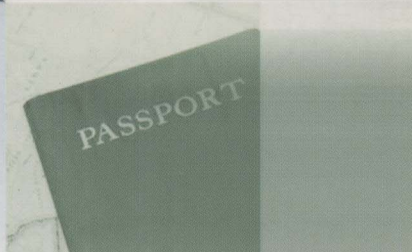
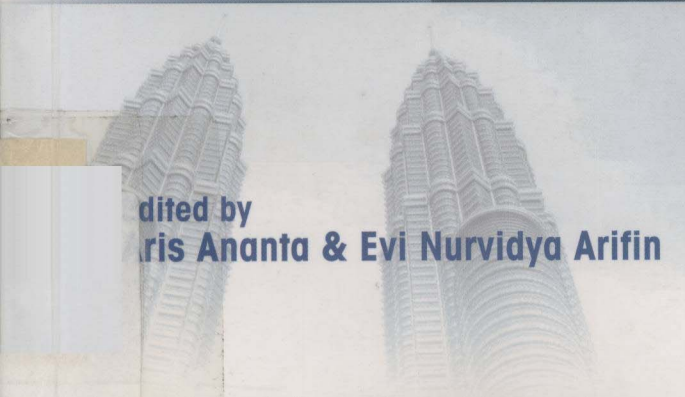
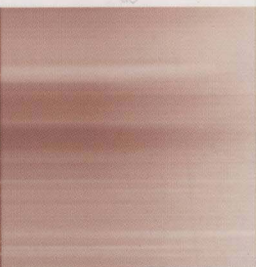
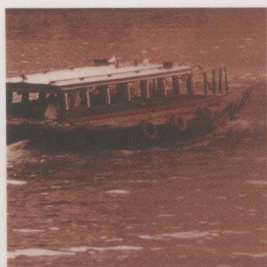


International Migration in Southeast Asia



edited by
Chris Ananta & Evi Nurvidya Arifin

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**Edited by
Aris Ananta & Evi Nurvidya Arifin**



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Message from the Director

Rapid population dynamics, economic development, and globalization have brought and been affected by the rising population mobility — along with other factors such as increasing international trade and capital flow. Also what happens in one country, or one region, becomes inter-related to developments in other countries or regions.

Southeast Asia is no exception. An event in one of the countries in Southeast Asia is very likely to have implications in other countries in Southeast Asia, and even, beyond Southeast Asia. On the other hand, events outside Southeast Asia may also affect the situations in Southeast Asia. International trade and capital flow, for example, have transformed the economies and lives in Southeast Asia.

In the last ten years, we have witnessed an increase in migration within and from Southeast Asia. This migration — involving people with different social, economic, and political backgrounds — certainly has as much implications as international trade and capital flow. It is therefore very timely for this book to be published. Edited by two ISEAS researchers, the book examines the migration issue from economic, social, and political perspectives.

I commend the contributors and the two editors of this volume and hope that it is beneficial to a better understanding of the complex issues of population dynamics, economic development, and globalization in Southeast Asia.

K. Kesavapany
Director
Institute of Southeast Asian Studies
Singapore

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1

Should Southeast Asian Borders be Opened?

Aris Ananta and Evi Nurvidya Arifin

The international networks of wealth, technology, and power have resulted in globalization and informationalization, and in turn have rapidly transformed all societies in the world. Productive capacity has increased, cultural creativity has expanded, and communication potential has multiplied. However, these same forces have also disfranchised the societies. The sudden transformations have led to the crumbling of existing mechanisms of social control and political representation (Castells 1997).

Castells argues that globalization and informationalization have brought increasing economic integration and governments have lost some controls within their own borders. International economic integration and political sovereignty have been in conflict. In the area of international labour mobility, as part of the globalization and informationalization, policies on labour market in one country may be of concern for other countries. A policy can stimulate the flow of migration to other countries and dampen wages in the receiving countries. Political problems arise because the gain from migration is not equally shared by all groups of people in a country. There are losers and winners.

Carl Gundry-Warr, in Chapter 8, posits that global migration has changed the way people think about their political, cultural, and economic maps. Moving has been much easier today and the states have become "borderless". Yet, many of them have been trapped between or within borders simply because they have crossed the borders.

It is not surprising then, that there are two opposing views on the relationship between international labour mobility and economic development. As mentioned by Tapinos (1994), the first one sees immigrants as a positive contribution to the economic development of the receiving countries. With this view, international labour mobility should be enhanced, and permitted to follow the nature of the labour market. The second view considers the non-economic, negative, implications of immigrants. This view, therefore, suggests that liberalization of trade, capital flow, relocation of activities, and co-operation should be enhanced rather than encourage in-migration.

Brettel (2000) argues that international migrants can be part of transnationalism, defined as "a social process whereby migrants operate in social fields that transgress geographic, political, and cultural borders". This construct is very appropriate where modes of transportation and communication in general have shortened the social distances between sending and receiving countries. The migrants can easily maintain their contact with others in their home countries. Home and host countries become "one", integrated. They are not uprooted, but they move back and forth freely between different cultures, social, economics, and political system. Migrants not only send economic remittances, but also social, cultural, and, perhaps political remittances.

Fundamental tensions have been found in all efforts to manage international population mobility in this globalizing world. On the one hand, business is transnational and international business necessitates the unrestricted flow of people internationally. On the other hand, politics is still national. The existence of supranational institutions and international organizations cannot supersede the importance of politics, which prioritizes the security and protection of the citizens in a country and hence demands restriction on the international flow of people. This dilemma becomes evident, as we have witnessed wars, internal conflicts, prosecution of minorities, and global terrorism (Jordan and Duvell 2002).

Migration has also been part of the globalization which has shaped the inter-dependence among nations, including those within Southeast

Asian countries and between Southeast Asian countries and other countries. Hugo (1998) has shown that international labour mobility in Asia is also a complex process of inter-relationship among economic, political, and social changes, especially with the emerging trend of globalization. However, the mechanism of international migration in Asia is much more complicated than that in nineteenth-century Europe, when international migration was relatively much easier. The Asian countries face many restrictions that the European countries did not have. It is not surprising therefore that, as pointed out by Graeme Hugo in Chapter 2, international migration has been an increasingly important topic in Southeast Asia among those both in the governments and outside the governments. International migration has become public consciousness as the mass media have reported it almost daily.

In an integrated world economy, trade, flow of capital, flow of labour, flow of raw materials and technology are inter-related. Therefore, studies of international migration should be seen in the context of an integrated world economy. From this point of view, in this book we examine the socio-economic and political impacts and challenges of international migration within Southeast Asia, to Southeast Asia, and from Southeast Asia, with particular emphasis on migration within and from Southeast Asia. The theme consists of four sub-themes. The first sub-theme discusses the history of migration in modern Southeast Asia. The second examines the linkage between international migration and economic development, particularly with respect to investments, remittances, and welfare. The third investigates the excesses of the lucrative business of sending unskilled workers — with a focus on the vulnerability of the workers. The fourth theme focuses on the national policies regarding international migration of two sending countries (the Philippines and Indonesia) and two receiving countries (Malaysia and Thailand). Finally, the fifth sub-theme provides some recommendations on approaching the problem of irregular migrants.

History of Migration in Modern Southeast Asia

There have been several rapid transformations sweeping across Southeast Asia in the last half century. Rapidly rising international population mobility is one of the transformations and it has been a cause and a consequence of extraordinary changes in the social, economic, and political life in the