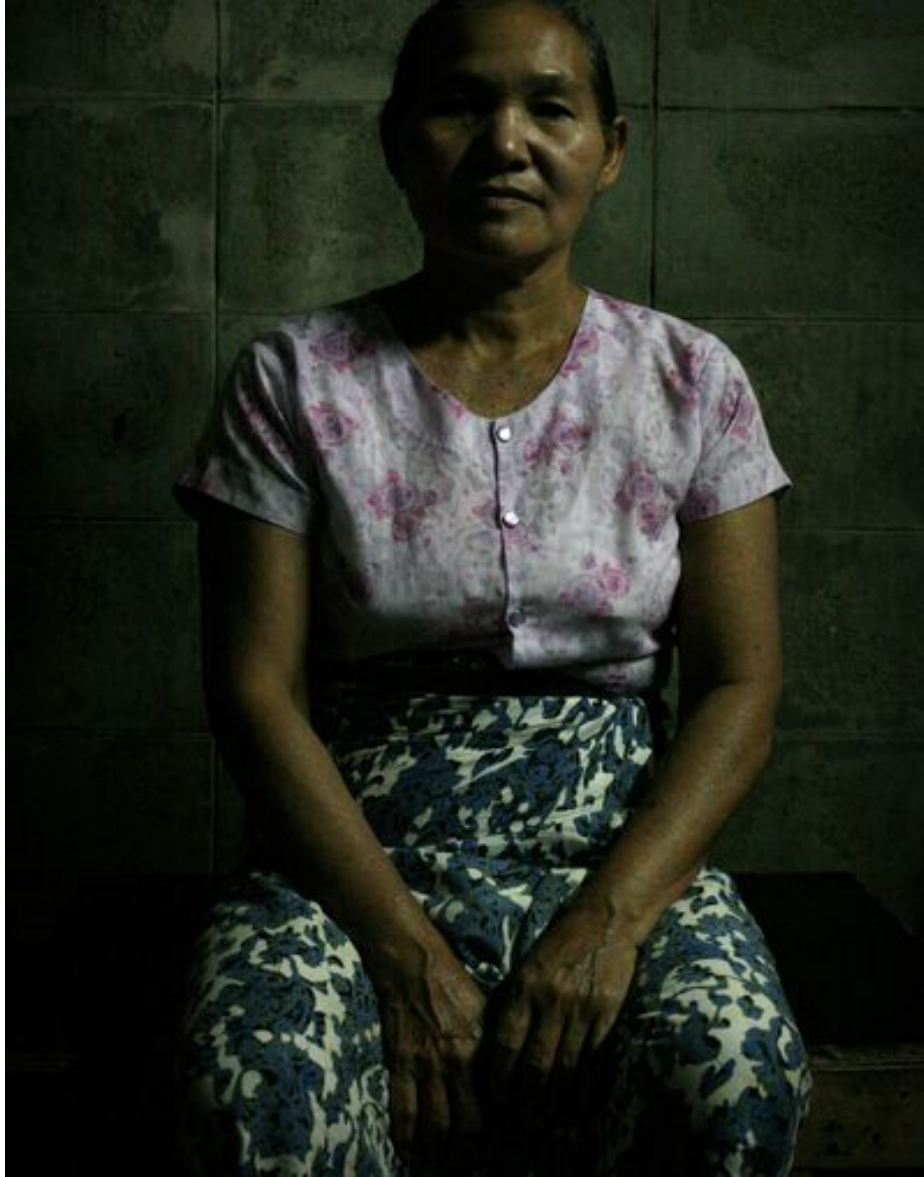


Human trafficking

- Construction
 - Commercial fishing
 - Commercial agriculture
 - Domestic work
 - Sex industry
 - Many are trafficked willingly, but with no documents.
 - Debt bondage
- (estimate: 60.000 women from North Thailand trafficked into the sex industry)



Daw Win Tin From Myanmar: forced to work in construction for months as bonded labour.



