

SELF-EMPLOYED MYANMAR LABOR MIGRANTS IN BANGKOK:
A CASE STUDY OF ROTI SELLERS FROM CHAREON KRUNG ROAD

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บทคัดย่อและแฟ้มข้อมูลฉบับเต็มของวิทยานิพนธ์ตั้งแต่ปีการศึกษา 2554 ที่ให้บริการในคลังปัญญาจุฬาฯ (CUIR)
เป็นแฟ้มข้อมูลของนิสิตเจ้าของวิทยานิพนธ์ ที่ส่งผ่านทางบัณฑิตวิทยาลัย

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are the thesis authors' files submitted through the University Graduate School.

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Master of Arts Program in Southeast Asian Studies
(Interdisciplinary Program)
Graduate School
Chulalongkorn University
Academic Year 2014

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รายงานย้ายถิ่นชาวพม่าผู้ประกอบอาชีพอิสระในกรุงเทพมหานคร:
กรณีศึกษาผู้ชายโรตี้จากถนนเจริญกรุง



วิทยานิพนธ์นี้เป็นส่วนหนึ่งของการศึกษาตามหลักสูตรปริญญาศิลปศาสตรมหาบัณฑิต
สาขาวิชาเอเชียตะวันออกเฉียงใต้ศึกษา (สหสาขาวิชา)
บัณฑิตวิทยาลัย จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย
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คิน นาน อู : แร้งงานย้ายถิ่นชาวพม่าผู้ประกอบอาชีพอิสระในกรุงเทพมหานคร:
กรณีศึกษาผู้ขายโรติจากถนนเจริญกรุง (SELF-EMPLOYED MYANMAR LABOR
MIGRANTS IN BANGKOK: A CASE STUDY OF ROTI SELLERS FROM CHAREON
KRUNG ROAD) อ.ที่ปรึกษาวิทยานิพนธ์หลัก: รศ. ดร. วิทยา สุจริตธนารักษ์, 85 หน้า.

ประเทศไทย ซึ่งเป็นประเทศเพื่อนบ้านที่ใกล้ชิดที่สุดของเมียนมาร์ เป็นปัจจัยแรงดึงที่
เข้มแข็งให้คนเมียนมาร์โยกย้ายทั้งโดยถูกต้องและไม่ถูกต้องตามกฎหมายเข้ามาสร้างชีวิตที่ดีกว่าใน
เมืองต่างๆ มีคนเมียนมาร์เล็กๆกลุ่มหนึ่งที่มีงานทำผิดแผกไปจากกลุ่มอื่นๆ ปัจจัยที่น่าสนอย่างหนึ่งซึ่ง
ข้าพเจ้าใคร่เสนอในงานเขียนนี้คือว่าคนขายโรตีสี่ซึ่งส่วนใหญ่เป็นมุสลิมดำรงชีวิตทางเศรษฐกิจและ
ปรับตัวทางวัฒนธรรมในประเทศไทยที่เป็นพุทธได้อย่างไร งานเขียนของข้าพเจ้าพยายามค้นหา
เรื่องราวในท้องที่ที่ศึกษาและรู้ลึกลงไปในตัวของผู้ขายโรตีสี่ในกทม. ในฐานะแวดล้อมใหม่และพยายาม
ผสมกลมกลืนวิถีชีวิตของตนกับวัฒนธรรมที่ต่างกันออกไป งานวิจัยชิ้นนี้จะใช้วิธีการศึกษาเชิงคุณภาพ
และทางชาติพันธุ์ การเก็บตัวอย่างแบบสโนว์บอลล์จะถูกนำมาใช้ในการเก็บข้อมูล งานวิจัยชิ้นนี้จะให้
ความสำคัญกับความสัมพันธ์ระหว่างสภาพความเป็นเมืองในประเทศไทย กับการเคลื่อนย้ายแรงงาน
ระหว่างประเทศ ข้าพเจ้าเชื่อว่าการนำเสนอเรื่องราวในท้องที่ของคนขายโรตีสี่อาจให้แง่คิดใหม่ๆว่า
ความเจริญในเมืองและการเป็นโลกาภิวัตน์เกิดขึ้นได้อย่างไรในประเทศไทยเป็นการเฉพาะและใน
เอเชียตะวันออกเฉียงใต้เป็นการทั่วไป



