



# Thai Women's Experiences of Migration to and within Nordic Countries

By Oriana Quaglietta Bernal & Susanne Boethius

A COLLABORATION BETWEEN  
LUND UNIVERSITY AND THAIWISE



LUNDS  
UNIVERSITET



ThaiWISE  
HELA MÄNNISKAN I MALMÖ

## Table of Contents

Acknowledgements.....	iv
Executive summary .....	iv
Key findings .....	v
Further research and policy recommendations .....	viii
Knowledge gaps.....	viii
Departure points for future studies.....	viii
Policy recommendations.....	ix
1. Background .....	1
1.1 About this report.....	1
1.2 About the authors of this report .....	2
2. Introduction.....	3
2.1 Outline of the report .....	4
3. Methodology .....	4
3.1 Timeline for report .....	4
3.2 Material .....	5
3.2.1 Peer-reviewed research.....	5
3.2.2 Papers, governmental reports, and Thai-language documents.....	6
3.3 Categorisation of texts.....	6
3.3.1 Limitations of the Study .....	7
4. Key Findings.....	8
4.1 Thai women migrating to the Nordic countries .....	8
4.1.1 Visas.....	9
4.1.2 Granted resident permits 2015-2022 .....	10
4.1.3 Human Trafficking.....	11
4.2 What are the push and pull factors propelling migration trajectories?.....	11
4.3 What are the socio-economic and demographic profiles of Thai women migrating to Nordic countries? .....	13

4.3.1 Intimate relationships and family life .....	14
4.4 What integration-related opportunities and challenges do Thai women experience in Nordic countries? .....	16
4.4.1 Presence on the labour market.....	16
4.4.2 The Thai massage industry.....	18
4.4.3 Limited access to healthcare and other social safety nets .....	19
5. Conclusion.....	20
5.1 What do we know about Thai women’s migration-related experiences to Nordic countries? .....	21
5.2 What more do we need to know about Thai women migration to and within the Nordic countries? .....	22
5.2.1 Migration routes: Transit and destination countries.....	22
Push and pull factors .....	23
Social safety nets for Thai women .....	23
6. Recommendations.....	23
6.1 Recommendations for future studies.....	23
6.2 Policy recommendations .....	25
7. Appendix.....	27
7.1 Works considered .....	27
7.2 List of databases .....	29
7.3 Summary of Thai-language papers .....	30
8. References .....	36

## **Acknowledgements**

We acknowledge the tremendous effort and support of Panadda Changmanee, Project Manager of Thai Women in Sweden Empowerment (ThaiWISE) – Hela Människan i Malmö. We also acknowledge the input of ThaiWISE volunteers, including Assistant Professor Dr. Wandared Olsson, PhD candidate Suchada Kaewin, Sirinrat Meesomboon, Siripon Ranger. Our special thanks go to Parichart Otakanon from Swedish4Thai and a member of ThaiWISE for leading the data collection and translation of Thai reports.

We acknowledge and thank Chanya Saejiang, President of Thai Women Network in Europe (TWNE), former President Sornkaew Grimsman and the members of TWNE who supported us during the data collection process. We would also like to thank LU librarian Daniel Lind for his support in setting the parameters of the bibliographic search.

Finally, we are very grateful to Niclas Olsson, Development Secretary, Labour Market and Social Services, Malmö Municipality, Panadda Changmanee, and Parichart Otakanon for their insightful comments on earlier versions of this report.

## **Executive summary**

This report is the result of a collaboration between the department of Sociology at Lund University and Thai Women in Sweden Empowerment (ThaiWISE) – Hela Människan i Malmö. This research is funded by Municipality of Malmö through ThaiWISE - Hela Människan i Malmö.

The aim of this report is to provide exploratory information about Thai women's experiences of migration to and within the Nordic countries, and to understand the reasons behind the issues they face. ThaiWISE's own work with Thai women in Malmö, Sweden has shown that many female Thai immigrants move within the Nordic region after first migrating to a Nordic country, and that many deal with labour exploitation, isolation, and domestic violence, regardless of their location. This report will be used by ThaiWISE as they expand their work to other Nordic countries, as well as by other organisations when planning work with and for female Thai immigrants.

The study was guided by the following five principal research questions:

1. What are the push and pull factors propelling migration trajectories?
2. What are the socio-economic and demographic profiles of Thai women migrating to Nordic countries?
3. What are the most popular trajectories for migrant Thai women to reach Nordic countries?

4. Are there any specific trends in experiences of movements of migrant Thai women in the Nordic countries?
5. What integration-related opportunities and challenges do Thai women experience in Nordic countries?

In this executive summary the authors will provide a brief snapshot of the literature on Thai women's migration-related experiences in the Nordic countries. The report, a desk study, is based on both peer-reviewed academic work as well as governmental and nongovernmental reports published within the last ten years (2012-2022).

### **Key findings**

The following questions have been answered in this study:

1. What are the push and pull factors propelling migration trajectories?
  - a. A crucial driver for migration and residence in the Nordic area appears to be the need to support financially origin families as well as a desire for upwards social mobility (Spanger, 2013; Pongthipatt et al., 2020). Finally, a desire to live in a more socially liberal context has been cited as a significant reason for migration by both transgender women and middle-class women (Pravattiyagul, 2021).
  - b. Pathways to Nordic countries consist of family reunification movements (particularly for spouses) and labour-related migration. This is because recent developments in Nordic countries' migration policies have led to the narrowing of legal migration paths for non-EU citizens: marriage to Nordic men appears to be one of the few legal paths to residency (Spanger, 2013; Tyldum, 2013). However, data shared by the Swedish migration agency (The Swedish Migration Agency) suggest that, starting from 2021, the rate of Thai women being granted labour-related residence permits is increasing. This may be a trend that requires further supervision. Finally, minor pathways into Nordic countries are also human trafficking, seasonal work, and adoption (particularly for children of Thai women).
2. What are the socio-economic and demographic profiles of Thai women migrating to Nordic countries?
  - a. The majority of Thai women migrating to Nordic countries appear to be from working-class or rural backgrounds. The 14 women interviewed in Tschirhart

(2019b: 4), for example, presented different education patterns: ‘almost half were grade 9 or below (6), 5 completed high school and 3 had gone to college or to finish an undergraduate degree’. The same could be said for the participants in Åkerman et al. (2021), among others. It is thus possible to suggest that the majority of Thai participants in the selected studies present low to medium educational achievements, with a minority having also gone on to university studies. Further, more than half of participants in Pongthippat et al. (2020), for example, originated from the rural region of Isan. Similar patterns were observed in other studies, which suggests that Thai women may be particularly migrating from rural contexts.

- b. There is limited data on the demographic profiles of Thai women who migrate to Nordic countries in the literature. The 266 participants in Åkerman et al. (2021), for example, were between the ages of 23 and 60 years which suggests a wide age range. Additionally, national statistics (see below) show that women represent the absolute majority of Thai migrants in all the Nordic countries, surpassing 75%.
3. What are the most popular trajectories for migrant Thai women to reach Nordic countries?
    - a. Information from ThaiWISE suggests that many women had moved from Thailand to a Nordic country (Sweden, Denmark, Norway, Finland, and/or Iceland) passing through Central or Eastern European countries (such as Germany, France, Italy, Hungary and/or Poland). Additionally, some Thai women may cross borders several times, moving between Nordic countries. However, more concrete information on this point has not been found in the examined material, which represents a crucial knowledge gap.
4. Are there any specific trends in experiences of movements of migrant Thai women in the Nordic countries?
    - a. The literature is fairly unanimous in considering Thai women who migrated to the Nordic area as particularly vulnerable to mental health issues and sexual and labour exploitation due to migration-related challenges, in the form of language barriers and unawareness of available social safety nets (Tschirhart et al., 2019a), but also due to their position as migrant women in racist and

sexist societies. Most often, newly-arrived women are in a position of having to depend on their spouses for support. This is for two reasons: first, there is limited state support for the integration of Thai women in Nordic societies. Because they arrive as spouses, and not refugees or asylum seekers, Thai women may not come in contact with social safety nets except in dire circumstances. Second, separating from their native spouses before Thai women obtain permanent residency may lead to deportation (Gisladdottir Bissat, 2013). As such, these factors may exacerbate power differentials in international couples which may in turn lead to abusive circumstances. While these dynamics are not necessarily found in all transnational couples, the literature has mostly focused on these aspects.

5. What integration-related opportunities and challenges do Thai women experience in Nordic countries?

In table 1 below, we summarise the main facets of the integration-related challenges and opportunities that we have discerned in the material.

Table 1. Key finding: integration-related challenges and opportunities of Thai women in the Nordic countries

<b>Integration-related challenges</b>	<b>Integration-related opportunities</b>
Language barriers and cultural differences <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Insufficient translation services</li> <li>● Self-reliance as an important value in Thai culture</li> <li>● Sexist and racist assumptions in host societies</li> </ul>	Entrepreneurship <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Thai women present strong entrepreneurial attitudes that may represent a way into society</li> </ul>
Insufficient social safety nets: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Poor protection from domestic violence / sexual and labour exploitation</li> <li>● Poor access to healthcare services</li> </ul>	Strong local Thai networks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Thai community may act as system navigators for newly-arrived women</li> </ul>
Power differentials / abusive circumstances in the family unit <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Sexist and racist assumptions in host societies</li> <li>● Domestic abuse</li> <li>● Desire to provide for origin families can be source of conflict</li> </ul>	Native partners and children as a bridge into local society <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● In school</li> <li>● Healthcare system</li> <li>● As entrepreneurs</li> </ul>

<p>Reliance on native spouses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Double-edged sword, as native spouses can both facilitate and hinder integration into local society</li> </ul>
<p>Strong reputation for care-oriented jobs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Double-edged sword, as it directs Thai women towards low-paying and/or low-skilled jobs, regardless of interests and educational attainments</li> </ul>

## Further research and policy recommendations

### *Knowledge gaps*

While the literature examined in this report is fairly in-depth and nuanced, we lack the following insights:

- An accountable and comparable statistics database to provide numerical insight on the presence of Thai women in the Nordic area and their migratory journeys.
- A holistic approach to migration and integration that takes into account different challenges and opportunities;
- Further insight on push and pull factors as these particularly relate to the Nordic countries;
- Further insight on Thai women's migratory routes through transit countries and to destination countries;
- Comparative studies on different parts of Europe and how these offer different contexts of migration and integration to Thai women;
- Evaluation of the available social safety nets in the Nordic countries;
- Further insight on the impact of Nordic migration policies on Thai women's migratory journeys.

### *Departure points for future studies*

Based on the results of this report and the knowledge gaps highlighted, we recommend the following departure points:

- Longitudinal and qualitative approaches to studying Thai women's experiences of migration to Nordic countries, focusing both on newly-arrived migrants as well as long-established ones, to understand the challenges and opportunities offered by Nordic countries. Here a methodology combining ethnography and interviews (both individual and focus groups) during longer periods of time would be particularly helpful.



- Evaluation of available social safety nets, including the factors that prevent from or lead to Thai women contacting the authorities in case of difficulties. Again, a methodology combining ethnography and interviews (both individual and focus groups as well as social network analysis) would be particularly helpful.
- All future studies should consider the following aspects:
  - We lack an accountable and comparable statistics database to provide numerical insight on the presence of Thai women in the Nordic area and their migratory journeys. Different countries operationalise concepts differently (citizenship, immigrant, etc.), and this has complicating effects on relevant statistics.
  - It is necessary to employ Thai native speakers with profound knowledge of Thai customs, culture, and practices to interview participants and collect material to ensure meaningful data;
  - Studies should consider both marriage and labour migrants to understand whether and how different categories of immigrants may experience the Nordic contexts in various ways, and why. By labour migrants here we mean both seasonal workers as well as long-term residents that relocate to the Nordic area with a work-related visa. Further, attention to both urban and rural populations would be an asset.