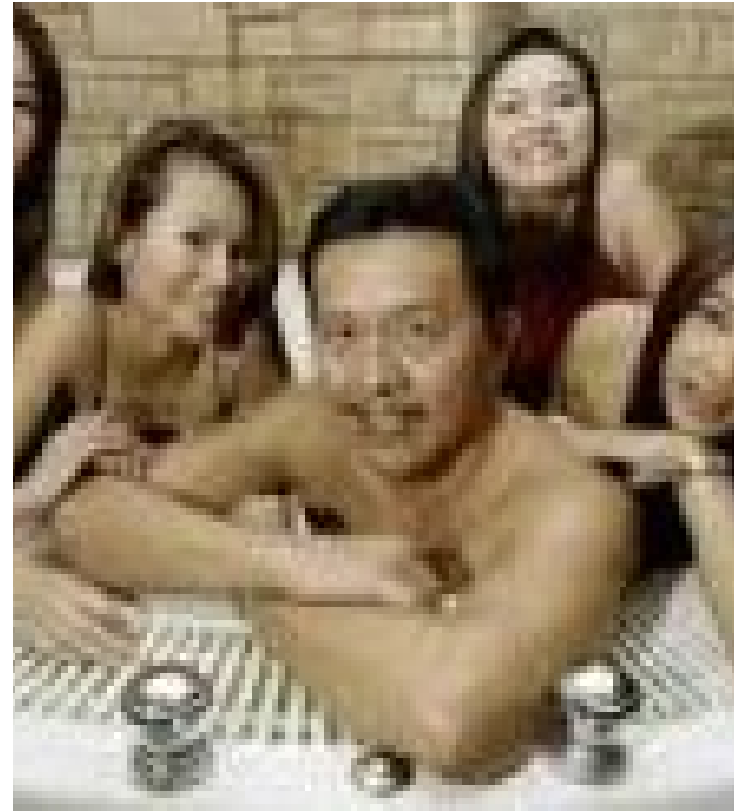
Sexual exploitation: prostitution



Prostitution: Thailand's worst kept secret

Survey by the Kinsey Institute:

- 75% of all Thai male have made use of a prostitute.
- 74% of young men have lost their virginity with a female sex worker.
- 6.6 billion USD revenue a year.
 - GDP: 387 billion USD



Human trafficking

Why Thailand?

- Lack of legal protection
- Corrupt law enforcement
- Thailand in “tier 3”*, lowest tier regarding policies preventing human trafficking

*Trafficking in Persons report (US).

Migration and Thai economy

Benefits

- Contribute to total economic output (GDP)
 - Minimal: research shows about 1% -.1.25%.
- Stabilize labour supply
- Maintain competitiveness
- Create excessive profit
 - One research: profits up by 21% employing immigrants.
- Keeping prices low (low inflation).

Migration and Thai economy

Costs

- Reduce native wages (less than 1%)
- Uneven income distribution
- Substitution of immigrants and native workers
- Uneven income distribution
- Low motivation to train workers
- Divert from knowledge-based economy and innovation
 - The middle income trap

Migration and Thai economy

Costs

- Competition for public services between low-income Thais and immigrants
- Increase in human trafficking, disease transmission
- Discomfort among Thai community.
- Increased corruption among government officials

Refugees



Refugee policies

- Refugee: a person who flees for safety in another country.
 - No recognition of refugees → not possible to seek asylum* → no legal status (illegal)
 - Thailand allow UNHRC (United Nation Refugee Agency) to care for Burmese refugees along the Thai/Burmese borders. Refugees living in camps.
 - Since 2014 Thai Government has been more strict preventing refugees entering Thailand.

*asylum: protection in another country.

UNHCR 2015 planning figures for Thailand

Type of population	Origin	January 2015	
		Total in country	Of whom assisted by UNHCR
Refugees	Sri Lanka	300	300
	Myanmar	72,900	72,900
	Pakistan	400	400
	Various	1,800	1,800
People in refugee-like situations	Myanmar	51,500	-
	Various	1,000	1,000
Asylum-seekers	Palestinian	900	900
	Pakistan	7,600	7,600
	Various	2,800	2,800
Stateless	Stateless	506,200	-
Total		645,400	87,700

Refugees: stateless

- Many arrived in the 1980s→ 500.000 – 1million.
 - Political prosecution, discrimination, armed conflicts.
 - Akna, Lanu, Lisu, Yao, Shan, Hmong and Karen
- Thailand deny them citizenship
 - One parent must be born in Thailand (no documents)
- Cannot seek legal employment
 - Very restricted access to health care
 - Cannot buy land
 - Cannot move freely within the country
 - Cannot vote

