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Faculty of Tropical AgriSciences



**Faculty of Tropical
AgriSciences**

**Male migration and the transformation of gender
roles in agriculture in South-East Asia**

BACHELOR'S THESIS

Prague 2023

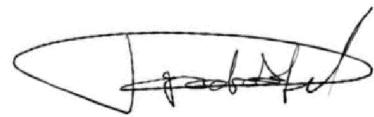
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Declaration

I hereby declare that I have done this thesis entitled “Male migration and the transformation of gender roles in agriculture in South-East Asia” independently, all texts in this thesis are original, and all the sources have been quoted and acknowledged by means of complete references and according to Citation rules of the FTA.

In Prague April 2023

A handwritten signature in black ink, enclosed within a hand-drawn oval border. The signature is cursive and appears to read 'Zuzana Procházková'.

Zuzana Procházková

Acknowledgements

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Abstract

Migration of male figures is the most typical strategy utilized in rural areas, with the intention to increase the wellbeing of the individual migrating as well as the household that they are leaving behind. The lack of a male figure causes a shift in the traditional gender roles. This bachelor thesis focuses on Vietnam, Cambodia, and Thailand in its analysis of the impact that male migration has had on the evolution of gender roles in the agricultural sector throughout Southeast Asia. The study is based on a literature review that examines previous studies on the subject, including the ways in which male migration has led to changes in conventional gender roles and increasing responsibilities on women in agricultural production. The first part of the thesis consists of a summary of the most important push and pull factors for migration, characteristics of migrants, preferences on reasons for movement, and types of migration. Another focus is placed on the gender roles that vary between countries and how those differences affect the distribution of labour, decision making power and shift of these factors during absence of male head of the household. In addition, this thesis investigates the gendered implications of the COVID-19 pandemic on agriculture and male migration in Southeast Asia, specifically the ways in which male migrants and their families were impacted by travel restrictions and economic slowdowns. The findings suggest that male migration has had significant effects on gender roles in agriculture in Southeast Asia, with women taking on more responsibilities and facing increased burdens as a result of the migration of their husbands or sons. Specifically, the findings suggest that women have taken on more responsibilities and increased burdens as a result of male migration. In addition, the COVID-19 pandemic has further exasperated the gendered effects that male migration has had on agriculture, putting women in a position where they face increased financial and health dangers.

Key words: labour migration, decision-making, women, farm production, work burden, feminization

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List of the abbreviations used in the thesis

AMS	ASEAN Member States
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian States
BCI	Basic Capabilities Index
CENTRAL	The Centre for the Alliance of Labour and Human Rights
COVID-19	Coronavirus Pandemic
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GII	Gender Inequality Index
HRW	Human Rights Watch
ILO	International Labour organization
IOM	International Organization for Migration
MoUs	Memoranda of Understanding
NV	Nationality Verification
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
UN	United Nations
WB	World Bank

1. Introduction

Over the course of the last few decades, male migration has been a frequent phenomenon in Southeast Asia. Moreover, it has been recognized as one of the essential drivers of social and economic transition in the region (Singh 2018). As men leave their rural communities to find work in urban areas or abroad, the impact on the rural areas they leave behind can be profound, particularly in agriculture. One area that has received relatively little attention, however, is influenced by the impact of male migration on gender roles in agriculture in Southeast Asia (Dilip et al. 2019).

It is possible to describe gender roles as the roles, behaviours, and expectations that are socially formed and which are associated with men and women in a particular culture (Krieger 2003). For a long time, people have thought of agriculture in particular as a male-dominated industry. In this industry, males are typically the ones in charge of land ownership and administration, while women are typically responsible for domestic tasks and supporting roles in farming (Resurreccion & Khanh 2006). Yet, with the rising migration of men, there is a growing need to analyse how these changes affect gender roles in agriculture in Southeast Asia (UN 2023).

This thesis is to examine the shifting dynamics of gender roles in Southeast Asian agriculture as a result of male migration to the region. This study will specifically concentrate on three countries in the region: Thailand, Vietnam, and Cambodia, all of which are well-known for the high levels of male migration that occur in their respective countries. The study will investigate the effects that male migration has had on gender roles in agriculture, including shifts in the distribution of labour and the authority to make decisions.

2. Aims of the Thesis

The aims of this thesis are to examine the impact of male migration on gender roles in developing countries, more specifically in agriculture in South-East Asia, particularly in Cambodia, Vietnam, and Thailand.

The primary goal of the bachelor thesis is to determine the shift in gender positions within a household before and after men migrate, when all of the responsibilities traditionally undertaken by men are reallocated to women.

Other aim is to assess and describe various reasons of migration, push and pull factors in countries in this region influenced by migration the most, the impact it has on children and young generation as well as the re-shift of gender roles of men return back after some time period.

Another topic that will be briefly discussed is the effect of COVID-19 pandemic on this whole topic, as migration was decreased due to various restrictions.

The value of this thesis resides in the fact that it contributes to knowledge of the social and economic consequences of male migration in Southeast Asia. The purpose of this thesis was to shed light on the impact that male migration has had on the livelihoods of rural communities by investigating the modification of gender roles in agriculture as a result of male migration.

This thesis, in its entirety, makes a contribution to the existing body of research on male migration and gender roles in agriculture in Southeast Asia. The goal of this thesis is to deepen our understanding of the changing dynamics of rural communities in the region by providing evidence of the impact that male migration has on gender roles in agriculture.

3. Methodology

The methodology employed in this thesis is a literature review. This review includes an analysis of the previous research that has been conducted on topics such as male migration and gender roles in agriculture in Southeast Asia. Specifically in countries of Cambodia, Thailand and Vietnam. This method makes it possible to compile information from a wide range of sources, such as scholarly journals, books, reports, and policy papers. This methodology's goals are to (1) provide a comprehensive assessment of the present state of research on the subject; (2) identify gaps in the literature; and (3) indicate areas that require further exploration.

Sources of the Data:

This literature review used scholarly articles, books, and reports from organizations with a solid reputation as its data sources. Some of these organizations include the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the International Organization for Migration (IOM), and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). JSTOR, Google Scholar, and Web of Science, and others provided by The University of Life Sciences are just few of the databases that were used to compile all of these sources.

Criteria for Inclusion and Exclusion:

Certain criteria for inclusion and exclusion were developed in order to guarantee that this literature evaluation contains only sources of an adequate standard and level of relevance. All of the sources that are included had to have been written in English or Czech. They also have to discuss the effect that male migration has had on gender roles in agriculture in Southeast Asia, migration in general and impact of COVID-19 on previously listed topics.

Data Analysis:

The data that was gathered from the sources will be evaluated thematically, which involves locating recurring themes and patterns in the existing study. The themes that have been discovered will be used to establish a knowledge of the influence of male migration on gender roles in agriculture in Southeast Asia. This understanding will

include changes in the division of labour, the usage of land, and the capacity to make decisions.

Considerations of an Ethical Nature:

Due to the fact that this methodology makes use of secondary sources, there are no ethical problems associated with the process of data collection. However, it is essential to recognize the limits of this methodology, which include the possibility of bias in the sources that were chosen and the difficulty to collect primary data. It is for these reasons that it is essential to accept these limitations.

In conclusion, the research approach that was utilized in the production of this thesis was a literature review. The purpose of this review was to offer a summary of the impact that male migration had on gender roles in agriculture in Southeast Asia. The application of this methodology enables the synthesis of findings obtained from a range of sources, resulting in a more in-depth comprehension of the subject matter as well as the identification of areas that require additional research. The data that was gathered from the sources will be examined using a thematic approach, and the results will be used to provide an answer to the research question as well as contribute to the previous research that has been conducted on the subject.