### *Policy recommendations*

We believe that the following interventions ought to be considered:

- Ensure greater support for newly-arrived Thai women in the form of informational campaigns but also mentorship/system-navigator schemes. This would include cooperation with other Nordic countries to provide Nordic-wide support to Thai women.
- Provide support to those interested in entrepreneurship through “microcredit” initiatives;
- Greater informational, bureaucratic, logistical, and social support for the Thai-native family units, targeting both children and spouses of Thai women;
- Migration-sensitive training for key workers in social and health services so that they can be more aware of the unique challenges experienced by Thai women;
- Evaluation of the coverage and strengthening of social safety nets in place in Nordic countries.

# **Thai Women's Experiences of Migration to and within Nordic Countries**

## **1. Background**

This report is the result of a cooperation between the department of Sociology at Lund University and Thai Women in Sweden Empowerment (ThaiWISE) – Hela Människan i Malmö. The report is written by Oriana Quaglietta Bernal and Susanne Boethius from the department of Sociology at Lund University, with input and support from ThaiWISE. The report is funded by Municipality of Malmö via ThaiWISE - Hela Människan i Malmö.

ThaiWISE began in September 2019 as a collaboration between Hela Människan i Malmö and the Municipality of Malmö (Malmö Stad). The project researched working conditions in the Thai massage industry in Malmö and began working to reduce forced labour and exploitation. ThaiWISE's services aim to increase immigrants' awareness of Swedish society, their rights and responsibilities, and the services available to them. ThaiWISE also strives to increase awareness of the issues experienced by Thai immigrants amongst policy makers and authorities at an operational level, and advocates for relevant policy enforcement. ThaiWISE is now expanding its work within Sweden and the Nordic region and needs a deeper understanding of its beneficiaries.

The ThaiWISE project activities were funded by the Swedish Gender Equality Agency (Jämställdhetsmyndigheten, 2019-2021), the Royal Thai Embassy in Stockholm, the Municipality of Malmö (Malmö stad) and the National Board of Health and Welfare (Socialstyrelsen).

### **1.1 About this report**

The present report wants to provide understanding about the migration-related experiences of Thai women in Nordic countries. The results from the report will be used by ThaiWISE when designing up-to-date and appropriate intervention for the target beneficiaries. The recommendations based on this report will help form advocacy messages on issues encountered by migrating Thai women.

The main audiences for this report are: 1) the ThaiWISE - Hela Människan i Malmö, which will use findings from this research to guide the design of future activities; 2) Swedish government agencies - specifically the Malmö Municipality; 3) Royal Thai Embassies from the Nordic countries; and 4) Thai Women Network in Europe (TWNE) and its members.

## **1.2 About the authors of this report**

Susanne Boethius, PhD in Sociology, is a researcher at the Department of Sociology at Lund University, Sweden. Her work focuses on domestic violence, violent men, gender and violence, men's violence against women, digital violence, digital health, money and care, and individuals' social networks' responses to domestic violence.

Oriana Quaglietta Bernal, PhD in Sociology, recently obtained her PhD degree from the department of Sociology at Lund University. Her work focuses on women's involvement with drugs and mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion in Sweden.

## 2. Introduction

The rate of Thai women migrating to the Nordic area has rapidly increased in the last decades (Åkerman et al., 2016). There are many reasons for Thai women to migrate to the Nordic countries, however the most common ones appear to be marriage migration and labour migration (both seasonal and long-term work migrants).

Women make up the vast majority of Thai nationals in the five Nordic countries, and more than 75% of the Thai population in all the Nordic countries are women (SCB, 2023; Ssb, 2023; Statistics Denmark, 2023; Statistics Finland, 2023; Statistics Iceland, 2023).<sup>1</sup>

Previous research shows that Thai women who migrate to the Nordic area are particularly vulnerable to mental health issues and sexual and labour exploitation due to integration-related challenges, in the form of language barriers and unawareness of available social safety nets (Straiton et al., 2019; Tschirhart et al., 2019a), but also due to their position as migrant women in racist and sexist societies (Kanchanachitra & Chuenglersiri, 2020).

There are several factors that lead us to focus particularly on Thai womens' experiences in the Nordic setting:

1. Nordic countries have comparable welfare-oriented societies and demographic histories (being formerly departure countries and now being primarily destinations countries), which facilitates international comparisons;
2. Thai women tend to marry Nordic men to a higher degree than other immigrant groups. Family reunification purposes remain one of the strongest migration paths to this region for Thai women;
3. A preliminary search of the literature suggests that the body of knowledge on this topic is mostly focused on this part of Europe. It is not possible at this stage to determine why this is the case;
4. The Nordic countries have in recent years raised public awareness about the experiences of Thai women with labour and sexual exploitation, particularly in relation to the massage industry.

For these reasons, this report represents a first step in the process of strengthening social safety nets for Thai women in this area.

---

<sup>1</sup> Statistics can be recovered from the websites of the statistical agencies in each of the countries named here (Denmark: <https://www.dst.dk/da/>; Finland: [https://stat.fi/index\\_en.html](https://stat.fi/index_en.html); Iceland: <https://www.statice.is/>; Norway: <https://www.ssb.no/en>; Sweden: <https://www.scb.se/en/>). It is not possible to provide permalinks to the specific pages examined.

## **2.1 Outline of the report**

With this report we aim to provide an overview of the state of the art on the literature concerning the experiences of Thai women in Nordic countries (i.e. Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Iceland, and Finland). These countries will be collectively identified as “Nordic countries” in this report.

We will first outline the methodology used to collect and gather the material under study. We will then provide an overview of the literature on the topic, focusing specifically on the following aspects:

1. What are the push and pull factors propelling migration trajectories?
2. What are the socio-economic and demographic profiles of Thai women migrating to Nordic countries?
3. What are the most popular trajectories for migrant Thai women to reach Nordic countries?
4. Are there any specific trends in experiences of movements of migrant Thai women in the Nordic countries?
5. What integration-related opportunities and challenges do Thai women experience in Nordic countries?

We conclude this report by discussing the overall trends we discern in the literature, summarising the knowledge in research relating to migrant Thai women between 2012-2022, and what more we need to know about Thai women's migration patterns. We provide suggestions for future research departure points and the reader will also find some policy recommendations based on these results.

## **3. Methodology**

This study is a desk review, aiming to provide an overview of published research of Thai women's experience of migrating to Nordic countries. In addition to peer-reviewed research articles, statistics and information from governmental and nongovernmental sources are also included. ThaiWISE volunteers also provided English translations of key documents written in Thai.

### **3.1 Timeline for report**

In this section we outline the timeline for the development of this report. The authors were entrusted with this research task in November 2022 and the report was completed in May 2023.

ThaiWISE volunteers and associates supported the data collection process by supplementing the work carried out by the authors. A major contribution of the larger research team lies in the highlighting of intergovernmental, governmental, and nongovernmental reports as well as Thai-language documents whose abstracts were translated to English.

Table 2. Timeline for report.

Month	Activity
November 2022	Preliminary literature review
December 2022	Preliminary literature review (cont.) Volunteers supplement material
January 2023	Drafting of preliminary report
February 2023	Sharing of preliminary report with relevant stakeholders
March 2023	Development and sharing of full report Feedback round 1
April 2023	Development of full report Additional statistical information
May 2023	Development of full report Feedback round 2

## 3.2 Material

### 3.2.1 Peer-reviewed research

To be able to provide an up-to date research overview, we chose to circumscribe our search to all pieces of peer-reviewed work within the last 10 years, i.e. from 2012 to 2022. As a part of the systematic literature review the following keywords were used to find research published in the databases (the reader will find in section 7.2 a list of the databases included in the search):

Thai\* AND \*migra\* AND (women\* OR woman\* OR girl\*) AND (Europe\* OR West\* OR Swed\* OR Denmark OR Dan\* OR Finland OR Finn\* OR Norw\* OR Iceland\* OR Nordic\* OR Scandinavia\* OR German\* OR Poland OR Polish OR Hungar\* OR Ital\* OR France OR French\*) NOT Burm\* or Vietnam\* OR Myanmar.

This process yielded 63 unique results that were considered for the report.

### 3.2.2 Papers, governmental reports, and Thai-language documents

Thai Women in Sweden Empowerment (ThaiWISE) members and volunteers highlighted papers and governmental reports that had not been caught by the search above. The documents were retrieved from online sources, including websites, universities, the National Research Council of Thailand, the National Statistical Office, and the Central Electronic Journal Database System of Thailand (Thai Journals Online, or ThaiJO). This process yielded 49 unique results.

In addition, Parichart Otakanon retrieved 13 Thai-language documents whose abstracts she translated into English. These are outlined in section 7.3. While these documents provided some interesting insights, they were deemed to not be in line with the needs of this paper (see section 3.3.1).

### 3.3 Categorisation of texts

A first screening was carried out, based on the abstracts, to determine the relevance of each work. Works were assigned an initial colour, depending on the apparent suitability of inclusion.

“*Green*” was used for those peer-reviewed works that had been published within the timeframe specified above and focused specifically on the experiences of Thai women in Nordic countries. As such, works based on empirical studies were privileged in our search.

“*Blue*” was used for works that had been published within the timeframe specified above and focused specifically on the experiences of Thai women in Europe and Thailand. It was also applied to works detailing the experiences of European men partnered with Thai women residing in Thailand. These articles were considered as background reading: while their focus did not make them suitable for inclusion, they provided important contextual information that could further nuance the literature review.

Finally, the “*red*” classification was applied to those works that did not follow the criteria to fit green or blue, outlined above.

The articles and reports categorised as green (35) and blue (26) were then examined thoroughly. After reading the whole texts, it became clear that some of the works needed to be reclassified, depending on their suitability. 113 works in total were identified for this report (see table 3).

Table 3. Classification of work identified.

Green	23
Blue	23

Red	67
Total number of texts identified	113

The final list of considered works can be found in section 7.1.

Given our specific focus on peer-reviewed works and reports penned by authorities in this field, this report has focused on the works marked as “green” and “blue”. The works we marked as “red” in the second screening phase were excluded.

While many of the articles under consideration in this literature review have been written in the Swedish context, we believe they accurately reflect the situation in other Nordic countries.

### *3.3.1 Limitations of the Study*

This report makes ample use of demographic statistics to describe the experiences of Thai women in Nordic countries. We have recovered data from online sources (e.g. the Norwegian statistics bureau, Ssb) as well as reached out directly to governmental agencies (e.g. the Swedish Migration agency), in addition to the ones cited by specific researchers. However, it must be noted that different countries use different statistical methods and concepts, which means that figures from Sweden and Norway, for example, are not easily comparable. Nonetheless, we believe they provide a reliable overview of the phenomenon. Further, some statistics are available for some countries and not others: we have been in contact with national statistics agencies to recover this information, but these were often not available.

A second limitation of this report consists in the range of studies examined. We have given precedence to scholarly work (mostly peer-reviewed articles) as well as governmental and nongovernmental reports and material. A crucial gap consists in material developed in Thai, as this study only includes one research publication written in Thai. While the original aim was to include more work written in Thai, and to this end ThaiWISE provided a research assistant that was a native Thai speaker, the majority of the works suggested did not fit the inclusion criteria<sup>2</sup>. We have therefore chosen to focus more on the English-language and Nordic-language reports as these provided more comprehensive data.

Finally, this study departs from both academic and non-academic sources to provide a wider understanding of this phenomenon.

---

<sup>2</sup> Parichart Otakanon did find 13 student work/conference papers that she thought could be of interest for the topic and translated the abstracts, from Thai to English. In section 7.3 the reader will find a summary of these student works/conference papers.



## 4. Key Findings

In this section, we will answer the research questions outlined earlier in this report.