Refugee camps

- 10 refugee camps. More than 110.000 people
 - Biggest camp Mae La, more than 40.000 people.
- Far majority from Myanmar.
 - Biggest ethnic groups *Karen* and *Karenni*.
- Refugees fled persecution by the Burmese military in the 1980s.
- Initially many registered with the UNHCR
 - Nearly 100.000 has been repatriated, mostly to the US
 - Hardly any registration now and very few are repatriated

Refugee camps

- Refugees must stay in camps.
 - Excluded from society
- Must stay in camp to register with UNHCR.
- Staying outside the camps → risk persecution by Thai authorities.

Refugee camps

- Some have lived for 30 years in the camps
 - Many children are born there
- People are not allowed to leave the camps
 - Cannot earn an income
 - Depending on food distribution
 - Mental health problems
 - People poorly prepared to manage life outside the camps

Refugee camp: education

- Basic education provided by NGOs
- No option for further education inside the camps.
 - Some students afraid to leave camps for further education.
- Some skill training

Refugee camps: health



Refugee camp: health

- Limited health provision
- Malnutrition common
 - Food ratios below minimum daily nutritional levels
- Poor housing
 - Overcrowded
 - Only bamboo houses allowed → cold
- Poor sanitation
- Malaria, dengue fever and tuberculosis common.
 - Only two camps have a hospital.

Refugee camp: Risk of fire

- High risk of fire
 - Overcrowded housing
 - House construction easily flammable
 - Poor access to water
 - No firearms

Southeast Asian refugees: living outside camps

- Many never register in camps
 - Mistrust of authorities
 - Cannot register with UNHCR
 - Cannot accept “camp life”
 - Life in North Thailand as well in other parts of the country, including Bangkok
 - Invisible in society
 - No legal or social protection
 - Very minimal social contact with Thais

Refugees: urban refugees

- More than 40 nationalities coming to Thailand
- Numbers very uncertain, minimum 20.000
- Many live in Bangkok (urban refugees)
 - All live illegally
 - No legal means to sustain their livelihoods
 - Risk deportation (being sent out of the country)
 - E.g. About 7500 Pakistani refugees in Bangkok
 - About 200 held in detention centers.

Pakistani refugees in Bangkok



Detention Center, Bangkok



Closing words

- Three different immigrant/migrant groups
- Three distinct position in society
 - Socio-economic position
 - Interaction in society
 - Legal status
- Three different contributions to society
- Three different attitude of Thais towards the immigrant groups.

Closing words

- Thai immigration policies not coherent
 1. Contain migration
 2. Secure low cost production
- Refugee policies
 1. No recognition of International Refugee Convention
 2. Signatory to ASEAN and UN universal Human Rights Conventions.

True or false

	True	False
1. Migrant workers are often exploited in Thailand		
2. Migrant workers are needed to fill shortages in certain sectors		
3. Migrant workers make a net contribution to economy		
4. The wages that migrant workers receive can impact on the wages and employment of national workers		

Agree or disagree

	Agree	Disagree
5. Government policies to admit migrants should be more restrictive		
6. Un documented migrants who have broken the law should not expect to have rights at work		
7. Documented migrant workers who have the same job as Thai workers cannot expect to have the same pay conditions		
8. The authorities do enough to protect migrant workers from being exploited		
9. Migrants commit a high number of the crimes in Thailand.		
10. The number of migrants is threatening our country's culture and heritage		
11. Government should reduce opportunities for skilled workers from ASEAN countries		

1. Migrant workers are often exploited in Thailand	True	False
2. Migrant workers are needed to fill shortages in certain sectors		
3. Migrant workers make a net contribution to economy		
4. The wages that migrant workers receive can impact on the wages and employment of national workers		

	Agree	Disagree
5. Government policies to admit migrants should be more restrictive		
6. Un documented migrants who have broken the law should not expect to have rights at work		
7. Documented migrant workers who have the same job as Thai workers cannot expect to have the same pay conditions		
8. The authorities do enough to protect migrant workers from being exploited		
9. Migrants commit a high number of the crimes in Thailand.		
10. The number of migrants is threatening our country's culture and heritage		
11. Government should reduce opportunities for skilled workers from ASEAN countries		