4. Migration and its Reasons

Undergoing a shift in world's population from mostly rural to largely urban is now an ongoing process in developing countries, while developed countries are nearly at the peak (Nauman et al. 2015). Migration has an impact on the wellbeing of the migrating person, their household, and the community left behind as well as the destination's host community (Dilip et al. 2019).

Humanity has been on the march from the beginning of time. Some individuals relocate in desire of better employment or economic possibilities, to be closer to family, or to further their education. Others relocate to avoid violence, persecution, terrorism, or breaches of human rights. Others relocate in reaction to the negative consequences of climate change, natural catastrophes, or other environmental problems. More individuals than ever before are now living in countries other than the one they were born in. (McAuliffe & Triandafyllidou 2022). According to the IOM Global Migration Report 2020, the number of international migrants worldwide was predicted to reach about 272 million in June 2019, 51 million higher than in 2010. Around two-thirds were labour migrants. In 2019, international migrants made up 3.5 % of the world population (IOM 2019).

According to the findings of the Global Migration Reports published by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in 2013 and 2015, migration in general and international migration in specific have become common in both developing and industrialized nations. Those who migrated from developing countries tended to be younger, and more men than women left their countries of origin (IOM 2019).

Migration of men is, in rural areas, most common strategy used to mitigate hazards in agricultural sector and variegate income. Several causes for the rising flight of labour from rural regions, including unemployment, a lack of non-farm work opportunities, and growing population (Singh 2018).

Policy discussions that centre on migration typically address issues related to international migration (Selod & Shilpi 2021). In 2020, there were 280.6 global migrants, or nearly 4 % of the world's population, according to the Migration Policy Institute (IOM 2019). In 2018, the anticipated number of foreign migrants and refugees was 266 million, with 240 million (90 %) representing economic migrants. Around 46 % of migrants from

developing countries travelled to high-income countries; however, contrary to common opinion, the percentage of migrants from developing countries who went to other developing countries was greater than the share who went to the "North," as defined by Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) high-income countries (Dilip et al. 2019).

Two essential and complementary processes are started by internal migration. The structural shift in employment from agricultural to non-agricultural industries and services, and the following economic expansion brought on by urbanization (Selod & Shilpi 2021).

4.1.1. Types of Migration

Migration can be classified into different categories, those important or this thesis are explained.

External Migration

Relocating to a new home in a place that is located in a different state, country, or continent (Asare 2012).

Impelled Migration

People are not pushed into leaving their homeland; rather, they do so voluntarily due to the presence of undesirable conditions such as armed conflict, political unrest, religious persecution, severe weather, or environmental disasters (Asare 2012).

Internal Migration

Relocating to a new home that is placed inside the same state, country, or continent as the current one (Kuhn 2015).

Labour Migration

is the act of movement of a workforce from one place to another in physical space. This kind of migration has taken place on occasion because of developments in technology, the creation of novel industries, or the moving of the primary main facility of a particular company (Asare 2012).

Return Migration

Migration to one's place of birth or one's nation of origin after living in another country. Migrants have the option of staying in their home country permanently once they reach a certain point in their professional lives or when they reach retirement age, or they can return for an extended period of time before leaving once more (Batistella 2018).

4.1.2. Push and Pull Factors

As their names imply, push and pull factors are a model of one of the most well-known explanations on migration. These factors either pull people into a country or a region (destination) or push them out of a country or a region (place of origin). Push and pull factors are a model of one of the most well-known explanations on migration (Kuhn 2015).

The push and pull elements can be broken down into four categories, as follows:

- Political
- Economic
- Social
- Environmental

Income (and employment) disparities between origin and destination nations, economic (and social) inequality, demographic imbalances, and climate change are the primary causes of migration. State fragility, war, and violence are also important push factors for forced displacement and refugee travel. Other variables that push and pull combine social exclusion and discrimination, corruption, a lack of education, health care, and social security, and marriage chances (Dilip et al. 2019).

4.1.3. Seasonal Migration

Seasonal migration is a term understood as movement from one location to another, most commonly related with both tourism and agriculture; seasonal agricultural migrants follow crop cycles, traveling from location to location in order to grow or harvest crops (Momtaz & Shameem 2016).

Definition of seasonal migrant by OECD; *Seasonal migrant workers are persons employed by a country other than their own for only part of a year because the work they*

perform depends on seasonal conditions. They are a subcategory of foreign migrant workers (OECD 2023).

Migration over shorter periods of time during different seasons is typically undertaken as a means of subsistence by the male members of the households (Momtaz & Shameem 2016). When compared to other members of the household, seasonal migrants in Vietnam are more likely to be younger and more educated men (De Brauw 2007).

4.1.4. Cost of Migration

Before making their final choice, prospective migrants weigh the expenses of their choices against the potential gains in utility that it could provide. Migrants may face large fees both at their homes of origin and at their points of departure, in addition to the real cost of transportation to their final destination. These costs may include the expenses of travel and subsistence incurred during job and housing searches, the psychological strain of leaving family members behind and the difficulty of maintaining relationships from a distance, the difficulties associated with integrating in destinations with cultural, ethnic, religious, and linguistic backgrounds that are different from their own, as well as the opportunity costs involved (Selod & Shilpi 2021).

The following are included in the recruitment fees, which can be paid all at once or on an ongoing basis and cover recruiting, referral, and placement services:

- compensation for recruiting services supplied by public or private labour recruiters;
- payments paid in the event of direct recruiting by the employer, and
- payments required to collect recruitment expenses from workers.
- payments made in total (ILO 2020).

The cost of migrating for work within the region is generally not excessive (US\$430/1.6 months of salary), but the cost of migrating along different migration corridors might vary by a significant amount. Workers migrating from Vietnam to Malaysia paid US\$1,166/4 months of earnings, while workers migrating from Myanmar to Malaysia paid US\$1,034/3.6 months of salaries. In comparison, the cost of transportation for Lao and Cambodian migrants traveling to Thailand was only US\$171/

0.6 months of pay and US\$211/0.8 months, respectively. Many migrants are forced to take out loans in order to cover the high costs of migration. The extended period of time required to repay this debt can force migrants to remain in exploitative employment situations, which reduces the returns migrants receive from migration (ILO 2017).

4.1.4.1. Pre-departure Costs

The term "pre-departure costs" refers to all of the money that an application for immigration is required to pay in advance. This includes not only the price of travel but also the fees associated with visas, safety deposits, transportation and training. The vast majority of migrants are frequently unaware of the official prices of the items that make up their belongings because they are typically just aware of the whole cost, which was approximately \$5,600 in the year 2009 to them (Bélanger et al. 2010).

4.2. Migration Reasons in Chosen Countries

Labour migration across borders has fuelled the Association of Southeast Asian States (ASEAN) region's fast economic growth. Foreign workers have filled positions left vacant by domestic workers as they move up the vocational ladder and helped to lessen the effects of an aging population. Visualized in Figure 1, people have been moving more often over the past few decades, both inside ASEAN Member States (AMS) and beyond, due to developments in social networking, communications, transportation, and technology (ASEAN 2022).