### 4.1 Thai women migrating to the Nordic countries

This section will address research questions 3 and 4: *What are the socioeconomic and demographic profiles of Thai women migrating to Nordic countries?* and *What are the most popular trajectories for migrant Thai women to reach Nordic countries?*

The rate of Thai women migrating to the Nordic area has rapidly increased in the last decades (Åkerman et al., 2016). The largest Thai community has settled in Sweden, with 9,872 men and 35,759 women of the Swedish population were born in Thailand as of the year of 2022, (population after birth country, SCB, 2023). In statistics over the Danish population, we can see that 3,052 men and 11,896 women living in Denmark 2022 were born in Thailand (population after birth country, Statistics Denmark, 2023). In Finland, 2,724 men and 9,728 women had Thailand as their country of birth<sup>3</sup> (population after birth country, Statistic Finland, 2023) and in Iceland, 383 men and 1,114 women were born in Thailand (population after birth country, Statistic Iceland) (see table 4). Since 2010, the number of persons born in Thailand living in Sweden, Norway, has increased, see table 4.

Table 4. Number of persons born in Thailand living in the Nordic countries in 2010 and 2022. Source: SCB, 2023; Statistics Denmark, 2023; Statistics Finland, 2023; Statistics Iceland, 2023.

Country	Men		Women	
	2012	2022	2012	2022
Sweden	7,729	9,872	27,825	35,759
Denmark	2,286	2,982	8,965	11,731
Finland	1,711	2,724	6,339	9,728
Iceland	294	383	817	1,114
Total	12,020	15,961	43,946	58,332

Comparable statistics from Norway (population country of birth, year) were not available. However, Norway also has a significant Thai-born population: in 2022<sup>4</sup>, there were 19,929 women and 4,078 men who had migrated from Thailand.

---

<sup>3</sup> The origin and background country in the Finish statistics are determined based on the country of birth data of the person's parents.

<sup>4</sup> The immigrant population includes persons with two foreign-born parents and grandparents. More precisely: Persons with no parent or grandparents born in Norway. The figures are rounded off. When figures are aggregated to continents and country groups the sum may differ somewhat from the actual figures.

The statistics above show that more Thai women than men migrate and live in the Nordic countries. It is posited that marriage and family reunification represents one of the strongest migration paths for Thai women in these countries (Gisladdottir Bissat, 2013; Spanger, 2013; Heikkilä, 2017; Tschirhart et al., 2019a). 9% of all Swedish men that are married to foreign-born people are married to a Thai woman (Source: Swedish register data 2014, cited in Irastorza, N., & Osanami Törngren, 2022). In Norway, the same trend is showing, most non-Nordic born women that come to Norway and marry a Norway-born man are from Thailand (Statistic Norway, 2020). Statistics from Finland show a similar trend: in 2021, 9.5% of all contracted marriages between Finnish men and non-Finnish women were of Finnish men and Thai women (Statistic Finland, 2023).

#### 4.1.1 Visas

Another way of measuring migration trends is to look at how many visas have been approved and for what reason. Statistics from the Swedish embassy<sup>5</sup> show that 2,040 Thai women applied for a visa to Sweden in 2022. The visas granted to Thai women in that same year were 1,474 (72%).

Most of them, 65% applied for a working visa, 31% for a family reunification visa (“anknytningsvisum”) and 4% for a student visa.

Table 5. Number of Thai Women that applied for and was granted visas in Sweden 2022 (Swedish Embassy, personal contact, 2022).

2022	Working visas	Family reunification	Student	Total
Applications	1335	628	79	2040
Granted	1062	351	62	1474

The statistics above show that most Thai women that apply for working visas do get their visas granted (80%). Also, most of the Thai women applying for student visas get them granted (79%). However, there is a large number of Thai women applying for family reunification visas that get rejected (44%). The statistics do not tell us why Thai women get their visa applications rejected, and it would be interesting to study this further with the help of qualitative methods.

Additionally, the Swedish Migration Service in a private communication provided official statistics on Thai seasonal agricultural workers (berry-pickers) in 2022: 866 women and 5 728 men were granted a seasonal residence permit, making Thailand the country of origin for most persons getting seasonal permits.

<sup>5</sup> Personal communication through ThaiWISE – Hela Människan i Malmö.

Table 6. Number of seasonal work permits granted to Thai berry-pickers in Sweden 2022 (The Swedish Migration Agency, personal contact, 2022).

Year	Women	Men	Total
2022	866	5,728	6,594

#### 4.1.2 *Granted resident permits 2015-2022*

Another indication of migration is to look at granted residence permits. When studying statistics from the Swedish Migration Agency we see that most of the Thai women that were granted residence permits in Sweden the last eight years had applied for a family reunification permit (see table 7).

Table 7. Number of resident permits granted for the first time to Thai women in Sweden and Finland, by year and type (Swedish & Finnish Immigration Services, personal communication 2023).

Year	Family-reunification		Work <sup>6</sup>		Education		Other	
	Sweden	Finland	Sweden	Finland	Sweden	Finland	Sweden	Finland
2015	939	457	433	119	75	42	21	15
2016	1,139	393	401	114	54	31	35	10
2017	1,225	286	406	131	72	32	24	22
2018	1,136	323	607	118	83	42	37	12
2019	945	363	817	129	67	42	63	13
2020	947	326	483	117	32	13	57	10
2021	635	177	761	137	57	37	38	25
2022	461	266	1,069	277	76	57	47	24

As we can see in the table it has been more common for Thai women to get residence permits for family reunification purposes than work-related reasons. However, this was not the case for 2021 and 2022: for the first time, more Thai women were granted work-related residential permits than family reunification.

If this is a trend or just a coincidence is something to study further.

If we zoom to look at the granted permits for women due to marriage/partnership or upcoming marriage/partnership, we can see that most Thai women that get family reunifications residence permits gets this due to partnership (Statistics from the Swedish Migration Agency, 2023, email).

Table 8. Number of Thai women granted residence permits due to marriage/partnership or upcoming marriage/partnership in Sweden, by year (Swedish Migration Services, personal contact, 2022).

Year	Number of women
2015	770

<sup>6</sup> The scope of this report prevents us from determining the work sectors in which Thai women are active.

2016	1,032
2017	1,082
2018	986
2019	835
2020	840
2021	564
2022	375
Total	6,484

We can see in the table above that the number of Thai women that were granted residence permits in relation to marriage/partnership decreased during the year 2021 and 2022. Possible explanations for this can be the travel restrictions adopted in relation to the Covid-19 pandemic, a coincidence, or a lasting trend. Future studies should investigate this further.

#### **4.1.3 Human Trafficking**

Statistics from The Danish Centre against Human Trafficking show that they identified 11 Thai women (out of 43) as victims of human trafficking in Denmark in 2021 (Center mod menneskehandel, 2021). All the women were identified as trafficked into sexual exploitation for the purpose of prostitution. Similarly, the Swedish Police Agency (Wahlberg, 2020) reports that 17 Thai women had been identified as victims of sexual exploitation in 2019. These relatively low numbers suggest that, while awareness of the phenomenon is quite high (see also Jämställdhetsmyndigheten, 2021), there are decided difficulties in identifying potential victims and that Thai women might be reluctant to contact authorities. Nonetheless, the fact that Thai women make up for a significant proportion of human trafficking victims (e.g. 25% in Denmark in 2021) is concerning.

#### **4.2 What are the push and pull factors propelling migration trajectories?**

In this section we address research question 1 *What are the push and pull factors propelling migration trajectories?* Push factors are factors that drive Thai women to leave Thailand due to the negative aspects they perceive in Thailand. Pull factors, instead, are aspects that are interpreted as positive and attractive in the Nordic countries, making Thai women want to move to the new country.

When reading the peer-reviewed articles identified for this report, it becomes clear that a crucial driver for migration to and residence in the Nordic area for Thai women appears to be the need to support financially origin families as well as a desire for upwards social mobility (Spanger, 2013; Pongthipatt et al., 2020). This implies that Thailand offers limited possibilities for gainful employment and safety nets for both ageing and young populations, which pushes Thai individuals to move abroad. As such, we suggest that countering economic poverty may be a significant push factor for Thai women who migrate to Nordic countries.

This ties into with the research results outlined by Pongthipat et al. (2020: 229), who explain that their participants expressed five important cultural values that may play a significant role in their migration trajectories and experiences in the host country: 'being a dutiful daughter, being a caring mother, being a kind relative, being a giving person and striving for a wealthy life' (see also Sunanta & Angeles, 2013). Religion, in the form of Buddhist beliefs about karma and atoning for past debts also played an important role in the perception of these duties (ibid). The ability to enact these roles could be felt as fulfilling but also stressful (ibid). Consequently, we suggest that economic motivations play a strong role in women's migration paths, either for themselves or to ensure they can financially care for others (such as out-of-work parents or children).

Pravattiyagul (2021: 85) further identifies a desire to escape stigma and 'a romanticized vision of life in Europe' as additional migration drivers for transgender Thai women, which might also be applicable for cisgender women. This also suggests that the Thai context is sometimes perceived by Thai women as less socially liberal than Nordic countries. As Pravattiyagul (2021: 97) explains, 'European societies are [perceived as] more individualistic and liberated than Thailand, in terms of sexuality, body politics, relationships and family life'. Thus, the perceived liberality of European societies represents an additional pull factor for some Thai women.

As such, it can be said that '[t]he desire to improve living conditions can serve as an umbrella over the many illustrated economic, social, romantic and legal pressures that motivate [cisgender and transgender women] to find European partners and migrate to Europe' (Pravattiyagul, 2021: 95).

Previous generations of Thai women 'came to Europe on a tourist visa, then remained and worked in Thai restaurants, or engaged in sex work and other kinds of so-called "black money" jobs' (The Foundation for Women, 2012; Pravattiyagul, 2021: 93). Others, instead, reached Europe on work visas, often in the agricultural sector (The Foundation for Women, 2012; Herzfeld Olsson, 2018; Eerbeek & Hedberg, 2021). These two avenues, however, have become increasingly less accessible given the recent migration policy developments in several Nordic countries so that, currently, marriage visas represent the most accessible migration path to Thai women (Gisladottir Bissat, 2013). As such, the newer generations of Thai women meet their future spouses online, via intermediaries, or in Thailand and come to Europe through family reunification schemes (Fernbrant et al., 2017; Pongthipat et al., 2020).

### 4.3 What are the socio-economic and demographic profiles of Thai women migrating to Nordic countries?

In this section we address with further details research question 2 *What are the socio-economic and demographic profiles of Thai women migrating to Nordic countries?*

Based on the peer-reviewed literature examined in this report, it is possible to suggest that Thai women who migrate to Nordic countries tend to have relatively low to medium educational achievements, with most not having completed university studies.

Further, Thai women who migrate to Nordic countries are placed in a socioeconomically vulnerable position, given the strict migration requirements in place. Prior to the change in migration policies, when it was easier to migrate to Nordic countries with a work visa, Thai workers often paid labour agencies high sums to facilitate the process (The Foundation for Women, 2012; Vanaspong, 2012). This led many to develop significant debts, particularly when the work conditions did not meet expectations, but also led to instances of human trafficking (ibid).

In recent years, work-based migration has become considerably more difficult for non-EU citizens, leading many to migrate to Nordic countries through family reunification schemes. For this reason, we see a greater percentage of women in this migration channel, since Nordic men are much more likely to marry non-EU women in comparison to their female peers (Haandrikman, 2014). However, the latest data provided by the Swedish Migration Agency suggests there might be a reversal of trend, as work-related residence permits granted in 2022 outnumbered those granted for family reunification purposes.

In any case, marriage migration presents some challenges for Thai women in comparison to other migration channels. In Sweden, for example, migrants from third countries may receive a temporary residency permit upon joining a Swedish-resident spouse valid for two years (Åkerman et al., 2017; Fernbrant et al., 2017). This permit may then be made permanent if they are still in a formal partnership (ibid). This implies that, throughout this time, Thai spouses are financially reliant on their Swedish-resident partners, given the lack of non-Swedish speaking job opportunities (ibid). Further, the relationship cannot be dissolved before Thai women gain a residence permit, or they may be forced to leave the country. Similar situations also arise in Norway (Tyldum, 2013), Denmark (Spanger, 2013), and Iceland (Gisladdottir Bissat, 2013).