สาขาวิชา เอเชียตะวันออกเฉียงใต้ศึกษา
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5587703820 : MAJOR SOUTHEAST ASIAN STUDIES

KEYWORDS: ROTI SELLERS / LABOR MYANMAR MIGRANTS / BANGKOK / SELF-EMPLOYED

KHIN NAN OO: SELF-EMPLOYED MYANMAR LABOR MIGRANTS IN BANGKOK: A CASE STUDY OF ROTI SELLERS FROM CHAREON KRUNG ROAD. ADVISOR: ASSOC. PROF. WITHAYA SUCHARITHANARUGSE, Ph.D., 85 pp.

Thailand, being the closest neighbor country to Myanmar, provides a strong pull factor for Myanmar people to migrate legally or illegally and to find a better life in the cities. There is a small group of Myanmar people who work differently from other groups. One interesting factor that I would like to propose in this paper is how the *roti* sellers, who are mostly Muslim, can, have their economic survival and cultural adaptation in Thailand which is Buddhist. My paper attempts to discover the local narration and an insight from the *roti* sellers in Bangkok as a marginalized group of people, but they tend to grow their *roti* selling business in new environment and try to integrate their lifestyle with different culture. Qualitative and ethnographic method approaches will be applied in this research. Snowball sampling will be used as a method to collect the data.

จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย
CHULALONGKORN UNIVERSITY

Field of Study: Southeast Asian Studies Student's Signature

Academic Year: 2014 Advisor's Signature

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First of all, I would like to express my deepest appreciation to my family, Jessica Olney, Aye Aye Khaing and all those from Chulalongkorn university who gave me opportunity to take part in this course. A special thanks go to my thesis committee members and Dr. Pithch Pongsawat who gave me good guide lines for my task. I would like to say thank to my interviewees without their help and cooperation my work cannot be done. Furthermore, I would also like to acknowledge with much appreciation my classmates and officers who helped me to complete my thesis.



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CHAPTER I

Introduction

Thailand and Myanmar are neighboring countries and they have many things in common in terms of culture, religious views and some social norms. Moreover, they share many border issues such as human trafficking, smuggling and illegal migration.

Thailand was not a colonial country like other Southeast Asian countries such as Myanmar (Burma)¹, which was taken over by the British Empire after three Anglo-Burmese Wars in the 19th century. During colonial times, the British administration encouraged Indians and Chinese people to migrate to Myanmar due to abundant work opportunities. This migration was also due to the fact that geographically, Myanmar is situated between these two countries with massive worker populations. As a result, many people of ethnic Chinese and Indian descent can still be found throughout Myanmar. Besides, the influx of diversity due to these more recent migration patterns, Myanmar is also composed of more than 100 ethnic groups, making it a very diverse and heterogeneous nation.

In 1948 Myanmar gained independence from the British government and since then it has been afflicted by one of the longest running civil wars in the world. A number of wars are still ongoing between government and the country's numerous ethnic groups; that can be attributed to the impacts of colonization. During first 10 years after independence, Myanmar was initiated as a democratic nation. However, after a 1962 coup it became a socialist country and then from 1988 it was ruled by a

¹ The official English name was changed by the country's government from the "Union of Burma" to the "Union of Myanmar" in 1989

military dictatorship which formally ended in 2011. The resulting political instability and long term armed conflicts continue to hinder its economic progress and development. Consequently, it has been left behind neighboring countries even though it is rich with natural resources. Thus many people from Myanmar go to Thailand in search of different goals such education, political refuge, job and health care services.

In the meantime, between 1985 and 1996 Thailand's economic grew rapidly, and it has transformed into an industrializing country and an internationally important exporter. In addition, tourism also plays a significant role to the Thai economy making Thailand a leading economy in Southeast Asia. It has also evolved into an international and regional migration hub for sending, receiving and transiting migrants. Moreover, population decline and aging in Thailand creates demand for labors from neighboring countries.

Because of these pull and push factors, labor migration has become a main reason that Myanmar people move to Thailand. Supang Chantavanich (Chantavanich, 2013) mentions that Burmese² and other ethnics migrants came to Thailand in the 1990s for economic reasons. According to the International Organization for Migration, the Myanmar nationality now represents the biggest population of migrant workers in Thailand.