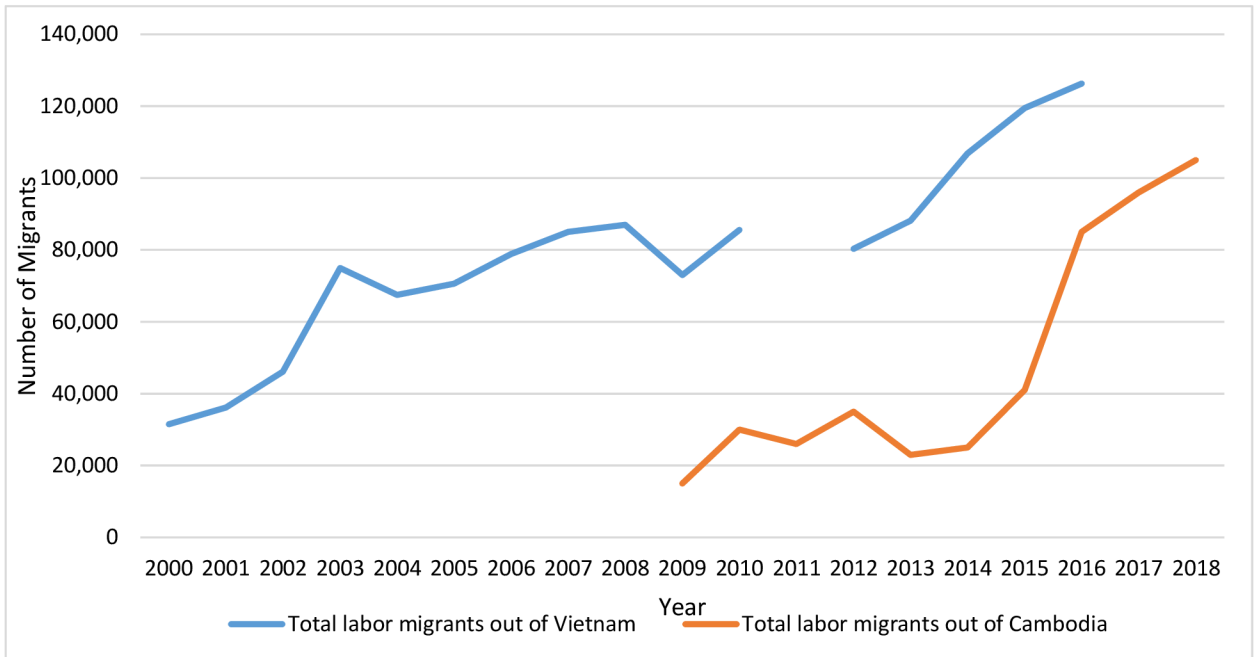


Figure 1: Total labor migration out of Vietnam and Cambodia

Source: data elaborated from Von Kamele 2021 and IOM 2017

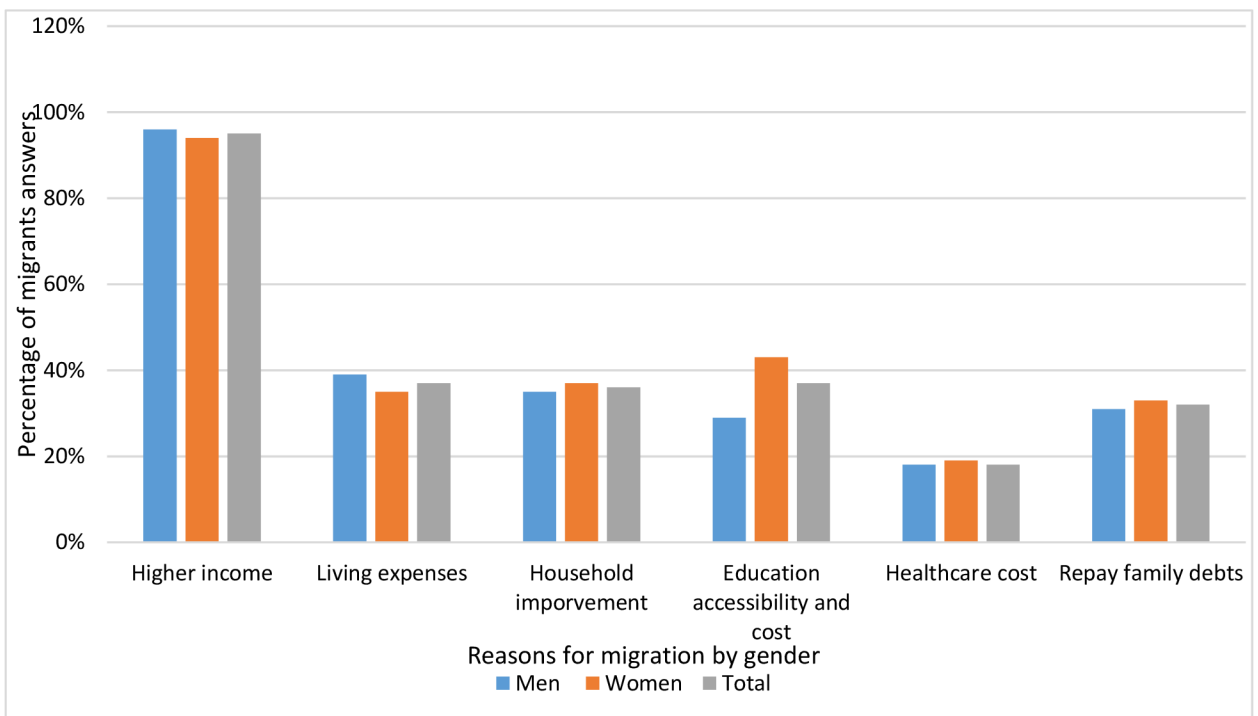


Figure 2: Migration reasons by gender

Source: data elaborated from Bélanger et al. 2010

As shown in Figure 2, higher income is the main driver of migration. Paying for everyday living expenditures, schooling, house upgrades, and family debts were noted by more than a third of migrants. The priority placed on covering daily living expenditures shows that migration is an essential family survival strategy for many migrants, as the fundamental necessities of many families cannot be adequately supplied by depending solely on their livelihood activities at home. Women were far more likely than males to mention college expenditures (Bélanger et al. 2010).

This chapter will be focusing on three specific countries - Cambodia, Vietnam and Thailand - and closely introducing the push and pull factors in each.

4.2.1. Cambodia

Cambodia's human capital quality, as evaluated by the Human Development Index, is among the lowest in the ASEAN area. The labour market is still dominated by low-skilled and uneducated workers; there is a severe shortage of semi-skilled and skilled individuals to satisfy shifting labour market demands. Although recent reductions in the poverty headcount, poverty and growing inequality remain important challenges in Cambodia (OECD 2017).

4.2.1.1. Push and Pull factors

Three main factors are occurring in Cambodia and the migration sphere. All could be considered push and pull factors, as there is lack of them in place of origin and the opportunity is in the place of destination. These factors are: work, education and marriage (UNFPA 2014).

Table 1: Migrant characteristics in Cambodia

Indicator	Rural Migrants		Urban Migrants	
	Women (%)	Men (%)	Women (%)	Men (%)
Age				
15-24	31.1	24.6	20.9	14.2
25-34	14.8	18.1	20.5	16.2
35+	4	5.9	16.9	12.4
Education level				
None	6.2	5.1	9.2	
Primary	48.3	38.2	29.2	
Secondary	38.8	44.3	19.0	
Higher	6.7	12.3	26.0	

Source: data elaborated from Ministry of Planning - CRUMP Report 2012 and UNFPA 2014

Women from rural areas are more likely to migrate only in younger age, as they are preoccupied with family obligations in higher years. Men, on the other hand, migrate more than women after reaching 25 years of age, with 18.8 %. Table 1 presents migration divided by gender and shows that migration is more likely to affect rural women only in younger age. It is more common for women to move at any age if they live in urban regions. This could be because they are more likely to experience gender-based discrimination, which drives them to seek refuge in other environments, as well as higher education or better career opportunities (Ministry of Planning 2012).