As we will see below, these migration mechanisms may exacerbate power differentials in the transnational couple that may have negative ramifications on the well-being of Thai women. However, Fernbrant et al. (2017: 5) also point out that '[t]he analysis showed that the greatest likelihood for mutual respect was in relationships where the woman knew her partner before

moving in with him, and had made an active choice of doing so [...]'. This means that not all transnational couples are necessarily founded on unequal grounds, but the academic literature tends to focus on problematic relationships.

The demographic details of Thai women in the Nordic countries are as follows (as taken from official national databases):

Table 8. Population of Thai women by Age and Country of Residence, year 2022 (source: National statistics agencies)

Age	Sweden	Denmark	Finland	Iceland	Norway
0-19 år	2,391	392	490	80	799
20-29	3,947	641	500	101	854
30-39	5,410	1,474	1,383	212	1,908
40-49	11,849	3,114	2,529	342	3,292
50-59	8,425	2,385	1,486	250	2,030 <sup>7</sup>
60 or older	3,737	996	384	129	78 <sup>8</sup>
<i>Total</i>	35,759	9,002	6,772	1,114	6,853

These figures suggest that the vast majority of Thai women in the Nordic countries are in the age groups 40 to 60.

#### *4.3.1 Intimate relationships and family life*

The tightening of migration rules for non-EU citizens may lead to extremely precarious circumstances for Thai women. Marriage to Nordic men appears to be one of the few legal paths to residency (Spanger, 2013; Tyldum, 2013), which places women in a condition of having to depend on their spouses for support. In some cases, this may lead to instances of conflict and domestic abuse in the family unit (Tyldum, 2013). Leaving the relationship may often not be possible for Thai women: aside from experiencing difficulties in accessing services aimed at victims of domestic abuse, dissolving the relationship before Thai women can obtain legal residency for themselves and their eventual dependents may lead to deportation (ibid).<sup>9</sup> Additionally, because Nordic spouses may provide economic support to

<sup>7</sup> The data presented from Norway in this cell is age 50-66

<sup>8</sup> The data presented from Norway in this cell is age 67-or older

<sup>9</sup> An exception appears to be Iceland: according to Gisladottir Bissat (2013: 56), the country now grants 'abused or trafficked spouses the right to petition for a temporary residence permit even if the minimum resident requirements has not yet been filled'. As such, this could potentially encourage victims of abuse to come forward much earlier, and it is a policy that ought to be implemented in other Nordic countries.

Thai women, the dissolution of the relationship may also negatively impact Thai women's livelihoods (Pongthipatt et al., 2018; Tschirhart et al., 2019b).

As such, many women may choose, or be forced, to stay in exploitative and harmful circumstances. Further, many may have been encouraged to remain in abusive relationships out of a need to "save face" with family and acquaintances and the assumption that dutiful wives ought to turn a blind eye to their spouses' failings (Pongthipatt et al., 2018; Pongthipatt et al., 2020). Additionally, Spanger (2013: 104) notes that, for many, love can be 'an important premise for performing all the subject positions of wife, sex worker, and female migrant', which further complicates these dynamics (see also Pananakhonsab, 2019).

Fernbrandt et al. (2017) identify three cultural registers Thai women adopt to negotiate the dynamics in their new relationships. Some may feel empowered by moving to [Nordic countries] and feel greater latitude to express their feelings and assert their needs, whereas others may find it best to sidestep conflict with their partners by avoiding sensitive topics, such as their desire to send money to their origin families (ibid). Finally, some women may adapt by 'putting their own needs last' and mostly functioning as 'caretakers of husbands, children and home' (Fernbrandt et al, 2017: 6)

As mentioned above, origin families often play a crucial role in Thai women's decision to move abroad. Pongthipatt et al. (2020) explain that participants may feel the need to ensure the financial stability of their family members in Thailand, but that sometimes their native spouses may object or resist, which can introduce a further element of tension in the relationship. This tension can be further worsened with the introduction of children from previous relationships. Some women, according to Fernbrandt et al. (2017), may have had to leave their children with relatives in Thailand. While many may hope to eventually be able to reunite with them in the destination country, this may not always be possible, especially if their Nordic partners object (ibid; Webster & Haandrikman, 2014). Many of the children left behind in the care of relatives may experience downward or lateral paths of social mobility due to insufficient parental support. As Korinek and Punpuing (2012: 478) explain, while remittances may provide economic support, 'gendered patterns of parental absence [through migration], [...] may weaken supervision and available resources to reinforce school attendance and continuity'.

When Thai women do succeed in migrating with their children from previous relationships, Liu (2018: 71) argues that their children may 'assimilate into [Nordic] society to a greater extent compared to their mothers', even though they may initially 'experience a tough period' of adjustment (see also Sukheatta, Suksawat & Seansa, 2018). However, it is possible to surmise that integration models in the Nordic countries may require more assimilation than



other contexts (Forsander, 2004, in Liu, 2018), so that the experiences of participants in Liu (2018) suggest children may struggle to retain a Thai national identity.

#### **4.4 What integration-related opportunities and challenges do Thai women experience in Nordic countries?**

In this section we address research question 5 *What integration-related opportunities and challenges do Thai women experience in Nordic countries?*

The research literature is fairly unanimous in considering Thai women who migrated to the Nordic area as particularly vulnerable to mental health issues and sexual and labour exploitation due to integration-related challenges, in the form of language barriers and unawareness of available social safety nets (Straiton et al., 2019; Tschirhart et al., 2019a), but also due to their position as migrant women in racist and sexist societies (Kanchanachitra & Chuenglertsiri, 2020). As Fernbrant et al. (2017) report, their participants:

[W]ere met by suspicion and condescending attitudes in [Nordic countries] due to prejudice against international marriages/relationships between Thai women and [Nordic]/Western men. The rumors behind such attitudes were according to the informants based on views that all Thai women in such relationships were prostitutes or adventuresses.

As such, several studies note that Thai women experience high rates of sexual harassment in their daily lives, regardless of whether they engage in the sale of sexual services. Some women choose to confront this abuse head on, whereas others decided to avoid other Thai women to evade the stigma (Fernbrant et al. 2017: 7). Others, finally, “internalize shame” by accepting other people’s opinions of Thai women’ (ibid: 7).

This is an understanding also shared by public agencies in the Nordic area: as human trafficking reports by governmental agencies show (Wahlberg, 2020 for the Swedish Polismyndigheten; Center mod menneskehandel, 2020; Jämställdhetsmyndigheten, 2021), authorities are focused on monitoring Thai massage parlours to offer support to sex workers. However, this also means that many women, who are similarly victims of abuse but do not engage in recognised forms of sex work, may be inadvertently overlooked.

##### **4.4.1 Presence on the labour market**

Thai women that migrate to the Nordic countries contribute to the destination society by being active in the labour market, given their strong presence. For example, statistics from 2022 show that in Norway 76,2% of Thai women between the ages of 20-66 years are employed (in comparison to 64,7% for all immigrant women in Norway) (Ssb, 2023). In Denmark, 78% of Thai women between the ages 16-65 were employed in 2021 (Statistics Denmark, 2023).

The literature on Thai women's presence on the labour market is relatively divided. On the one hand, it is posited that Thai women's lack of fluency in the host country's language and the fact that their educational and employment attainments in Thailand often go unrecognised in their host countries might lead to their underemployment or unemployment (Webster & Haandrikman, 2014; Straiton et al., 2019). Webster and Haandrikman (2017), on the other hand, suggest that Thai women are considerably more likely than native women to be entrepreneurs and manage small businesses, mostly in the services industry (providing massages, managing restaurants, and so forth). Indeed, Webster and Haandrikman (2017: 19) report, based on register data, that 'about 5% of Thai women in Sweden (including those outside the labour market) are registered as entrepreneurs'. As such, 'Thai migrant women are a visible entrepreneurial group in rural Sweden, often opening businesses like small eateries, massage parlours, or Asian grocery stores' (Webster, 2017: 219). A similar pattern was found in Finland as well (Heikkilä, 2017).

We posit that both assumptions can be valid: precisely because Thai women may find it difficult to enter the Nordic labour market due to the barriers mentioned above (language, limited certifications, etc.), entrepreneurship may be a possible alternative to under-/unemployment. Entrepreneurship can therefore be a meaningful activity that provides women with feelings of independence and empowerment (Webster & Haandrikman, 2017).

Further, their native romantic partners may also self-identify as entrepreneurs, which might allow Thai women to tap into their spouses' social and economic resources to establish their enterprises (Webster, 2017). As such, romantic relationships may be intertwined with a professional one (ibid; Pongthippat et al., 2018). It is also possible that many businesses may be formally registered under the name of the local spouse, given the bureaucratic hindrances that may make it difficult for non-native entrepreneurs to thrive (Webster & Haandrikman, 2014). This may provide an additional form of risk for Thai women seeking to dissolve their romantic partnerships.<sup>10</sup>

As Fernbrant et al. (2017) discuss, Thai women's lack of economic and social capital when migrating to Nordic countries places them in a precarious position that may continue in the long-term. It is possible to surmise, based on the works of Herzfeld Olsson (2018) and Eerbeek and Hedberg (2021), that work in the service industry, and particularly work in massage parlours and restaurants, has substituted work in the agricultural sector as the main occupation for Thai women in Sweden and possibly other Nordic countries. As Herzfeld Olsson (2018: 151) notes, 'the scandals that followed the 2008 reform prompted the authorities

---

<sup>10</sup> Interestingly, similar barriers exist for Western men who choose to settle in Thailand with their Thai wives (Statham, 2021).

and the trade union movement to adopt a – fairly successful – coordinated approach to prevent further exploitation’ of seasonal agricultural workers, among which Thai women figured quite prominently.

Unfortunately, this shift in agendas may have inadvertently created fewer pathways for Thai women to migrate to and flourish in the Nordic area. As we saw above, there are barriers to the Nordic labour market in the form of language barriers, education going unrecognised, Thai women’s reputation for care work, etc. Further, Thai women may have limited possibilities of creating support systems outside of their immediate family in the host country, given these integration-related challenges. As such, several studies suggest that the likelihood of Thai women becoming stuck in dependent or abusive circumstances may be quite high.

#### *4.4.2 The Thai massage industry*

The massage industry has become particularly well-known in the Nordic area both as a point of entry to the local labour market for Thai women, but also as a location vulnerable to sexual exploitation. As the report by the Swedish police highlights (Wahlberg, 2020), many Thai women may have been lured to Sweden on the promise of earning money for themselves and their dependents (both those that came with them and those that stayed in Thailand). As such, it is estimated that approximately 80% of Thai massage parlours in Malmö (Sweden), for example, may offer the sale of sexual services (Jämställdhetsmyndigheten, 2021). Further, reports suggest that Thai women may be at risk of work-related exploitation in this and similar industries in several Nordic countries (ibid; Center mod menneskehandel, 2020; 2021; Jämställdhetsmyndigheten, 2021).<sup>11</sup>

While the increased (inter)national attention on Thai massage parlours has the merit of increasing awareness of this phenomenon, it also risks magnifying the stigma and discrimination experienced by Thai women, even if they do not engage in sex work. In rural areas, however, when Thai women are partnered to local men, their social capital can help to shield Thai women from some of the prejudices that women in more urban areas may encounter. As Webster (2017: 224) explains:

Mook, a massage businesswoman, explains everyone in the village is connected to her husband; they grew up with him and they know he is in the house (attached to her massage shop). Her husband's social capital also belongs to her through their relationship and connects her business to the

---

<sup>11</sup> This topic has been recently discussed in Nordic media by, for example, a Norwegian reportage and then distributed by Swedish SVT in Uppdrag Granskning (<https://tv.nrk.no/serie/brennpunkt/2022/MDDP11000422/avspiller>).

village materially (through his home) and symbolically. This connection to the village, she argues, protects her from unsavoury customers.