Consequently, in Thailand, people who come from Myanmar can be seen everywhere, especially in big cities like Chiang Mai and Bangkok where they have more opportunity. Some of the workers are legal and others are not. For the migrants who have professional skills, they are paid based on their skill capacities but for those who do not possess any specific skill, they tend to become manual or

² One of the ethnic groups and the largest population in Myanmar

unskilled labors in construction sites, plantations, food industries, factories and brothels that are commonly classified as the “3D” jobs (dirty, dangerous and difficult).

Nevertheless, there is a unique phenomenon regarding Myanmar migrants who work in Bangkok. There is a small group of people who work differently from other groups. They are neither relying on factory nor construction sites in Bangkok in order to economically survive. They are the *roti* sellers from Myanmar. *Roti* is a kind of bread and is traditionally considered Indian and India– Muslim culture is embedded with the food.

Rationale

Bangkok is a mega city³ in Southeast Asia and it has been a capital of Thailand for more than 200 years. It is founded with diversity of people (Raksaman, 2008) so multiple societies with different culture, customs and social practices coexisting harmoniously.

Moreover, Thailand is one of the most popular tourist attraction cities in the world and Bangkok street food is also very famous among tourists. It is usually easy to find something to eat, and food carts can be found on almost every corner of the street. According to Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (1989), "street food is an important source of economy and nutritious food, particularly for urban poor" that reflects the requirement of it.

In addition, selling street food is included in the informal sector and Amornvivat (2013), wrote in Bangkok Post in November 2013, that "the informal sector accounted for 75% of employment nationwide in 1990, but there was a downward trend and

³ A mega city is usually defined as a metropolitan area with a total population in excess of ten million people. (How Big Cities Get? New Scientist Magazine, 17 June 2006, page 41)

dropped to 60% in 2004. However, its trend was upward again and even college-educated people have been joining the informal sector in larger numbers especially in small shop and restaurant." This shows the role of job creation.

One of the significant examples is Panrop Kamlah who began his business with a noodle cart. He was not satisfied with his initial nightly earnings so he started making his own noodle dough at home, then opened a second stall. After creating his own logo, relatives and friends asked to join, so he offered carts as a franchise. His business boomed when he appeared on national television. Today he has a noodle factory and an empire of some 1,500 branded carts. It reflects the prospect to grow in business starting with a low investment and gradually achieving higher income.

Another reason of the many snack-type stalls and food carts that can be found everywhere is the fact that Thai people eat snacks throughout the day and in between meals. Existences of different kinds of foods prove Bangkok a cosmopolitan city along with the diversity of food.

There is one snack called *Roti (Paratha)* in Bangkok that seems to be universally popular. Although it is originally from India, it is available and popular in Southeast Asian countries as well, especially in Myanmar, Thailand, Singapore and Malaysia because of the phenomena of globalization and the unavoidable consequences of migration.

Roti carts and stalls can be found in all parts of Thailand from Bangkok to Chiang Mai to Phuket, but are particularly common in the southern provinces where there is a larger Muslim population. Most of the *roti* sellers in Bangkok are Muslim as seen by the noticeable religious symbol that they usually display on their cart. *Roti* carts are usually set up in the evening by the roadside along with other food carts.



Roti cart with Islamic religious symbol

Being a Myanmar person, I am familiar with roti sellers because they look like Myanmar Muslim. It is obvious that in Bangkok there are many Myanmar migrants whose work is based on wage, but roti sellers are contrasting with them because they can be called self-employed.

That is why I asked my Thai friends about roti sellers. My friends said they believe these sellers are Indian and in Thai language, called "Khaek"⁴. One of my Thai friends from Bangkok told me a joke about roti seller, that roti selling is limited only for Khaek people'. This reputation shows how extensively the roti business is dominated by this specific ethnic group.

I usually buy roti near my apartment, which is situated on the Charron krung Road, and I tried to make conversation with them. At first they were quite reluctant to talk with me but after talking frequently they became friendly and trusted me enough to share their life experience as migrants in Bangkok.

