

# Return migration and Crime in Nakhon Phanom

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- 1 Motivation
- 2 Conceptual Framework
- 3 Crimes and migrants data

- **Migration & Crime Nexus:**

- Early theories (Becker, 1968; Ehrlich, 1973) emphasize rational choice in crime decisions.
- Literature on immigration effects in developed countries is extensive, but return migration in developing countries is under-researched.

- **Return Migration in Developing Countries:**

- High return rates (14–70%) noted in Tanzania, Thailand, Vietnam (Hirvonen & Lilleør, 2015; Do et al., 2020).
- In Thailand, influx of returnees approx. 3–4% of native population annually, while crime victimization stands at 5.46% (Grote et al., 2024).
- Potential for tension if returnees struggle to reintegrate.

## Foundational Models:

- Becker (1968) and Ehrlich (1973): benefit-cost analysis in individuals' decision to commit criminal activities
- Extensions: Economic shocks & social dislocation affect criminal behavior (Lochner, 2004; Mocan et al., 2005).

## Three Channels:

- 1. **Selection Effects** (Wahba, 2015): Negative vs. Positive selection in returnees.
- 2. **Labor Market Channel**: Large influx → downward wage pressure, unemployment, possible increased crime.
- 3. **Exposure Effects**: Returnees' experiences alter norms, risk preferences, potentially heightening social tension.

# Empirical Context (Rural Thailand)

**High Internal Migration:** Rural to urban (Bangkok) due to economic development.

## **Return Migration Patterns:**

- Often driven by negative selection (low education, job loss, family crises).
- Can cause sudden population surges in rural areas, weakening the social capital.

## **Potential Outcomes:**

- Increased theft, neighbor disputes, and broader social conflicts.
- Tension between returning urban norms and traditional rural culture.

**Do return migrants affect crimes & social conflicts in rural Thailand?**

**Data:** TVSEP Panel (2016 & 2019), covering 110 Thai rural subdistricts.

## **Thailand-Vietnam Socioeconomic Panel (TVSEP)**

- Longitudinal household survey funded by the German Research Foundation (DFG) since 2007
- Covers rural areas in 3 provinces in each country, Thailand & Vietnam
- In Thailand:
  - approx. 2,200 rural households interviewed in three Northeastern provinces: Nakhon Phanom, Ubon Ratchathani, Buriram
- Low attrition rates (less than 10% by 2017), high response rates (more than 95%)

## Crime Variables in TVSEP

- Types: theft, burglary, fraud, vandalism, social conflicts
- Severity levels (high, medium, low)
- 12-month or 36-month recall period on criminal victimization
- Additional contextual data: subdistrict-level info on local labor market, native population, in- & out-migration

## Data Reliability

- Computer-assisted personal interviews (CAPI)
- Thorough post-interview validation ensures consistency



# Local vs. Regional Return Migrants

## Definitions (adapted from Junge et al., 2015)

- **Local Return Migrant:** Individual who had migrated outside of the home province for at least one wave and returned to the original home subdistrict. (tambon)
- **Regional Return Migrant:** Returned to home province but settled in a different subdistrict than original

## Key Distinctions

- Local return migrants: Lower education, more likely to engage in farming
- Regional return migrants: Higher education, more non-agricultural employment

# Key Observed Trends in Return Migration

## Descriptive Statistics

- Return vs. continuing migrants: 25.9% (new sample) vs. 41.8% (Junge et al., 2015)
- Narrowing education gap between returnees and continuing migrants
- Employment: More returnees now in agriculture (27%)

## Age and Education

- Return migrants' average age: 34 years (SD 13.7)
- Education gap between returnees & continuing migrants has narrowed

## Employment and Health

- Higher share of return migrants in farming/fishing (27% vs. 13%)
- Slightly poorer health, more non-participation due to illness/disability

# Descriptives of Crimes and Conflicts in Nakhon Phanom

**Table 1**

	2016		2019	
	Offences	Severity	Offences	Severity
<b>Social conflicts</b>	24	—	8	—
Neighbor conflict	3	2.00	1	1.00
Being cheated at work/business	21	1.71	7	1.86
<b>All theft</b>	49	—	31	—
<b>Other crimes</b>	31	—	18	—
Transportation theft	6	1.67	0	—
Burglary	13	2.46	18	1.94
Robbery	2	2.50	0	—
<b>Rural-style thefts</b>	18		13	—
Livestock theft	11	2.45	2	3.00
Crop theft	2	3.00	6	2.00
Vandalism	1	2.00	4	1.50
Other theft	4	2.25	1	1.00

# Descriptive Statistics of Return Migration in 2019

**Table 2**

		Rural returnees (1)		Urban returnees (2)	
		Mean/Prop.	SD	Mean/Prop.	SD
female dummy	1 for female	0.49	0.51	0.25	0.46
age	years	38.32	13.00	35.50	10.78
farmers/fishermen dummy	1 if farming/fishing	0.54	0.51	0**	0
non-farm dummy	1 if having non-farm job	0.41	0.50	1**	0
out of labor force dummy (sick, disabled)	1 if unable to work	0.05	0.23	0	0
unemployed dummy	1 if unemployed	0	0	0	0
ethnicity dummy	1 for Thai	0.95	0.23	1	0
education years	years	8.14	3.85	8.75	3.15
health dummy	1 for healthy	0.78	0.42	0.88	0.35
Observations		37		8	

Thank you for your attention, and your feedback is welcomed!

# The End!