This is an example of how important a partner can be in a context where he has a positive position and creates conditions for integration and less vulnerability. It can be therefore said that native spouses may both facilitate and hinder integration for their Thai wives.

#### *4.4.3 Limited access to healthcare and other social safety nets*

One striking aspect emphasised by many of the works under consideration for this study is the limited support of state authorities. As Åkerman et al (2017: 194) note, Thai women who migrate to join romantic partners in Nordic countries 'are not offered the same support from [Nordic societies] as refugees or asylum-seekers'.

This can be seen particularly in the healthcare system where practitioners assume that the native partners will provide adequate translation support to their foreign-born spouses. This, as Tschirhart et al. (2019a) explain, is a common but mistaken assumption, as the partners may not be able or willing to do so due to language difficulties (inability to translate adequately to Thai or English, etc.). Thus, Thai women may often prefer to self-medicate, sourcing medicines from friends and family, or travel back to a country where they are familiar with the healthcare system, such as Thailand, to seek care there instead (Åkerman et al., 2016; Tschirhart et al., 2019a; Åkerman et al., 2021). Additionally, self-reliance is cited as an important value for many Thai women, which further complicates access to healthcare and other services in the host countries (Tschirhart et al., 2019a).

As The Foundation for Women (2012) notes, service providers in destination countries often encounter linguistic barriers in meeting and offering effective support to Thai women. The report also observes that there is a strong need for cooperation between service providers and related NGOs in destination countries, as well as intergovernmental and governmental institutions from both destination and origin countries to aid Thai women more effectively (ibid). Consequently, increased awareness and the development of national and international guidelines are sorely needed to allow for the establishment of more effective social safety nets (Jämställdhetsmyndigheten, 2021). Further, formal evaluations of the safety nets in place to support Thai women would also be a welcome addition to the literature on this topic.

Because of the assumption that Thai women may be particularly at risk for sexual work, public agencies have focused their efforts on reaching out and supporting women working in Thai massage parlours. This means that women not currently engaged in sex work may fly under the radar. And yet, as the studies above explain, Thai women who migrate for family reunification purposes may likewise struggle to enter Swedish society without appropriate

guidance and support. If their struggles are not understood and remedied in time, the risk of exploitation may become higher.

Paradoxically, it appears that women working in the Thai massage industry, whilst certainly more exposed to sexual and labour exploitation, may also be most in contact with health and social authorities, given the visibility of this industry in popular discourse. As such, it is most likely that they will come into the reach of health and social interventions that may offer support. Conversely, marriage migrants appear as the least likely to come into contact with health and social services, which means their experiences of abuse may be less likely to be apprehended by authorities.

## **5. Conclusion**

In this section, we will draw some conclusions as to the state of the literature regarding our knowledge of Thai women's experiences in the Nordic area and suggest some future points of departure for further research.

In this report we have offered an overview of the literature on the experiences of Thai women in Nordic countries 2012-2022 (i.e. Sweden, Denmark, Norway, Finland, and Iceland). As we mentioned above, this topic is important because Thai migration flows to Nordic Europe present special characteristics that are worth investigating further: for example, Nordic countries present similar socioeconomic structures that allow for a comparative approach; Thai women are much more likely to marry native men in comparison to other immigrant groups; they are more likely to migrate to Nordic Europe for family reunification purposes (although this trend may be currently evolving); and their presence in Nordic Europe has been particularly tied to the phenomena of human trafficking and sexual and labour exploitation.

It appears clear, based on the works outlined above, that Thai women are placed in a considerably vulnerable position when migrating to these countries. Stringent migration policies and relatively exclusive social structures put Thai women in a position of relying on their native spouses for socioeconomic support. The barriers experienced surrounding the labour market funnel Thai women towards low-skilled employment, even though they may have been working in highly-skilled occupations in Thailand. This, in addition to perceived duties to both origin and current families may lead Thai women to experience considerable psychological and emotional stress.

## 5.1 What do we know about Thai women's migration-related experiences to Nordic countries?

There is limited reliable and/or comparable data available on the demographic profiles of Thai women who migrate to Nordic countries.<sup>12</sup> However, national statistics presented in this report show that women represent the absolute majority of Thai migrants in all the Nordic countries, surpassing 75%.

The Thai women interviewed in the studies outlined above expressed both push and pull factors in relation to their migratory journeys. Many moved to Nordic countries to provide for their families and to improve their economic situations (Spanger, 2013; Pongthipatt et al., 2020), while others did so because they perceived the context to be more socially liberal than Thailand (Pravattiyagul, 2021).

The migratory journeys often relied on family reunification projects, so that Thai women moved to join their Nordic spouses in their destination countries. This may also partly be because recent policy changes have made it more difficult to migrate to Nordic countries with work visas and residence permits (Spanger, 2013; Tyldum, 2013). Other minor migratory pathways are human trafficking, seasonal work, and adoption (for children of Thai women).

The academic literature on Thai women's experiences has tended to focus particularly on participants' vulnerability to mental health issues and sexual and labour exploitation due to migration-related challenges, in the form of language barriers and unawareness of available social safety nets (Tschirhart et al., 2019a).

Because there is limited state support for migrating women (in comparison to refugees or asylum seekers), many Thai women tend to rely mostly on their native spouses for financial and bureaucratic support. These factors may lead to power differentials in international couples which may in turn lead to abusive circumstances.

We have identified, in the literature, several integration-related challenges Thai women experience in Nordic countries: namely, language barriers and cultural differences, insufficient social safety net and power differences in the family unit, among others. At the same time, we have also identified several integration-related opportunities, such as strong local Thai networks, entrepreneurial ambitions, and children and partners as possible bridges to the destination society. We have also found factors that can be interpreted as challenges and

---

<sup>12</sup> For example, Finland chooses to identify individuals based on their first native language and/or nationality, but each of these variables lead to different numbers, which then makes it difficult to make a scientifically valid comparison with figures from other countries. Furthermore, these variables also present methodological and conceptual difficulties as they do not take into consideration those who might be second-generation immigrants or those who acquired a Nordic nationality *in addition* to their Thai nationality.

opportunities depending on the specific context, such as reliance on native spouses and the strong reputation of Thai women in care-oriented jobs.

While there is a considerable wealth of knowledge on Thai women's experiences, the research works often focus on specific aspects of their lives, such as their sexual and reproductive health. We therefore recommend that future studies consider Thai women's experiences from a more holistic point of view through longitudinal and qualitative approaches, instead of the register data approach espoused by many of the works analysed here.

## **5.2 What more do we need to know about Thai women migration to and within the Nordic countries?**

In this section we highlight the knowledge gaps that we identified during our analysis of the available literature on the topic.

### *5.2.1 Migration routes: Transit and destination countries*

In the beginning of this project, we aimed to reach an understanding also about the migration routes of Thai women in Nordic and other European countries, given the information shared with us by ThaiWISE – Hela Människan i Malmö. We wanted to explore the target group's transit and final destinations. This, with starting point in ThaiWISE's experiences; ThaiWISE has through their networks identified Thai women moving from Sweden to Norway, while others moved from Sweden to Denmark, and then Hungary. Other routes known from ThaiWISE are from Thailand to Hungary then to Norway or Finland, Thailand to Poland then to Sweden or to Norway or to Finland, Thailand to Italy or France then to Denmark or Sweden or Norway as final destination or Germany to Denmark.

Unfortunately, the research team did not find any academic literature related to migration from Thailand to transit and destination countries in European countries through the desk review. We contacted the Board of Migration in Sweden and the Statistic Finland, but they were not able to provide statistics on whether Thai women had travelled through other countries on route from Thailand to their destination (The Swedish Migration Agency, 2023 email, Statistic Finland, 2023 email). However, we do not believe that studying statistics on previous countries of residence will be enough; it is important to know why Thai women choose (or not choose) certain routes, what the push and pull factors are and to understand how Thai women (and their children) experience their migration route. To be able to design capacity-building and empowerment activities that are relevant, we need to know more about the experiences and routes of Thai women migrating to Europe. This is something that would be important to study further using other methods.

### *Push and pull factors*

Additionally, we lack in-depth knowledge of the specific push and pull factors for Thai women migrating to Nordic countries as most works focus on Europe as a single, culturally-homogenous area.

Based on data gathered from the Swedish Migration agency (The Swedish Migration Agency, personal communication), it appears that labour-related migration is on the rise again after a several years-long pause; this is a recent change that merits further investigation, as it may also provide insight on marriage-related migration trends (if, for example, marriage-migration has become less attractive).

### *Social safety nets for Thai women*

As Åkerman et al. (2021) report, Thai women appear to have limited knowledge of their sexual and reproductive health rights, and it is possible to suggest that their knowledge of other available social safety nets may be similarly lacking. As such, we currently need more research on the reach of social services in Sweden (and possibly other Nordic countries), to what extent these are available to non-natives, and their accessibility for Thai women. Further, the literature has not yet focused upon whether and how Thai women consider contacting social services.

## **6. Recommendations**

### **6.1 Recommendations for future studies**

As Straiton et al. (2019: 107) note, '[f]ocusing on only discourses around marital relationships may be limiting when trying to understand factors that influence the health and well-being of Thai immigrant women'. Similarly, we suggest that future studies ought to depart from a more holistic approach that considers Thai women as multiply advantaged/disadvantaged and their lives as multifaceted.

In this section, we propose several research departure points. **First**, a longitudinal qualitative study following a group of recently immigrated Thai women as they negotiate entry to Nordic societies. A variant of this study could include studying the involvement of the ThaiWISE network that could act as system navigators in a manner described, for example, by Tschirhart et al. (2019b). Here a mixed methods approach combining ethnography and in-depth interviews (both individual and focus groups) over a long period of time could generate meaningful data.

A **second** possible study would be to research the effectiveness of social safety nets available to Thai female migrants with the objective of understanding best practices and areas of



improvement. This study could focus on long-time Thai residents and would benefit from a retrospective approach aiming to understand what interventions could have been helpful for them as they negotiated entering Nordic societies. Again, in-depth interviews (both individual and focus groups) could generate meaningful data.

**Third**, a qualitative study that interviews successfully-integrated Thai women could shed light on the support mechanisms that actually were effective in helping them achieve their objectives. Here it could be helpful to also investigate the challenges and opportunities faced particularly by Thai mothers, both if children were part of their migratory journey or if they instead stayed behind in Thailand.

These three potential studies ought to consider a longitudinal approach to follow participants as they negotiated entry in Nordic societies, scheduling interviews at regular intervals.<sup>13</sup>

A **fourth** study could look at the factors preventing Thai women from contacting social services and police in the case of abusive and/or unsafe circumstances. A start could be to identify barriers and triggers for help seeking. This study could then lead to actionable information to ensure social safety nets become more responsive to Thai women's needs. A recommendation would be to include the impact and effects of the responses from the women's social networks (family friends, neighbours, co-workers etc.), and how these responses affects Thai women's help seeking processes.

Participants could be recruited through contact with state migration agencies when they obtain a visa, in the case of newly-migrated women, or when they obtain long-term residency or citizenship, in the case of more established women. While many of the studies under consideration in this overview recruited Thai participants in major cities, Webster (2017: 219) suggests that 'Thai women are an increasingly present migrant group in rural [areas]'. It could therefore be useful to ensure that the rural population is also adequately represented in the sample of prospective participants. Because of their remote location, it is possible that many of the social safety nets in rural areas may be particularly lacking. Further, we would recommend an open design that considers both marriage and work migrants to gain a sense of how different migration trajectories may impact entry into Nordic society.

As Åkerman et al. (2017) among others highlight, fluency in Thai would be a great asset in any study on Thai women's experiences, as it would allow participants to fully express themselves in the interview setting. Further, knowledge of Thai customs, culture, and practices would also allow a more profound and sensitive understanding of the possibilities and

---

<sup>13</sup> A similar approach was used by Gålnder (2020) to study the barriers and facilitators for criminal women's rehabilitation processes in Sweden with excellent results.

challenges faced by participants. We would therefore recommend that a native Thai speaker conduct the majority of the data collection process. The researcher then would need to be supported by a research team familiar with the participants' cultural background.