⁴ Khaek in Thai culture means a foreigner from countries to the west of Thailand, excluding Farang. Khaek are both Muslim, such as Cham, Java, or Malay, and Non-Muslim, such as Brahma, Armenian, or Sikh. Information from an interview with Julispong Chularatana on July 12, 2005,

Being outsiders or marginalized people, there are many tragic stories amongst them. However, they say they are able to make money and feel that life in BKK is much better than their previous situation. Moreover, they feel that Thailand is their second home because they have been in Thailand for many years and they have a good enough job that they can support the family members who remain in their original country. They may wish to go back home, but doing so would be profoundly dependent upon their work opportunity in Myanmar and many other things would need to be taken into consideration such as life-style , education, health care and security.

Evers and Korff (2000) explained that the dynamic of Southeast Asian urbanism results from the struggle of different actors, who are trying to shape the city in a sensible effort, or simply put their stamp on the city via their daily routine within it so that these countries' emerging urbanism is created by everyday life of the people living there. So it is undeniable that migrant workers are also participating somehow in the cities life of Thailand where they are staying. It is interesting to explore how Myanmar migrant people, especially roti sellers, involve in city life of Bangkok.

Moreover, the majority population in Thailand and Myanmar are Buddhist but *roti* sellers, are mostly Muslim. These things escalate my motivation and drive to conduct research about "*Self-employed Myanmar labor migrants in the city of Bangkok (Case study of roti seller from Chareon krung Road)*". This paper will attempt to discover the local narration and an insight into the *roti* sellers in Bangkok as a marginalized group of people, who are attempting to develop their *roti* business in a new environment while trying to integrate their lifestyle within a different culture.

Research Questions

This research proposes the specific questions as follows:

- What are people's motivations in becoming a self-employed roti seller in Bangkok?
- How do roti sellers operate their roti selling business within Bangkok context?
- How do roti sellers adapt or live as city dwellers in Bangkok?

Objectives

The purpose of this thesis is:

- To find out the motivations and main causes of Myanmar migrants to become self-employed roti seller
- To study how they are trying to survive as self-employed roti seller in the city of Bangkok.
- To learn how they are adapting to life as Bangkok city dwellers

Hypothesis

Migrants from Myanmar with Islamic faith prefer to dwell in the metropolitan city of Bangkok, where they can find specific self-employment, which is favorable to them over working as wage laborers, and where they can easily accommodate to their new environment which is amenable to them due to having established contact and linkages with other members of their group.

Research Methods

Qualitative and ethnographic methods are applied in this research. This paper will cover various stages of the research, starting from selecting topics, collecting and verifying data, interpreting, analyzing, and writing a systematic research. Snowball sampling will be applied as a method to collect the data. To collect the information, three techniques such as the in-depth interview, participation observation and observation were be used. In-depth interview was the most comprehensive methodology used to collect the information. The use of the observation strategy of

research was also used as a way to better get to know key informants. The target interview group was Myanmar migrants who are actively selling roti, have been in Thailand from 2 years to up and currently living in Bangkok, Chareonkrung Road. Moreover, Thai Muslim, Thai Non-Muslim and foreigners will be interviewed to learn their perspectives on roti and Myanmar roti sellers. Then the data was analyzed by identifying status of interviewee, testing their validity, authenticity, originality, and also their relation to the research topic. Document review from books, thesis, articles, reports and journals were used as secondary sources.

Research Scope

The scope of this research is limited by people and place. Only Myanmar migrant workers, who have been in Thailand from 2 to over 20 years and were at the moment staying in Bangkok, were selected as key persons of this research. Also, 3 types of customers of each Thai Muslim, Thai Non-Muslim and foreigner were interviewed to know their opinion toward roti sellers and roti in Bangkok. The spatial limit for this research is only in Bangkok which is Thailand's political, commercial, industrial and cultural hub. Due to the limited time available to conduct the study I chose Chareon krung Road to be my specific research area to be feasible. This is an area with significant Myanmar Muslim roti sellers precisely 7 people who meet with research criteria.

Conceptual Framework

This research is analyzed using migration and urbanization theories. It consists of several parts. Firstly, the relationship between Myanmar people's migration and Bangkok's urbanization will be studied. Secondly, the historical background of street vendors in Bangkok will be traced back and its role in providing livelihood will be learned. Thirdly, the narrative of individual roti sellers will illustrate how Myanmar labor migrant workers try to overcome many difficulties to become self-employed

street sellers. Their life-style in Bangkok and other people perspective toward them also will be discussed. Concepts of migration and urbanization will be discussed in chapter two.