IOM conducted an assessment report “Profile of returned Cambodian migrant workers”, where 667 of returning migrant workers were interviewed to better comprehend concerns and needs throughout their whole migrating journey. As shown in Figure 3, most frequent reasons for migration were search for better job/income, where 69 % of male and 62 % of female responded and second most common, where 66 % of male and 73 % of female migrant chose this option was no job/income. Emphasizing the reality, that women have problem searching for a job or finding work, whereas men prioritized better job options. This helps to illustrate the reality that extra pressure may be placed on male migrants to obtain an income that will secure their family's financial future. Earning money to satisfy the requirements of the family in terms of education, food, and healthcare was another reason that came up frequently, along with the necessity to pay off financial obligations that had to be dealt with (Dickson & Koenig 2016).

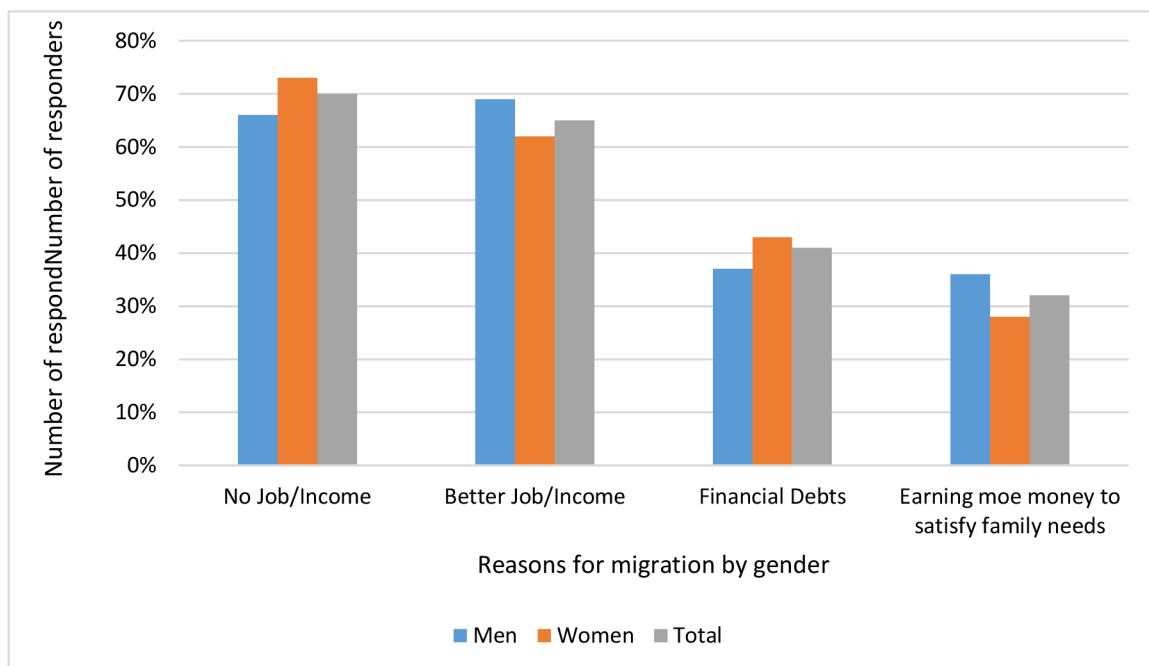


Figure 3: Fundamental reasons for leaving Cambodia

Source: data elaborated from Dickson & Koenig 2016

Since March 2020 till January 2022, almost 280 thousand of migrants returned, of whom 122 thousand were women (IOM 2023a), showing that male migration is more frequent.

This could be due to the fact that male migrants receive a higher pay than female migrants, as illustrated in Figure 4, which shows that a male worker receives almost 9 USD per work day, while a woman worker receives just 7.5 USD per work day. When such information is available, families frequently come to the conclusion that a man will be migrating rather than woman (Dickson & Koenig 2016).

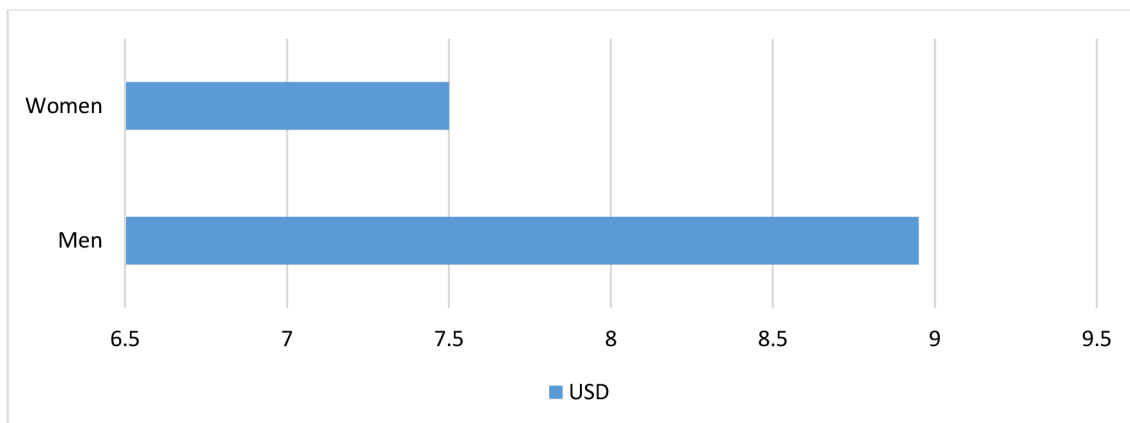


Figure 4: Daily average income by (\$) by gender of Cambodian migrants in Thailand

Source: data elaborated from Dickson & Koenig 2016

4.2.2. Vietnam

Vietnam, one of the nation's whose people go overseas often in line with the phenomenon of globalization and international integration. They reside in practically all of the world's nations and territories. Many people travel back to Vietnam each year for a variety of reasons, including repatriation, visiting family, investing, conducting business (Bélanger et al. 2010). As many of migrants were temporarily present in place of work, there has been an underestimation of numbers of migrants. Due to this day this case is still occurring (Resurreccion & Khanh 2006).

Doi Moi, which literally translates to "renovation" or "reform," is the collective name given to a number of economic and political changes that were made in Vietnam in the year 1986. These changes represented a critical turning point in the history of the country, leading to the transition of the economy from one based on central planning to one oriented more toward market principles (Que & Phuc 2003). The deregulation of

agricultural markets was the first step in the changes. Instead of being required to sell their produce to state-owned firms at predetermined prices, farmers were given the option to sell their goods on the open market instead. This resulted in an increase in both productivity and production since it gave farmers an incentive to produce more in order to earn larger profits, which in turn led to the increase in productivity and output (Resurreccion & Khanh 2006).

The government also started to open up specific areas of the economy to the participation of foreign investors, including as the manufacturing and tourism industries. The injection of capital from overseas helps to propel economic expansion and the creation of new job opportunities (Que & Phuc 2003).

Doi Moi was not only responsible for bringing about economic reforms, but also for bringing about political changes. The Communist Party of Vietnam was able to maintain its stranglehold on power despite the fact that the government started decentralizing decision-making and giving more authority to local administrations. Because of this, there was more room for flexibility and reactivity in the creation of policies, since local authorities were better suited to responding to the requirements of the people they represented (Que & Phuc 2003).

4.2.2.1. Migration Reasons

With similarity to Cambodian migrants and their reasons to migrate, Vietnamese migrants can be split the same directions. Men mostly aim to find better income and improved life quality for their family, whereas to women, whom lack the education for their children, healthcare facilities and are trying to overcome their or family's debts (Bélanger et al. 2010).