A useful theoretical departure point for future studies would be intersectionality: this theory aims to understand the complexity of lived experience by analysing how individuals with different characteristics (gender, ethnicity/racialisation, class, nativity status, etc.) navigate specific environments (Quaglietta Bernal, 2022). This approach would allow for a continued attention to the agency of individuals, whilst acknowledging the power of structuring forces that may limit their circumstances.

## 6.2 Policy recommendations

Finally, we are providing some policy recommendations based on the results presented in the report. However, further research as outlined above is necessary to ensure the appropriateness of the recommendations below.

1. **Orientation to Nordic societies:** The studies examined in this report have highlighted the knowledge gap for newly-arrived Thai women. We therefore recommend the following measures:
  - a. Greater information in Thai for departing and newly-arrived immigrants, including but not limited to information on migration to other Nordic countries, bureaucratic hurdles, available social safety nets, etc.;
    - i. Here the collaboration of the Nordic and Thai embassies around the world could be sought to ensure they are adequately informing Thai nationals about the logistical hurdles involved in migrating to Nordic countries. However, it could be good to first evaluate the extent of the information already available.
    - ii. Additionally, we suggest that steps be taken to raise awareness about possible cultural complexities for international couples and Thai nationals entering Nordic societies.
  - b. "System navigators" or mentors for newly-arrived immigrants;
  - c. Establishment of a digital network of Thai natives that can work as a knowledge and support base for newly-arrived and established Thai immigrants;
2. **Supporting Thai female entrepreneurs:** It is highlighted in the report that Thai women appear to be particularly entrepreneurial migrants, and we suggest this may be to counter the employment barriers they face. As such, future policy approaches should consider social interventions aimed at supporting Thai female entrepreneurs

by, for example, providing them with further information on the bureaucratic aspects of setting up a business, as well as opening lines of microcredit to incentivise entrepreneurship.

3. **Migration-sensitive training:** Staff in social and health services should be trained to be more sensitive to the needs of Thai immigrants and not take for granted that marriage migrants require less support than asylum-seekers or refugees.
4. **Empowering Thai women through their children and spouses:** Research results suggest that Thai women's children may assimilate into Nordic society to a greater extent compared to their mothers, although they may also require greater support than their native peers. The education system ought to take particular responsibility to ensure that immigrant children may thrive in the Nordic countries. Further, native spouses ought to be supported in helping Thai partners enter Nordic societies by, for example, incentivising social and networking events for Thai-Nordic couples and by raising awareness about possible logistical entry barriers for Thai nationals. In so doing, it is hoped that Thai children and native spouses may help to connect Thai women to their local communities. Additionally, we recommend that future policies help support the children of Thai migrants who remained in Thailand.
5. **Formal evaluations** of the social safety nets in place to support Thai women would also be a welcome addition, so that it may be easier to understand and cover crucial gaps.

## 7. Appendix

### 7.1 Works considered

<b>“Green” Papers</b>	
<b>Title</b>	<b>Authors</b>
Accessing public healthcare in Oslo, Norway: the experiences of Thai immigrant masseuses.	Tschirhart, Diaz, & Ottersen (2019)
Binational Marriages in Sweden: Is There an EU Effect?	Haandrikman (2014)
Broken dreams of a better life in Sweden: Thai women's lived experiences of intimate partner violence by Swedish men in international marriages.	Pongthipat, Darvishpour, Kijssomporn & Östlund (2018)
Dependence and Human Trafficking in the Context of Transnational Marriage.	Tyldum (2013)
Doing Love in the Borderland of Transnational Sex Work: Female Thai Migrants in Denmark.	Spanger (2013)
Effects of policy changes on Thai migration to Iceland	Gisladottir Bissat (2013)
From Asia to Europe and Back: A rapid appraisal of Thai workers travelling to and from the European Union, and available assistance	The Foundation for Women (2012)
Healthcare-seeking behaviour in relation to sexual and reproductive health among Thai-born women in Sweden: a qualitative study.	Åkerman, Essén, Westerling & Larsson (2017)
Intimate partner violence and poor mental health among Thai women residing in Sweden.	Fernbrant, Emmelin, Östergren, Cantor-Graae & Essen (2014)
Knowledge and utilization of sexual and reproductive healthcare services among Thai immigrant women in Sweden.	Åkerman, Östergren, Essén, Fernbrant & Westerling (2016)
"Living like I am in Thailand": stress and coping strategies among Thai migrant masseuses in Oslo, Norway.	Tschirhart, Straiton, Ottersen & Winkler (2019)
Menneskehandel i Danmark 2020 - Årsrapport	Center mod menneskehandel (2020)
Människohandel för sexuella och andra ändamål: Lägesrapport 21	Wahlberg (2020)
Migration and assimilation in a Nordic setting - a generational analysis of the Thai diaspora in Denmark	Liu (2018)
Perceptions of transnational family responsibilities' effects on subjective health and wellness – voices of Thai immigrant women.	Pongthipat, Östlund, Darvishpour, Kijssomporn, & Gustafsson (2020)
Possibilities for maintaining a strong self – a grounded theory study of relational experiences among Thai women in Sweden.	Fernbrant, Agardh, & Emmelin (2017)
Prostituotion och människohandel: Slutredovisning av uppdrag att stärka arbetet mot att barn och unga respektive vuxna utnyttjas i prostituotion och människohandel, samt kartlägga omfattningen av prostituotion och människohandel	Jämställdhetsmyndigheten (2021)
Rural to rural translocal practices - Thai women in the Swedish countryside	Webster (2017)
Thai transgender women in Europe: Migration, gender and binational relationships.	Pravattiyagul (2021)
Thai women entrepreneurs in Sweden: Critical perspectives on migrant small businesses	Webster & Haandrikman (2017)
Thai women in rural Sweden - victims or participants?	Webster & Haandrikman (2014)
Transnational marriages and the health and well-being of Thai migrant women living in Norway.	Straiton, Ansnes, & Tschirhart (2019)
Understanding the needs and use of sexual and reproductive health services among Thai women: a descriptive cross-sectional study in Sweden.	Åkerman, Larsson, Essén, & Westerling (2021)

<b>“Blue” Papers</b>	
<b>Title</b>	<b>Authors</b>
Beyond Migration Patterns--Understanding Family Reunion Decisions of Filipino Labour and Thai Marriage Migrants in Global Reproductive Systems	Fresnoza-Flot (2018)
Chameleon brokers: A translocal take on migration industries in the Thai-Swedish wild berry business.	van Eerbeek (2021)
From rural life to transnational wife: agrarian transition, gender mobility, and intimate globalization in transnational marriages in northeast Thailand.	Sunanta & Angeles (2013)
From Sex Tourist to Son-in-Law: Emergent Masculinities and Transient Subjectivities of Farang Men in Thailand	Thompson, Kitiarsa & Smutkupt (2016)
Gender, class, and paradoxical mobilities of Thai marriage migrants in Austria.	Butratana & Trupp (2021)
German Migrants in Pattaya, Thailand: Gendered Mobilities and the Blurring Boundaries between Sex Tourism, Marriage Migration and Lifestyle Migration	Jaisuekun & Sunanta (2021)
Globalising Thailand through gendered 'both-ways' migration pathways with 'the West': cross-border connections between people, states, and places.	Statham, Scuzzarello, Sunanta & Trupp (2020)
Globalising the Thai 'high-touch' industry: exports of care and body work and gendered mobilities to and from Thailand	Sunanta (2020)
Immigration and immigrants in the Nordic countries 2016-2020	Statistisk sentralbyrå (2022)
Immigrants in the Finnish labour market and future needs in an ageing society	Heikkilä (2017)
Lifestyle Migration in Thailand: A Case Study of German Migrants in Pattaya	Jaisuekun & Sunanta (2016)
Masculinity, Marriage and Migration: Farang Migrant Men in Thailand.	Lapanun (2018)
Migration for love? Love and intimacy in marriage migration processes.	Pananakhonsab (2019)
Population and society	Statistics Finland (2022)
Practising privilege. How settling in Thailand enables older Western migrants to enact privilege over local people.	Scuzzarello (2020)
A Case Study of Thai migrant workers in Poland	Vanaspong (2012)
Thai wives in Europe and European husbands in Thailand: how social locations shape their migration experiences and engagement with host societies.	Kanchanachitra & Chuenglertsiri (2020)
Thailand and the Global Intimate: Transnational Marriages, Health Tourism, and Retirement Migration	Sunanta (2014)
The Adaption Experience of Thai Youths Immigrated with Their Mothers to Live in Stockholm Sweden.	Sukheatta, Suksawat & Seansa (2018)
The Effect of Household and Community on School Attrition: An Analysis of Thai Youth.	Korinek & Punpuing (2012)
Towards Protection of Vulnerable Labour Migrants in Sweden: The Case of the Thai Berry Pickers	Herzfeld Olsson (2018)
Unintended transnationalism': The challenging lives of Thai women who partner Western men.	Statham (2021)

## 7.2 List of databases

eBook Collection (EBSCOhost), Academic Search Complete, AMED - The Allied and Complementary Medicine Database, OpenDissertations, Art & Architecture Source, Atla Religion Database with AtlaSerials, Avery Index to Architectural Periodicals, Bibliography of Asian Studies, Business Source Complete, CINAHL Complete, Communication Source, Criminal Justice Abstracts with Full Text, EconLit, ERIC, European Views of the Americas: 1493 to 1750, GeoRef, GeoRef In Process, GreenFILE, Humanities International Complete, Inspec, LGBTQ+ Source, Library, Information Science & Technology Abstracts with Full Text, Literary Reference Center, MathSciNet via EBSCOhost, MEDLINE, MLA Directory of Periodicals, MLA International Bibliography, New Testament Abstracts, Newswires, Old Testament Abstracts, Philosopher's Index, Political Science Complete, APA PsycArticles, APA PsycBooks, APA PsycInfo, APA PsycTests, Regional Business News, SocINDEX with Full Text, Teacher Reference Center, Urban Studies Abstracts, Literary Reference eBook Collection, RILM Abstracts of Music Literature, eBook Subscription Harvard Business Publishing Collection (EBSCOhost)

### 7.3 Summary of Thai-language papers

During the time of data gathering, we received 13 texts from the ThaiWise research assistants, 12 of whom had to be excluded because they were not in accordance with the original inclusion criteria (see above).