Significance of Research

This research will serve as a case study to highlight the relationship between urbanization and international labor migration. Moreover it will show how migrant workers try to survive as self-employed in the city of Bangkok. It can serve as a contribution to the academic community at large, especially for researchers who are concerned with migration in Southeast Asia. The findings of this research will be beneficial for further research regarding labor migration in Southeast Asia in general, and Myanmar and Thailand in particular.

Literature Review and Related Researches and Works

Many scholars write and many books have been written to explain theories of migration, types of migration and urbanization. Besides, there are many Myanmar migrant workers in Thailand, and many books and research have already been published regarding their suffering and their need for better legal protection Myanmar migrant workers in Thailand of whom so many books and research have been published and done regarding how they are suffering and how they need to get legal protection. It is very clear that they need more protection and a good legal mechanism in order to avoid negative and unnecessary consequences.

In *The Golden Peninsula, Culture and Adaptation in Mainland Southeast Asia*, (Keyes, 1995) University of Hawaii Press, discusses the longstanding pluralistic tradition found in colonial cities, the economic role of these colonial cities and the economic role of these cities in contemporary mainland Southeast Asia.

A book called *Southeast Asian Urbanism (The meaning and Power of Social Space)*

written by Hans-Dieter Evers (Evers & Korff, 2000) expresses a wide trend of urbanization in Southeast Asian cities including Bangkok. This book focuses mainly on the middle class and grassroots people who comprise the majority of these cities. It is very obvious that Southeast Asian cities have become more metropolitan and globalized, but it is very difficult to define the meaning of Southeast Asian cities because they each have their own distinct history and cultural concept that has long been influenced by India and China. Globalization has had a profound impact on the state's role and cultural values. Moreover, Southeast Asian societies are strengthened by the multi-ethnic composition of the population. There are two main patterns of urbanism, commercial cities and inland sacred cities. Economy and society are strongly related, and economic factors have become more complicated due to the so-called shadow economy, informal sector and subsistence production. One of the big issues facing these cities is the imbalance between people and space because of poor city planning and weak land management. Architecture and technology play crucial roles in meeting people's needs, and amongst the many high-rise condominiums there is a wide range in the quality of buildings correlating with the income and class of the building's inhabitants.

The Southeast Asian City: "Social Geography of Primate Cities of Southeast Asia" (T.G McGee, 1967) covers and reflects many aspects of third-world cities and the emergence of colonial cities. It focuses on three different perspectives: namely, cities and the world economy, cities and their hinterlands, and cities as systems in their own right. Good governance and management systems are also highlighted as very important tools without which many problematic consequences may occur. McGee compares the differences between Bangkok, Jakarta, Manila and finally Singapore, a model world city. In Southeast Asia, the majority of people now live in cities instead of rural areas. This shows how people are moving from one place to another to get a

better life and new urban settlements are arising due to economic development and globalization.

Brokers and Labor Migration from Myanmar: A Case Study from Samut Sakorn, by Sakaew and Tangpratchakoon (2009) presents how Myanmar migrant workers enter into Thailand through brokers and agents. In Samut Sakorn, there are more than 400,000 Myanmar labors - four times more than the local population. Most of them are employed in the fishery sector, downstream fishing industry, agricultural and service sectors. This case study explains the role of agents or brokers and how they exploit workers. Many useful recommendations are also expressed in order to improve this situation in the future.

Fighting Poverty from the Street a Survey of Street Food Vendors in Bangkok was conducted by Nirathron (2006)It is about the background of Bangkok street food vendors. Interestingly, Thais are latecomer of street food vending compared to Chinese migrants. It shows the socioeconomic characteristics of food vendors as well as social and economic aspects of food vending and success stories. Moreover, it includes buyer's socioeconomic characteristic, expectation, purchasing behavior and how much they spend for food vendors. The last section of this book contains policy recommendations.

Consumers' Opinion toward Street Food Consumption at Bang Kapi Market" (Tiemmek, 2005)thesis is about the relationship with Thai people and street food and people opinion on street food.