Notwithstanding the spectacular rise of the economy since Doi Moi, 90 % of the rural population has remained impoverished, in a nation where rural regions account for 80 % of the overall population. In consequence, the state adopted the policy language of 'leaving the rice fields but not the countryside,' emphasizing the necessity for diversification to non-farm jobs as a strategy for development and moving away from reliance on farming as the major source of living for rural residents (Que & Phuc 2003).

To promote this policy, the government as well as the private sector have increased their investments in improving rural roads, transportation, and communication

infrastructure. Against this setting, an increasing number of rural people are migrating to cities as temporary migrants (Resurreccion & Khanh 2006).

4.2.3. Thailand

Over the two decades, Thailand has developed into an important destination for migrant workers from nations in the surrounding region, and increasingly from further abroad in ASEAN (ILO 2019). The number of people who migrate through Thailand is significant for the South East Asian region. In contrast to neighbouring countries such as Vietnam and Cambodia, where residents are more likely to leave their homeland in search of better living conditions, the Kingdom of Thailand is often the destination of migrants (IOM 2023a).

The economic contribution of immigrant workers is estimated to have ranged from 4.3 % to 6.6 % of gross domestic product (GDP) in 2010, despite the fact that they represented only 4.7 % of the employed population. This is due to the fact that the sectoral distribution of workers and their productivity are both taken into consideration. Given the relatively high employment rates of foreign-born employees and their favourable impact on native-born paid employment, it appears likely that foreign-born workers have a beneficial effect on income per capita. In addition, given the positive impact that foreign-born workers have on native-born paid employment. (OECD & ILO 2017).

Because of the nature of economic and social development in an increasingly globalized world, the importance of international migration to Thailand's economy has increased. Because of its relatively prosperous and stable economy, Thailand has become a migration destination for millions of people from countries in its immediate vicinity who are looking for a higher standard of living as visualized in Figure 5. Their presence is a reflection of the progress made by the Thai economy, which results in higher earnings and a wider variety of employment opportunities (IOM 2023a).

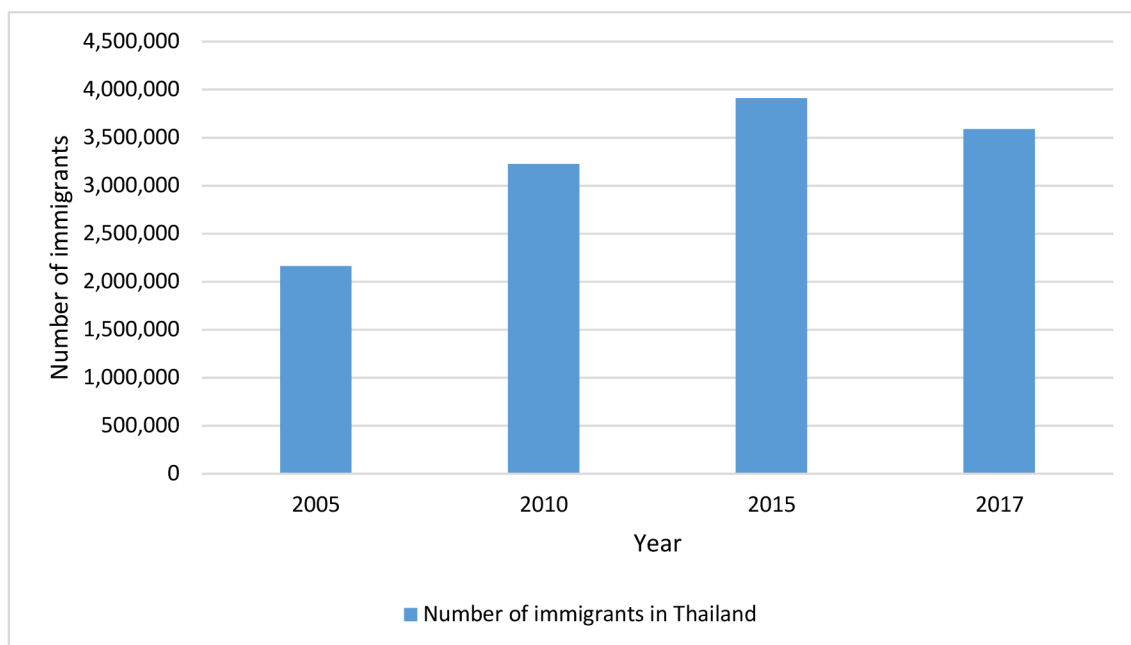


Figure 5: Number of immigrants in Thailand in 2005, 2010, 2015 and 2017

Source: data elaborated from Statista Research Department 2023

4.2.3.1. The Administrative Structure Governing Labour Migration in Thailand

It is believed that more than half of the non-Thai population are regular workers. These workers either have work permits obtained under the Memorandum of Understanding or they have earned regular status through Nationality Verification (NV) process (IOM 2021a).

Memoranda of Understandings

In years 2002 and 2003, a collaboration in the workplace agreement between countries Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Thailand was signed, known as Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs), which provided a pathway for the legal migration of workers from neighbouring countries into Thailand (ILO 2019).

Nationality Verification

During the NV process, unauthorized migrant workers in Thailand are given the opportunity to register and legitimize their status in the country. Undocumented migrant laborers, who are also known as irregular migrant workers, are able to come forward and register themselves as a result of this. Migrant workers who have had their status

regularized through the NV process are granted permission to remain in Thailand for up to two years, with the need that their visa be renewed annually (IOM 2021a).

4.2.3.2. Employment of Migrants by Sectors

Workers from Cambodia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Myanmar, and Vietnam who are hired through the MoUs and NV procedure are allowed to work in one of 25 different categories of businesses. As of 2019, 2,722,423 were allowed to be employed due to the administrative structures of Thai government (IOM 2021a). In table 2, main sectors applicable for this thesis are mentioned.

Table 2: Migrant workers by sector.

	MoU Workers	NV workers
Agriculture and livestock	465,944	796,666
Fishery	70,021	96,444
Manufacturing sector (all types of manufacturing sectors included)	302,490	359,635
Total	838,455	1,252,745

Source: data elaborated from IOM 2021a

Table 2 gives us an overview of the fact that more migrants are employed via NV process. This can be caused by the fact that the MOU process is difficult, time-consuming, and costly because of the procedures that are involved (ILO 2019).

5. Gender Roles

Important aspect of any conversation about gender, viewing maleness and femaleness is the differentiation of sex and gender (Krieger 2003). Sex, a biological indicator between female and male, and gender, cultural characterization of femininity and masculinity. Naturally one is given gender, yet it is usually automatically connected with the sex assigned at birth, as it represents attributes, that were simultaneously settled by people (Calasanti 2007). Gender relations are dynamic as a function of social

interaction. What is considered masculine and feminine varies by location, time, and within cultures, including age ranges. This sex-to-gender translation impacts men's and women's experiences throughout their lives and into old age (Khalid 2011).

Gender roles, also commonly described as gender stereotypes are a broad impression or assumption regarding features or characteristics women and men possess or should possess or undertake. Often this bias restricts an individual in possibility to develop their personal qualities, make decisions about their lives and/or fulfil their career aspirations. Inequalities are perpetuated by damaging stereotypes. Commonly the society views women as birth givers, henceforth there is an expectation that women will undertake tasks such as childcare (UN 2014).

One of the most common reasons for discrimination against women is the perpetuation of inaccurate gender stereotypes. It is a factor that contributes to the violation of a wide variety of rights, including the rights to health, an adequate living standard, schooling, marriage, familial relations, work, freedom of speech, mobility, political participation and representation, and freedom from gender-based violent actions (UN 2023).