Title	Inclusion / Exclusion	Abstract (as translated by Otakanon Parichart)
Adaptation process of Thai women who married foreigners in Norway - Payao Holten	Excluded - Student work	The objective of this research is to study the adaptation process of Thai women who married foreigners in Norway. Questionnaire was used as research tool to interview the Informants, Thai women who married foreigners in Norway which were selected by purposive sampling. Data were analyzed and synthesis analysis, following by the interpretation for main issues and presentation in essay format. The results showed that: Thai women who first moved to Norway would be excited with new things, then would have some troubles with weather and time before adapting themselves to the weather, time, language and lifestyle. Thai women who could not adapt themselves well would have problems with cold weather, such as cold, stiff, numb hands and ears, runny nose, chapped lips, peeled skin, dry hair with dandruff and illness, and with language, such as being withdrawn, depressed, shut in. Therefore, Thai women who would marry foreigners in Norway should study the Norwegian language, culture and way of life before moving there, and Thai Ministry of Social Development and Human Security should cooperate with private sectors to set up the counseling service center in Norway.
Cross cultural Marriage Roles and Relations between Isan Women and Foreign Men - Pradhana Somnuek and Natedao Taotawin	Excluded - Student work	Marriages between Northeastern Thai (or "Isan") women and foreign men have gained widespread attention as more Isan women have married foreign men. This research raises three questions: (1) what are the reasons Isan women choose to marry foreign men, (2) what are the division of roles and responsibilities within cross-cultural marriage families, and (3) what are the relationships between foreign men and their wife's relatives? This research is qualitative research. Various research methods were employed, including non-participant observation and in-depth interview. The study cases are 5 Isan women who married foreign men and resettled in Nong Chan Village, Sri Wilai Sub-district, Sri Wilai District, Bueng Kan Province. The study finds the main reason that Isan women decide to marry foreign men is economic, because Isan women want to escape from poverty and enhance their family's economic and social status. However, the decision to marry foreigners is also a social choice; Isan women want to create a perfect family in order to be accepted by their families and community, as they have experienced divorce with Thai men before marrying the foreigners. After marriage with foreign men, most Isan women and their foreign husbands migrate to live with their wife's former families in Nong Chan Village. In addition, Most Isan women quit their jobs and become housewives. Only one woman still works outside the home after marriage. The relationships and roles of men and women within cross-cultural marriage families are complex. However, relations between Isan women and foreign men can be considered "equal exchanges" although the exchanges between the two parties are different the husband provides economic assistance to

		his wife and honors his wife, including accepting the wife's former family; the wife gives Love and provides care for the husband and welcomes the foreign husband as a family member. The reciprocal exchange of the resource of which one party has an excess and the other party lacks on the basis of satisfaction of both parties may be considered an equal exchange.
Cultural adjustment of Thai migrant workers - Pornvipa Haulavanija	Excluded - Student work focusing on men, out of scope	This study aimed to examine cultural adjustment of Thai migrant workers. Participants were 9 males who were selected based on these criteria. Data were collected through in-depth interviews and analyzed using a consensual qualitative research method. Data analysis yielded 7 domains; 1) an increase in the income as the main incentive for workers migration, 2) concerns about family and adjustment to living in a foreign country, particularly in those without sufficient preparation for the migration, 3) experiences off cultural and environmental differences (e.g., weather condition, food, social interaction, and language), 4) emotional distress in the new environment (e.g., homesickness, loneliness, and emotional suffering as a result of challenges in the new living and fatigue), 5) adjustment to the new environment by changing own beliefs and attitude, managing emotional disturbance, and taking care of oneself, 6) resources for living abroad, especially those obtained through networking with Thai coworkers and other Thais, and also orientation before migration, 7) the sense of fulfillment upon returning home and witnessing improvement in family's well-being and living conditions. The findings of this study might lead to better understanding of cultural adjustment of Thai migrant workers and can be implemented as a guideline to promote migrant workers well-being.
Dynamic of Desire and International Migration in Sawang Village Nong Wua So Districts Udon Thani Province - Laksamee Kaewwongyai, Dr. Patcharin Lapanun & Dr. Panu Suppatkul	Excluded - Conference paper	This article aims to demonstrate the dynamic of 'desire' of migrants that occurs continuously and endlessly. The study applied the qualitative methodological approach in Sawang village, Udon Thani province. The data were collected from documents related to migration, in -depth interviews, non-participant observation. The migration phenomenon at Sawang village has occurred continuously for more than 30 years. The study examined expectations and experiences in travelling to foreign countries, both before migration and after migration, which is constantly changing. The research found that the dynamics of the desire of migrant workers are as follows: career paths for economic security, good family life, International experience, financial Independence, and life. Desires arise from the experience and background of each migrant in particular.
Economic and Social Security of International Migrant Worker Households A Case of the Northeast - Dusadee Ayuiwat &	Excluded - Out of scope	This research focused on both the economic security level and the social security level of the international migrant worker households in the northeastern part of Thailand. This research attempted to describe the economic security and social security of the northeast labour households where members migrated to work abroad. The quantitative research method was performed with 428 households in the Northeast with overseas migrant labourers during the 5 year period from 2010 to 2015. The sample was migrant households in Udonthani, Chaiyaphum, and Khon Kaen, where international migration existed within the recent five-year period from 2010 to 2015, the three provinces with the highest number of migrant labourers. The research instrument, the interview schedule, was reliable at 0.87 level. The data were collected from



Piyapong Boonkwang		January to March, 2015 and analysed based on descriptive statistics. The results of this research indicated that the majority of the migrant worker households, or 77.8%, were considered to be at the middle economic security level, while only 14.5% were at the high level; and 53.5% of households were at the middle level of the social security level, while 45.8% were at the high level. It is noticeable that the migrant worker households with the high level of social security have the higher compared ratio than the households with the high level of economic security. When comparing the average values between the economic security level and social security level, the study found that the economic security level has only 88.05%, which is lower than the social security of 93.28%.
Living Expectations of Rural Women with a Foreign Husband A Case of Northeast Thailand - Dusadee Ayuwat and Wanichcha Narongchai	Excluded - Out of scope	This research was aimed at studying: 1) preparation of women who were travelling to marry foreigners and their expectations of living with their husbands, and 2) factors correlated to the levels of expectations of living with their husbands in the destination country. The quantitative method was applied and the target group consisted of 211 women living in Udonthani and Khon Kaen who were going abroad to marry foreigners. The number of women in these two areas has shown high potential in cross-national marriage. The data were collected through the structured interview during June to August 2011. Pearson Correlation Analysis was completed to determine correlation between the factors. The results show that women who were going to marry a foreigner had language, social and cultural preparation for their lives abroad. Preparation in terms of knowledge on their rights after marriage, needs of assistance while living abroad, and financial management was found at a low level. However, the majority's expectations of living with their foreign husband! were at a medium level; roughly half had great expectations of security, sustainability, honest spouse who trust them, and spouses assistance in their adjustment. Moreover, one third of the target groups expected their foreign husband to provide financial assistance to support their parents and family back home. The factor's correlated significantly with expectations of living with a foreign husband included the degree of preparation before travelling and the Income per month.
Long-Lasting Temporary Migration of Thai Migrant Workers Living Without Residence Permit in France - Vjitt Prapong	Excluded – Student work	The migration of Thai migrant workers without residence permit in France is a form of temporary-permanent migration, or long-lasting temporary migration. The situation of these undocumented migrants is neither temporary migration nor permanent migration because the migrants will remain in the host society until retirement: when they can no longer work because of their age or there is no employer willing to recruit them. There is little doubt that these migrants before leaving their homeland, have no intention of settling permanently in the host society. Despite times spent in the host society, their preconceived opinion remains unchanged; notable factors are the social contexts and the living conditions they face in the host society. In other words, the clandestine condition of these migrants, specially characterized by its invisibility and insecurity, does not allow them to integrate into the host society. On the contrary, the clandestine condition encourages them to remain highly attached to the original society.
Management of Thai migrant workers Working abroad in the 21st century	Excluded - Out of scope	The research project on administrative of Thai migrant workers go to work abroad in 21st Century has objectives as 1. To analysis the situation and collecting data of Thai workers in South Korea and Malaysia in the themes of receiving in job, debt bondage from job seeking, vulnerability to being victim of human trafficking, labour protection and justice process in destination country. 2. To study and analysis the guideline for implementation of Thai returnees and connection of Thai returnees

		<p>include knowledge and experience which received from destination country. 3. Promoting to establish and increase capacity of connection of Thai returnees in the community. In term of research areas, research team has collecting data of Thai workers in South Korea and Malaysia by using in-depth interviewed with Thai workers, Thai authorities and private sector as well. In case of Thai returnees, research team has collecting data in Nongpai subdistrict, Wieh tanburi district, Pelhchaburi province and Ban Nongpai subdistrict, Nomg Harn district. Udon Thaitn province by using questionnaire to interview 1(1(1 returnees and separated 50 eases in (both areas. Therefore local coordinators collect data within 5 months between September 2015 till January 2016. The samplings that collect are total 138 cases. Moreover researcher team has add collect data of Thai returnees in Nonghan DisEricQ, Udon Thani Province and in 3 border provinces in Southern of Thailand. The aims of this survey collection arc want to collect the returnees' information that never have and operate these information from Thai authority and private .sector before. Especially the important information about deceiving and go to work aboard by their own that did not through the process by Thai authority. So I his project is the pilot project to show the collecting of returnees* information in the areas where have more Thai workers go to work aboard is important with I he policy, administrative and strategy for Thai workers go to work aboard and can manage Thai workers go aboard safety and protection by Thai authority sustain able.</p>
<p>Marriage Migration and the Uses of Communication Technology among New-generation Thai Migrants in Germany - Woremon Sinsuwan</p>	<p>Excluded - Out of scope, Student work</p>	<p>This article draws from the author's research on marriage migrants from Thailand to the Federal Republic of Germany, focusing on those arriving under the 2005 Residence Act. The research integrates primary statistical data from the Federal Statistical Office, documentary research, quantitative data from online questionnaires, and qualitative data from the author's interviews with these "new-generation" Thai migrants. The article illustrates a different context of migration from those discussed in earlier research, which mainly focus on migration processes and remittances. On the basis of the Residence Act's regulations on marriage migration and the ubiquity of new media technologies, the experiences of "new-generation" Thai migrants are constituted of different socio-economic backgrounds and accordingly different socialization patterns from their predecessors. In particular, they use communication technologies as alternative platforms to connect with their networks both in their homeland and among the Thai communities in Germany; both before and after their migration.</p>
<p>Media Exposure in Website Dating Attitude and Intention for Marriage with a foreigner of Thai Woman - Parichatr Techatirapanya</p>	<p>Excluded - Student work</p>	<p>A thesis on "Media Exposure in website dating, Attitude and Intention for marriage with a foreigner of Thai woman" which aims to study the exposure behavior of dating website; attitudes to marriage with foreigners, and intention of marriage with foreigners of Thai woman. This thesis studies in a quantitative research by collecting 400 data from women living in Bangkok, Thailand. This research is a survey research using a questionnaire by Mixed Sampling, Probability Sampling and Non-Probability Sampling. The thesis on the part of the population is female aged between 23-30 years old and their education levels are the bachelor's degree, employees in the private sector and single with an average income per month around 10,001-20,000 baht. Behavioral on information exposure in the dating websites shows that most samples have the frequency of information exposure on the website www.interpals.net Each time, the duration of dating is around 60 minutes from 6 pm. to 11.59 pm. The most content Is finding a new friend. A computer is the most of tool that exposure In the dating websites.</p>

<p>Thai-German Marriages Reciprocal compensatory exchange and interdependence - Pataya Ruenkaew</p>	<p>Excluded - Out of scope</p>	<p>This article presents an overview of Thai-German marriage, focusing on socio-economic backgrounds and motives for marriages between Thai women and German men. The discussion draws on data and findings from three of the author's previous field researches which span over the past three decades: in 1989, 1995-1997 and 2008-2009. The common stereotypes of Thai-German couples are often associated with the contexts of their first encounters, their brief premarital relationship, and particularly their contrasting marriage motives. However, reconsidering the author's empirical study within the frameworks of reciprocal compensatory exchange and interdependence theories, the article illustrates how their marriage decisions exemplify the processes of reciprocal compensatory exchange driven by their disparate anticipations of marriage lives. In many cases, such anticipations have developed into forms of interdependence between the spouses, and have consequently formed a basis of enduring marriages among the Thai-German couples.</p>
<p>The Adaptation Experience of Thai Youths Immigrated with Their Mothers to Live in Stockholm Sweden - Sunisa Sukheeatta, Jirasuk Suksawat &amp; Niranath Seansa</p>	<p>Included</p>	<p>The purpose of this qualitative research was to explore the adaptation experience of Thai youths who immigrated with their mothers to live in Stockholm, Sweden. The key informants of research were 7 Thai youths, who immigrated with their mothers to live in Stockholm, Sweden, purposively selected based on their age of 11-18, stayed in Sweden not lower than one year, had a Swedish adoptive father, were able to communicate in Thai and willing to participate in this research. The employed research instruments were a semi-structured interview form, a participatory observation recording form, and a held recording form. Analysis of data was conducted using context and content analyses. Findings of the research revealed that the adaptation experience comprised 4 main themes: (1) state of mind prior to migration, which included 3 sub-themes: 1) not wanting to leave Thailand, 2) missing and caring for those who were left behind and 3) being anxious about the future. (2) The confronted obstacles which were divided into 9 sub-themes: 1) longing to be back to Thailand, 2) feeling inferior in the eyes of others, 3) having problems in using language and communication! 4) family members being strangers, 5) being unfamiliar with the society, people and culture, 6) feeling hopeless and frustrated with difficulty in learning, 7) lack of friends to rely on while suffering, 8) food eaten being unfamiliar with tongue and 9) being unfamiliar with the weather. (3) The adaptation to new society which was divided into 5 sub-themes: 1) opening one's mind and being ready for adaptation to the changes, 2) building self-respect and self-esteem, (3) having skills of life in the new society., 4) having leisure time activities for recreation and extra incomes, and (5) receiving helps from different agencies. (4) The goal of life which was divided into 3 sub-themes: 1) education being really important, 2) achieving for education degree, and 3) back to develop their homeland.</p>
<p>The Effect of Outward Foreign Direct Investment on International Labor Migration - Chutika Kiatruangkrai</p>	<p>Excluded - student work and out of scope</p>	<p>The objective of this paper is to analyze effects of foreign direct investment (FDI) on international labor movement in bilateral context. The analyses are conducted focusing on the labor flows from the developing nations (the South) to the same group of country, and between the developing nations to the developed nations (the North), given the FDI flows in the opposite direction. The Poisson pseudo-maximum likelihood (PPML) regression is adopted to estimate augmented gravity model for above analyses. The data used in this study contains information from 110 origin countries and 122 destination countries of migration from 2005-2010. This empirical result suggests that the effect of bilateral FDI outflows from destination countries into origin countries of migration on migration flows in the South-South and the South-North direction are not statistically significant. While the effect of aggregate FDI inflows into the South on the flows is negatively significant (substitutability effect) only in the South-South direction, such</p>