Bangkok's Foods cape "Public Eating, Gender Relations and Urban Change" (G. I. Yasmeen, 2007), shows the relationship between the culture of public eating and urbanization in Thailand. Eating habits are related to other social factors such as agriculture system, religious beliefs and history. This book also explains the history of street food in Bangkok and reasons of public eating. Food vending is explained as a

kind of home-based business for women, and this book presents the lives and voices of food-shop owner.

Snap Shot Stories Invisible Victims of Trafficking in Thailand which was conducted by Andy Hall (2011) is about stories of human trafficking victims from Myanmar who were trafficked in Thailand. One of the victims was exploited by a roti seller also from Myanmar. Roti selling is one of the networks for exploitation but also a potential job opportunity for newcomers.

A report produced by the Equal Rights Trust in partnership with the Institute of Human Rights and Peace Studies, Mahidol University ("The Human Rights of Stateless Rohingya in Thailand," 2014) gives an overview of the Rohingya people and the challenges they face in Thailand. It also discusses their means of earning a livelihood including roti selling.

"Migrant workers from Burma and Thailand: Policy reviews and protection mechanisms" is a book resulting from the seminar held at Chulalongkorn University on the 21 February 2003 (Vicary, 2003). It discusses many issues that related to migration policy and the difficulties of migrant laborers. Thailand's economic development is associated with the demand for cheap labor, so this creates a market for migrant laborers from neighboring countries, especially from Myanmar which provides more than 80 percent of Thailand's migrant workers. It points out many aspects to develop the migration policy that can reduce the consequences of unwanted problems.

Various journals and articles available on the Internet also discuss Myanmar migrant workers and Bangkok street food, but there has not yet been a detailed narration and systematic academic research, thesis or dissertation information about self-employed Myanmar migrants in Bangkok.

Chapter II

Relationship between Myanmar migration and Bangkok urbanization by 1990s

Brief introduction about Myanmar

Myanmar is the second largest country in Southeast Asia and it lies at the juncture of South and Southeast Asia. The Northern part is sandwiched between India and China (Berlie, 2008). It is undeniable that the geographical situation shows the important relationship with these two giant countries. It is said that Myanmar culture has been most greatly influenced by India (Connor, 1925; Toru, 1993). Moreover, Thailand, Laos and Bangladesh are also neighboring countries of Myanmar and they are connected to each other in many ways.

According to the 2014 Myanmar Census, the total population is over 51 million. People have been moving from one place to another with many reasons including economic insecurity and displacement by armed conflicts (Kaur, 2009) since time immemorial. Martin Smith (1994) says many different ethnic people have migrated across the great horseshoe of mountains which surround the central Irrawaddy river-plain since long ago so different cultures, customs and religions exist together in Myanmar. Many different dialects and languages within the country prove the existence of diversity. Buddhist, Christian, Muslim, Hindu and other religions are present as a multi-religious country, but the majority of people practice Buddhism. However, there is no official state religion in Myanmar.

Tom Kramer (2009) mentions in his article that ethnic minority groups compose some 30% to 40% of the population, so one-third of the population is ethnic minority in Myanmar. Although 135 ethnic groups are recognized officially as Myanmar, the

recognition of Rohingya people, a Muslim group from Rakhine State, is a controversial nationality issue which the country has not been able to solve for many decades. The Myanmar government denies Rohingyas as one of the official ethnic races and claims that they are recent illegal migrants from Bangladesh.

Likewise, Bangladesh does not accept Rohingyas as their people, making them a stateless people. The situation became more complicated after the promulgation of 1982 citizenship law, which is criticized by many scholars as designed to discriminate against the Rohingya. According to the 1982 citizenship law, the rights and privileges of full citizenship are granted only to recognized 'national races' and those who can prove they had ancestors in the country before 1824 (Smith, 2002). Many Rohingyas have become stateless because they did not meet the requirements of the citizenship law. Being stateless, they do not exist on legal paper, and as a result they are not able to look forward to education, healthcare, overseas travel and formal employment. According to ("The Human Rights of Stateless Rohingya in Thailand," 2014), "there are three significant time periods particularly in 1978, 1992, and 2012-3 when Rohingya mass exodus from Myanmar into Bangladesh and beyond consequences of statelessness, human rights violation of government and communal violence between Rohingya and Rakhine Buddhist". Over one million Rohingya are living abroad and the largest numbers are in Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, Malaysia, Saudi Arabia and Thailand either as refugees or migrants who are mostly with no legal status".