5.1. Gender Roles In Households by Cultural Standards

In principle, the social ties that characterize work in the workplace and in the home are distinct, and they yield quite diverse meanings. Housework is done for compensation in the economic system, while work is done for love at home, and the fruits of labour are perceived as gifts. As a result, the logic of gift-exchange dominates, with the result being a sense of feminine duty. Women's primary role in domestic work is therefore not perceived as 'work,' because these conceptions are frequently couched in the norms of 'gift-giving, duty, and love' or 'labour of love' (Resurreccion & Khanh 2006).

5.1.1. Cambodia

The majority of positions of power and influence in Cambodian society are held by men, contributing to the culture's deeply patriarchal nature. Nonetheless, women have been instrumental in the growth of the country's economy, particularly in the garment sector. This has been particularly true in recent decades. It is impossible to overestimate

the importance of women's contributions to the economy of this country, as women now make up the majority of the workforce in this industry. In spite of these advancements, women in Cambodia continue to confront significant obstacles in their daily lives. There is a widespread problem of violence against women, and women frequently face sexual harassment and other forms of discrimination in the workplace. In addition to this, women have a far harder time getting access to education and healthcare, and they are underrepresented in political positions (UN Cambodia 2022).

5.1.2. Vietnam

Vietnamese society is deeply patriarchal, with men traditionally holding positions of power and authority. However, in recent years, there has been a gradual shift towards greater gender equality, particularly in urban areas. Women now make up a significant portion of the workforce, and their participation in political and economic life is increasing. Despite these changes, traditional gender roles continue to be deeply ingrained in Vietnamese society. Women are still expected to prioritize family and domestic responsibilities over their careers, and they often face discrimination and harassment in the workplace. Moreover, the government has been criticized for failing to adequately protect women's rights and address issues such as domestic violence and sex trafficking (UN Women 2021).

5.1.3. Thailand

Over the past few years, Thailand has taken a number of significant steps toward achieving gender equality (Figure 6) (UNDP 2022). Women are increasingly holding important positions in both the public and commercial sectors, and their involvement in political and economic life is growing. In addition, Thailand has passed laws that address concerns such as domestic abuse and human trafficking in an effort to protect the rights of women and solve these problems (UN Women 2023). Despite these advancements, traditional gender roles are still embedded in Thai society to a significant degree. Women are frequently subjected to sexism, harassment, and other forms of discrimination in the workplace, and it is often expected of them to place their family duties before of their professions. In addition to this, women continue to have limited access to education and healthcare, and they remain underrepresented in political positions of power (UN 2023).

5.2. Challenges Faced by Women

From the moment they are born, society has the expectation that both boys and girls will fulfil gender-specific responsibilities that are based on either customs or religious beliefs. These norms place women and girls in a great number of countries around the world at a significant disadvantage. Girls, for instance, are frequently prevented from going to school in favour of remaining at home, and the opportunities available to women for generating revenue may be limited. Women in rural areas are essential to the expansion of agriculture because they are the ones who manage natural resources on a daily basis; despite this, rural women in many developing nations do not yet have the option to own land. They are unable to make investments in their farms or enterprises without land, and as a result, they have no control over how the property is utilized or the benefits that result from it. Males typically make decisions pertaining to the household, such as how to best utilize the resources available to the family. (Kalabamu 2006).

5.3. Importance of Women in Agriculture

Gender roles and systems vary in diversity and structure. Influenced by external and internal factors, the importance of recognition of this divergency is important, as generalization often occurs (Mason & Smith 2003).

Over 50 % of the food produced worldwide is produced by women, who also make up roughly 43 % of the agricultural work force worldwide and in developing world. In more than 90 countries, there are over than 400 million women who work in agriculture. In developing nations, almost two thirds of women's laborers work in agriculture. Around 60–98 % of women working in agriculture are only seen in South Asian nations. Women's roles in agriculture are primarily limited to labour-intensive jobs and subsistence farming (Aiswarya et al. 2023). In addition, women devote up to ten times more of their income to their families' welfare than do males, particularly in the areas of nutrition, education, and child health. Thus, the status of women has a direct bearing on agricultural output and domestic food security (Akter et al. 2017).

The division of labour between male and female participants in agriculture has common patterns. Some are in majority done by men, other by women, yet some are shared between both genders (Akter et al. 2017).

5.3.1. Women Empowerment

Empowering of women, directly connected to improvement of their political, social, health and economic status, is necessary. Furthermore, it is necessary for achieving sustainable development. Full involvement and cooperation of both men and women is essential in productive and reproductive life, including shared responsibility for child care and nurturing, as well as home upkeep. Women across the world face hazards to their lives, health, and well-being as a result of being overwhelmed with labour and lacking authority and influence (Sheldon & Kaminaga, 2023).

Regarding it being a fundamental human right, gender equality is also a precondition for a society that is stable, affluent, and sustainable. Although there has been progress in recent decades, gender equality will not be achieved by the year 2030 as planned to reach fifth Sustainable Development Goal, which aims to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls (UNDP 2023).

5.3.2. Gender Inequality Index

The Human Right Watch developed both the Basic Capabilities Index (BCI) and the Gender Equity Index (GII) in addition to their work on the BCI. Its purpose is to bring more awareness to the fact that gender inequality exists in particular nations, so that it may be measured and tracked over a period of time. The GII is a tool that may be used to categorize and rank countries according to a variety of indices of gender inequality (Marková 2015). GII is a composite metric that uses three dimensions to measure gender inequality: reproductive health, empowerment, and the labour market. A low score for the GII suggests that there is a low level of inequality between men and women and vice versa (UNDP 2022).