		<p>effect on the migration flows in the South-North direction is not statistically significant. In addition, the results show that the destination country's per capita income, origin and destination country's population, geographical and cultural factors such as common border and colony relationship are important determinants influencing the migration pattern from the South or both directions. However, the migration flows in the South-South and the South-North direction have the different determinants. This result reflects the different potential and incentive of migrant from the South into each of the destination countries, the South and the North, which are classified by levels of economic development.</p>
--	--	---

## 8. References

- Åkerman, E., Essén, B., Westerling, R., & Larsson, E. (2017). Healthcare-Seeking Behaviour in Relation to Sexual and Reproductive Health among Thai-Born Women in Sweden: A Qualitative Study. *Culture, Health & Sexuality*, 19(2): 194-207. doi:10.1080/13691058.2016.1214746
- Åkerman, E., Larsson, E. C., Essén, B., & Westerling, R. (2021). Understanding the Needs and Use of Sexual and Reproductive Health Services among Thai Women: A Descriptive Cross-Sectional Study in Sweden. *Sexual Health (14485028)*, 18(3): 203-211. doi:10.1071/SH20184
- Åkerman, E., Östergren, P.-O., Essén, B., Fernbrant, C., & Westerling, R. (2016). Knowledge and Utilization of Sexual and Reproductive Healthcare Services among Thai Immigrant Women in Sweden. *BMC International Health & Human Rights*, 16: 1-14. doi:10.1186/s12914-016-0100-4
- Center mod menneskehandel. (2020). *Menneskehandel i Danmark 2020 - Årsrapport*. odense: Socialstyrelsen.
- Center mod menneskehandel. (2021). Human trafficking in Denmark 2021. A excerpt of the annual report, with a focus on statistics and data. Odense: Socialstyrelsen.
- Eerbeek, P. v., & Hedberg, C. (2021). Chameleon Brokers: A Translocal Take on Migration Industries in the Thai-Swedish Wild Berry Business. *Migration Studies*, 9(3): 830-851. doi:10.1093/migration/mnab030
- Fernbrant, C., Agardh, A., & Emmelin, M. (2017). Possibilities for Maintaining a Strong Self – a Grounded Theory Study of Relational Experiences among Thai Women in Sweden. *Global Health Action*, 10(1): N.PAG-N.PAG. doi:10.1080/16549716.2017.1396881
- Gålnander, R. (2020). *Maintaining Desistance: Barriers and Expectations in Women's Desistance from Crime* (Doctoral Dissertation). Stockholm: Stockholms universitet. Retrieved on the 21st of July, 2021 from <http://su.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:1465405/FULLTEXT01.pdf>.
- Gisladottir Bissat, J. (2013). Effects of Policy Changes on Thai Migration to Iceland. *International Migration*, 51(2): 46-59. doi:10.1111/imig.12017
- Haandrikman, K. (2014). Binational Marriages in Sweden: Is There an Eu Effect? *Population Space & Place*, 20(2): 177-199. doi:10.1002/psp.1770
- Heikkilä, E. (2017). Immigrants in the Finnish Labour Market and Future Needs in an Ageing Society. In E. Heikkilä (Ed.), *Immigrants and the Labour Markets: Experiences from Abroad and Finland*. Migration institute of Finland: 129-160.
- Herzfeld Olsson, P. (2018). Towards Protection of Vulnerable Labour Migrants in Sweden: The Case of the Thai Berry Pickers. In C. Rijken & T. de Lange (Eds.), *Towards a Decent Labour Market for Low-Waged Migrant Workers*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press: 149-167.
- Irastorza, N., & Osanami Törngren, S. (2022). Melting Pot or Salad Bowl? An Overview of Mixed Families in Sweden. *Journal of Critical Mixed Race Studies*, 1(2). <http://dx.doi.org/10.5070/C81258333> Retrieved from <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/8gb8r94t>
- Jämställdhetsmyndigheten. (2021). *Prostitution och Människohandel: Slutredovisning av Uppdrag att Stärka Arbetet mot att Barn och Unga Respektive Vuxna Utnyttjas i Prostitution och Människohandel, samt Kartlägga Omfattningen av Prostitution och Människohandel*. Göteborg: Jämställdhetsmyndigheten.

- Kanchanachitra, M., & Chuenglertsiri, P. (2020). Thai Wives in Europe and European Husbands in Thailand: How Social Locations Shape their Migration Experiences and Engagement with Host Societies. *Journal of Ethnic & Migration Studies*, 46(8): 1588-1605. doi:10.1080/1369183X.2020.1711569
- Korinek, K., & Punpuing, S. (2012). The Effect of Household and Community on School Attrition: An Analysis of Thai Youth. *Comparative Education Review*, 56(3): 474-510. doi:10.1086/666911
- Liu, C. (2018). Migration and Assimilation in a Nordic Setting: A Generational Analysis of the Thai Diaspora in Denmark. *PSDS Journal of Development Studies*: 57-91.
- Pananakhonsab, W. (2019). Migration for Love? Love and Intimacy in Marriage Migration Processes. *Emotion, Space and Society*, 31: 86-92. doi:10.1016/j.emospa.2019.03.001
- Pongthipat, W., Darvishpour, M., Kijssomporn, J., & Östlund, G. (2018). Broken Dreams of a Better Life in Sweden: Thai Women's Lived Experiences of Intimate Partner Violence by Swedish men in International Marriages. *Global Health Action*, 11(1): 1-10. doi:10.1080/16549716.2018.1496889
- Pongthipat, W., Östlund, G., Darvishpour, M., Kijssomporn, J., & Gustafsson, L.-K. (2020). Perceptions of Transnational Family Responsibilities' Effects on Subjective Health and Wellness – Voices of Thai Immigrant Women. *International Journal of Migration, Health & Social Care*, 16(3): 225-240. doi:10.1108/IJMHS-12-2019-0104
- Pravattiyagul, J. (2021). Thai Transgender Women in Europe: Migration, Gender and Binational Relationships. *Asian & Pacific Migration Journal*, 30(1): 79-101. doi:10.1177/0117196821998361
- Quaglietta Bernal, O. (2022). *In Her Words: Women's Accounts of Managing Drug-Related Risk, Pleasure, and Stigma in Sweden* (Doctoral Dissertation). Lund (Sweden): Lund University. Retrieved on the 12th of September, 2022 from [https://lucris.lub.lu.se/ws/portalfiles/portal/124620487/In\\_Her\\_Words\\_O.\\_Quaglietta\\_Bernal.pdf](https://lucris.lub.lu.se/ws/portalfiles/portal/124620487/In_Her_Words_O._Quaglietta_Bernal.pdf).
- Spanger, M. (2013). Doing Love in the Borderland of Transnational Sex Work: Female Thai Migrants in Denmark. *NORA: Nordic Journal of Women's Studies*, 21(2): 92-107. doi:10.1080/08038740.2013.781543
- Statham, P. (2021). 'Unintended Transnationalism': The Challenging Lives of Thai Women Who Partner Western men. *Population, Space and Place*, 27(5): 1-12. doi:10.1002/psp.2407
- Straiton, M. L., Ansnes, T. J., & Tschirhart, N. (2019). Transnational Marriages and the Health and Well-Being of Thai Migrant Women Living in Norway. *International Journal of Migration, Health & Social Care*, 15(1): 107-119. doi:10.1108/IJMHS-01-2018-0002
- Sukheatta, S., Suksawat, J., & Seansa, N. (2018). The Adaption Experience of Thai Youths Immigrated with Their Mothers to Live in Stockholm Sweden. *Nakhon Phanom University Journal*, 8(2): N/A.
- Sunanta, S., & Angeles, L. C. (2013). From Rural Life to Transnational Wife: Agrarian Transition, Gender Mobility, and Intimate Globalization in Transnational Marriages in Northeast Thailand. *Gender, Place & Culture: A Journal of Feminist Geography*, 20(6): 699-717. doi:10.1080/0966369X.2012.709827

- The Foundation for Women. (2012). *From Asia to Europe and Back: A Rapid Appraisal of Thai Workers Travelling to and from the European Union, and Available Assistance*. Manila: International Labour Organization - Country Office for the Philippines.
- Tschirhart, N., Diaz, E., & Ottersen, T. (2019a). Accessing Public Healthcare in Oslo, Norway: The Experiences of Thai Immigrant Masseuses. *BMC Health Services Research*, 19(1): N.PAG-N.PAG. doi:10.1186/s12913-019-4560-9
- Tschirhart, N., Straiton, M. L., Ottersen, T., & Winkler, A. S. (2019b). "Living Like I Am in Thailand": Stress and Coping Strategies among Thai Migrant Masseuses in Oslo, Norway. *BMC Women's Health*, 19(139): 1-11. doi:10.1186/s12905-019-0836-9
- Tyldum, G. (2013). Dependence and Human Trafficking in the Context of Transnational Marriage. *International Migration*, 51(4): 103-115. doi:10.1111/imig.12060
- Vanaspong, C. (2012). *A Case Study of Thai Migrant Workers in Poland*. Manila: International Labour Organization - Country Office for the Philippines. Retrieved on the from
- Wahlberg, K. (2020). *Människohandel för Sexuella och Andra Ändamål: Lägesrapport 21*. Stockholm: Polismyndigheten.
- Webster, N., & Haandrikman, K. (2014). Thai Women in Sweden: Victims or Participants? *Stockholm Research Reports in Demography*, 9: 1-41.
- Webster, N. A. (2017). Rural-to-Rural Translocal Practices: Thai Women Entrepreneurs in the Swedish Countryside. *Journal of Rural Studies*, 56: 219-228. doi:10.1016/j.jrurstud.2017.09.016
- Webster, N. A., & Haandrikman, K. (2017). Thai Women Entrepreneurs in Sweden: Critical Perspectives on Migrant Small Businesses. *Women's Studies International Forum*, 60: 17-27. doi:10.1016/j.wsif.2016.11.001
- Åkerman, E., Larsson, E. C., Essén, B., & Westerling, R. (2021). Understanding the Needs and Use of Sexual and Reproductive Health Services among Thai Women: A Descriptive Cross-Sectional Study in Sweden. *Sexual Health* (14485028), 18(3): 203-211. doi:10.1071/SH20184