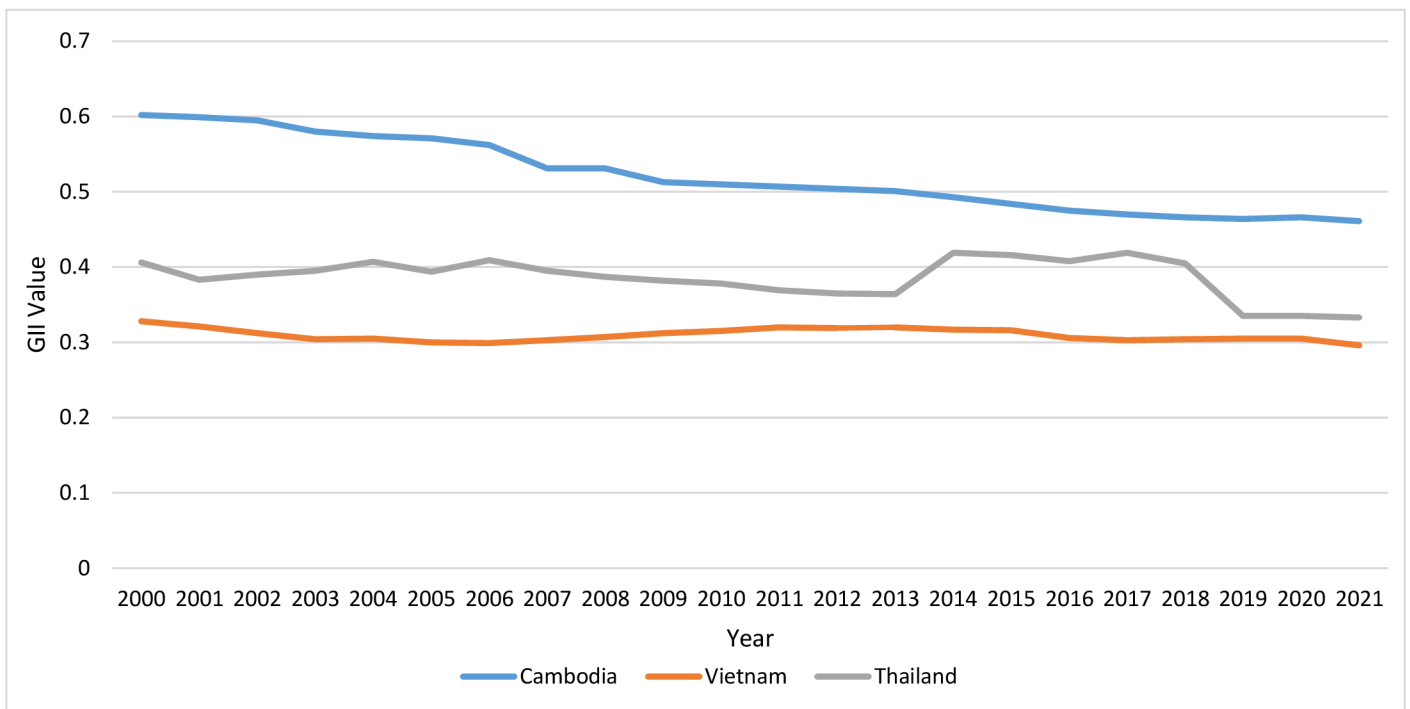


Figure 6: GII in initial year in a country

Source: data elaborated from UNDP 2022

As shown in Figure 6, it is possible for us to visualize progress in each of the three counties. Cambodia improved from having a score of 0.617 in 2000 to having a score of 0.461 in 2021, Thailand improved from having a score of 0.406 in 2000 to having a score of 0.333 in 2021, and Vietnam improved from having a score of 0.328 in 2000 to having a score of 0.296 in 2021. Cambodia has shown the greatest growth, with a difference of 0.156 between their previous and current scores.

Between the years 2013 and 2016, Thailand experienced a rather significant setback, as the country's GII reached its lowest point in the previous two decades, which was 0.419. A value of GII that was comparable to this was last measured prior to these years before the year 1999, when GII was on average 0.431, with the year 1999 having the value that was the closest (0.422) (UNDP 2023).

Between 1996 and 2013, there was a significant reduction in the gender wage gap; nonetheless, discrimination in the workplace has prevented it from closing completely (European External Action Service 2015).

5.4. Gender Roles After Male Migration - Woman Ruled Household

Male-dominated migration affects agricultural output as well as gender equality. As male figures leave the household, women are left behind at home in rural areas, leaving them the responsibility of being in charge in agriculture. Since 1978, when Pierce came up with notion of “feminization of poverty”, the share of women active in agricultural sector has continuously increased, and this phenomenon is recognized as “feminization of agriculture” (Yan et al. 2022; Slavchevska, Kaaria, & Taivalmaa, 2016).

Three main characteristics may be connected to this phenomenon:

- 1) Since traditional approach to role division in agriculture has shifted to modern approach, economic roles of women have also taken different direction, which leads to altering the selection of labour within a household and/or family;
- 2) The agricultural processes and production have changed in factors as increased machinery available or different services being implemented, as well as promoting women to decision-making roles.;
- 3) It has altered the emotional interactions and knowledge imbalance between males and females about agriculture.

In general, the feminization of agriculture has increased female farmers' reliance on farmland for work, decreased knowledge asymmetry regarding farmland between males and females, and increased female farmers' competence in making agricultural decisions (Yan et al. 2022).

5.5. Change of Household After Return of Male Figure

After the return of male figure back to their home, changes of the household flow can be observed. Similarity can be found with soldiers who were deported for a mission in other location and their family adapted to this change. After their comeback the roles are changing again and may vary from those they had prior to departure, or they may stay the same.

Identity is at the core of the process of adjusting to new host societies, which is a problem that all migrants must overcome in order to succeed. The experience of migration has an effect on a person's identity in three distinct ways:

- 1) how the person sees him in relation to his individuality;
- 2) how the person interprets the roles and social expectations associated with gender, society, and traditions; and
- 3) how the person believes others see him (IOM 2023b).

Returnees face these challenges to their identities not just when traveling to their final destination and once they have arrived there, but also while returning to their communities of origin and readjusting to life there (Sarmiento 2021). Returnees are also need to adjust to a different support structure within their community of return after returning home. It is not uncommon for a returnee's family and social networks to have evolved over their time away, particularly after lengthy absences. As a result, people who move away and then return frequently find that they need to reconstruct their networks. Networks are essential for social capital, information, safety nets, and access to the labour market (IOM 2023b).

5.6. Impact of Men's Migration on Women and Their Wellbeing

One of Cambodia's prevalent issues is the inability to respect basic human rights in the industrial sector. Low salaries, forced labour, discrimination against women/pregnant women, and unionized employees are major issues. Noncompliance with basic hygiene requirements, limitations on using restrooms outside of scheduled breaks, which also apply to pregnant women, psychological pressure, intimidation, and violent attacks are all common concerns. Companies also often deny mothers the right to paid maternity leave, making it impossible to return to work under the same conditions as before parenthood. The Centre for the Alliance of Labour and Human Rights (CENTRAL), which raises awareness about worker legal protection, particularly in the garment industry, is one of the groups highlighting the issue of Cambodia's industrial sector (Marková 2015).

Human Rights Watch (HRW) issued a thorough report titled *Work Faster or Get Out*. The study is based on a quantitative methodology, with 340 respondents interviewed (270 workers from 73 factories). They highlighted the fundamental unfair practices in the industrial sector as a violation of basic human rights (HRW 2015).

Women go through a process of 'forced' emancipation as a result of men's migration. This is a transition that is frequently abrupt because the women and their families need to adjust to the situation, a new life without the physical presence of the migrant husband; the return of the women to the workforce. A woman's marriage marks the beginning of the transition back to her traditional role. In situations where this is not the case, the changes might alter the dynamics of the family, which can occasionally lead to crises and disputes within the family (Sarmiento 2021).

6. Impact of COVID-19

Due to personal, societal, environmental, and structural factors, some of the 272 million international migrants globally are more susceptible than others. As is the case with the COVID-19 pandemic, their vulnerabilities may be exacerbated in emergency situations (IOM 2019).

In Southeast Asia, the COVID-19 pandemic has brought about considerable changes to a variety of facets of society, including migration patterns and the roles that women and men play in agriculture (OECD 2022). The influence that male migration has had on gender roles in agriculture has been documented. Countries such as Vietnam, Thailand, and Cambodia have all experienced significant social and economic change as a direct result of male migration. Yet, new issues have arisen as a result of the pandemic, which have had an effect on male migration and, as a consequence of this, gender roles in agriculture in these nations (Jespersen et al. 2022). The purpose of this chapter is to investigate the impact that the COVID-19 pandemic has had on male migration and the evolution of gender roles in agriculture in the three countries of Vietnam, Thailand, and Cambodia.

6.1. Impact on Remittances

The financial growth and general welfare of families in their home countries is significantly influenced by the remittances that immigrants send back to their home countries from the money they earn working abroad. Sending money back home can boost an individual's or a state's income, which in effect can help alleviate poverty. In addition, remittances have significant potential advantages for developing countries relating to international labour remittances. In this perspective, remittances constitute one of the sources of income by emigrants that a household and state get (in the form of foreign currencies) to support the domestic economy and development. This helps emigrants send money back to their families in their home countries (Komariyah et al. 2022).

Due to COVID-19, in Asia, particularly in the economies of the Pacific, Central, and West Asia, are vulnerable to falling into poverty if there is an abrupt stoppage in the flow of remittances to these regions (Takenaka et al. 2020).

6.1.1. Cambodia

As a direct result of the COVID-19 lockdowns, the volume of remittance payments received in the first quarter of 2020 was 5.4% lower than in the first quarter of 2019. Each consecutive quarter of 2020 shows a further decrease in remittances, while the most significant differences from 2019 were shown in the third quarter of 2020. The volume in the third quarter of 2019 was greater by 24.2% than it was in the third quarter of 2020 (IOM 2021b).

6.1.2. Thailand

The months of October through December in 2020 held the greatest differences with regard to 2019's results. The volume in the fourth quarter of 2019 was 14% higher than it was in the fourth quarter of 2020. COVID-19 had caused remittances to drop by roughly US\$74 million in the fourth quarter of 2020. This was despite the fact that foreign employees maintained stable inflows throughout the holiday season (IOM 2023b).

6.2. The Influence of COVID-19 on Male Migration

As a direct consequence of the COVID-19 epidemic, male migration has been greatly hampered in the three countries of Vietnam, Thailand, and Cambodia. The inability of men to go to other countries in search of work as a consequence of the closing of borders and the suspension of international flights has significantly reduced the number of opportunities that are available to them (OECD 2022). In Thailand, for instance, where it is estimated that four million migrant workers were employed prior to the epidemic, over 260 000 migrant workers returned to Cambodia in the first few months of the crisis. This represents a significant proportion of the overall number of migrant laborers employed in Thailand before the epidemic. Other nations included Vietnam and Cambodia, among others. There has been a decline in demand for migrant labour in a number of various industries (IOM 2023c).

6.3. Health of Migrants

Despite the fact that some migrants could be healthier than their accepting community, others have medical vulnerabilities due to:

- socioeconomic status;
- being in overcrowded or otherwise unsuitable environments;
- limitations on obtaining services, such as medical care, for reasons including, but not limited to, immigration status
- cultural-language barriers or health – related information (IOM 2019).

Another obstacle that is present is insufficient health insurance or the lack of has the potential to negatively influence the migrant ability to take precautionary actions against COVID-19 and to obtain medical treatment if infected (IOM 2019).

6.4. The Impact on Mobility and Migration

The pandemic caused by COVID-19 is already having a significant influence on mobility and migration, despite the fact that governments have taken steps to 'flatten the curve' of infection rates (IOM 2019). Flattening the curve refers to community separation practices that maintain a manageable number of daily disease cases for medical providers

(Specklor 2020). In an effort to control the spread of the virus, travel restrictions have been enacted, including a ban on the entry of citizens of other countries; furthermore, many nations have completely shut down their borders. In some nations, the processing of migration applications and aid provided to asylum seekers has been temporarily held down, while in others, labour migration has been temporarily halted (IOM 2019).

6.4.1. Mobility Restrictions

Leaving their respective countries of origin: It has been impossible for migrants to embark on their intended migratory journeys, such as going to work or school or reuniting with relatives. Individuals who needed to leave unstable nations to seek asylum or for other reasons have been prevented from doing so, putting them in danger of being subjected to assault, abuse, or persecution, and possibly even death (McAuliffe 2020).

Admission to Countries of Transit or Destination: As restrictions have been progressively put into place and/or strengthened, it has become increasingly difficult for migrants (including refugees and people seeking asylum) to enter countries that are either in transit or their final destination. Certain industries, including agriculture during harvest seasons, have been hit particularly hard by the effects, and global food supply networks have been thrown off balance as a result (McAuliffe 2020).

Residence in transit and destination nations: Impacts on migrants have been significant, particularly for the most vulnerable in societies who lack access to social protection and health care, and who have also confronted job loss, xenophobic racism, and the possibility of immigration detention while being unable to return home. In addition, refugees and internally displaced persons living in camps and camp-like settings are subject to crowded, deplorable living conditions that are not conducive to COVID-19 physical separation and other infection-control measures (McAuliffe 2020).

Return to original countries: Fear of being stranded without a source of income or access to social protection prompted a mass exodus from some nations following the announcement of border closures. A large number of migrants were stranded throughout the globe due to their inability to return home, in other countries mass migration back to places of origin began (Batistella 2018). Over the course of the first six months in 2020, the unexpected implementation of lockdowns in Thailand resulted in the departure of more than 300,000 migrant workers to homeland countries. In the latter half of the year

2020, migratory laborers returned in comparable huge numbers. and by early 2021, following amnesties that saw 600,000 undocumented workers registered, the overall number of documented migrant workers in Thailand had returned to the 2.8 million figure that was reported in the country before the crisis (Jones et al. 2021).

Some states have conducted mass repatriation operations, but many others have been unable to afford or organize repatriations, leaving migrants in danger (Batistella 2018). More than 19,600 individuals were returned to their homes in Viet Nam by the government between April and July of 2020, using a total of 80 aircraft (Asian Development Bank Institute 2021).

6.5. Impact of COVID-19 on Gender Roles in Agriculture

The pandemic caused by COVID-19 has also had an effect on gender roles in agriculture in the countries of Vietnam, Thailand, and Cambodia. As a result of the repatriation of male migrants, there has been a shift in the division of labour, with women taking up a greater share of the duties in agricultural work. As a result of the return of male migrants who had previously helped women in their agricultural operations, women in some countries, such as Vietnam, have been forced to take on roles that are more substantial in terms of both farming and decision-making. In addition, as a result of the decline in the amount of money that male migrants send back to their homes, women have been forced to shoulder a greater share of the responsibility for providing financial support for their families (OECD 2022).

Because of the critical role that they have played in maintaining food security throughout the epidemic in Thailand, the importance of women working in agriculture has been brought to light as a direct result of the pandemic. Despite this, women continue to confront substantial obstacles when trying to acquire resources and support in order to fully realize their potential in agriculture. The pandemic has also had a huge effect on how women are expected to behave in agricultural settings in Cambodia. As a result of the recent economic slump, a significant number of the men who had been employed in the textile business have relocated back to their native villages and are now pursuing careers in agriculture. Because of this, there has been a substantial shift in the roles that

men and women play in agriculture, with women assuming greater responsibility and leadership positions in farming and decision-making (Rahmadhani et al. 2021).

7. Conclusions

After conducting a literature review on male migration and the transformation of gender roles in agriculture in Southeast Asia, with a particular emphasis on Vietnam, Cambodia, and Thailand, a number of important findings have become apparent.

Firstly, the movement of men from one country to another has had a considerable effect on the traditional roles of women and men in agriculture in all three nations. With the absence of men, women have been forced to assume a greater share of the responsibilities associated with agricultural production and the management of households. Yet, the extent to which these changes take place and the characteristics they take on varies widely depending on the local cultural and societal circumstances.

Secondly, women's empowerment has been recognized as a beneficial result of male migration in some circumstances. Within households and communities, women now possess more control over resources and have more say in the decisions that are made about those resources. However, this has not been the case everywhere, and gender inequality can still exist even when more women are working in agricultural fields.

Thirdly, migration of men has consequences for the safety of food supplies and the amount of agricultural output. Women frequently have to deal with heavier workloads and are sometimes forced to rely on unofficial or unpaid jobs, all of which can have an adverse effect on their health and well-being. In order to foster sustainable development, it is necessary to implement policies and initiatives that encourage the empowerment of women and address the gendered implications of male migration.

The COVID-19 pandemic has made the gendered effects that male migration has had on agriculture in Southeast Asia much harsher. Because of the epidemic, travel restrictions and economic slowdowns have led to a fall in the number of remittances provided by male migrants. As a result, women are under an increased amount of pressure to provide for their families.

The body of research reveals, on the whole, that the effects of male migration on gender roles in agriculture are complex and variable depending on the local cultural and socioeconomic elements that are at stake. It is necessary to have policies and initiatives in Southeast Asia that address the gendered implications of male migration in order to foster sustainable development and gender equality in that region.

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