In fact, Myanmar is not only a cultural diversity county but also rich with natural resources. It was one of the richest countries in Southeast Asia in the colonial period (Steinberg, 2001) and known as the "Rice Bowl of Asia" because it exported the largest amount of rice in the world (Oo, 2004). Likewise, Myanmar teak is world famous and produced 75% of world teak (Steinberg, 2001). Besides, education was also very good

and reached the highest literacy rates in Asia in the late 1940 and 1950s (Keyes, 1995). The first railways in the region also were built in Myanmar, and the cities of Yangon⁵ (Rangoon) and Mawlamyine (Moulmein) played a major role in international trade in colonial time as port cities (Keyes, 1995).

Economic development created many job opportunities which attracted many Chinese and Indian laborers. Moreover, historically Myanmar was incorporated as part of the Indian Empire under the British rule so over 1 million Indians, including Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs migrated into Myanmar (Smith, 2002). As a result, significant number of Indian people were in Yangon and other cities in colonial period (Keyes, 1995). According to Aye Hlaing (1964), in Yangon in 1931 89% of the unskilled and semi-skilled workers and 70% of traders and shop-assistants were Indian. The 1931 census, the most complete one taken in Myanmar, showed that 52.9 % of the Yangon population was Indian and presented 6.7 % of Myanmar's total population (Keyes, 1995).

However, anti-Indian violence occurred several times in the 1930s in which hundreds lost their lives and an estimated 500,000 Indians fled during the Second World War (Smith, 2002). Moreover, after independence in 1948 there were political changes in Myanmar which impacted not only Myanmar people but also Indian people in the community. The government launched a nationalization process in 1964, and took over many Indian-owned businesses which caused many Indian people to leave from Myanmar (Smith et al., 1994).

Although Myanmar practiced parliamentary democracy between 1948 and 1962, this was discarded after the 1962 military coup. Ne Win seized power in 1962 and the Burmese Way to Socialism was introduced by the Revolution Council with the aims

⁵ Formal capital city of Myanmar

of economic development, dropping foreign influence and growing the role of the Myanmar government (Holmes, 1967). This greatly affected the economy, education and people's living standard, which turned Myanmar into one of the most impoverished countries in Asia (Tallentire, 2007). Educational standards started to decline after all schools were nationalized and English was replaced by Burmese as the medium of instruction at universities in 1965 (Thein, 2004).

Keyes (1995) claims that economic stagnation and the emigration of much of the Indian population led to the slowdown of the process of urbanization and the size of Yangon and other cities increased as a natural process rather than as a result of migration under the Nay Win regime, particularly during its first ten years.

Moreover, shortly after gaining independence civil wars began and are still continuing. These have now become some of the longest civil wars in the world (Winn, 2012). Armed conflicts always hinder development and bring unwanted consequences, and have also profoundly impacted Myanmar people's socioeconomic status.

Poverty, lack of job opportunities, the political situation and ethnic conflict have pushed people to cross borders (Huguet & Chamrathirong, 2011). According to the International Organization for Migration report published in 2009, up to 10% of Myanmar's population, based on 50 to 55 million people, is currently abroad. A significant number of Myanmar migrants are employed in Malaysia, Singapore, and Thailand where labor migration has reappeared since the 1980s and overseas workers cover between 15-30% of the labor force (Kaur, 2009). The greatest numbers of Myanmar migrant workers are in Thailand (Huguet & Chamrathirong, 2011) and it is believed to be more than 2 million of either legal or illegal status. In the early 1960s, a per capita income in Myanmar was more than double that of Thailand but 50 years later, per capita on purchasing power parity basis is about ten times higher in

Thailand ("OECD Investment Policy Reviews MYANMAR," 2014). Myanmar and Thailand are neighboring countries so crossing the border is easy and common. People cross with various reasons but economic migration is the leading factor that people migrate and this has been especially true since the 1990s (Chantavanich, 2013) because of the economic disparity between the two countries and the political situation in Myanmar.

Factors relating to migration from Myanmar to Thailand in 1990s

As mentioned above, crossing the border between Thailand and Myanmar is common but the numbers of people crossing the border has increased significantly since the mid-1980s and early 1990s (Chalamwong, 2012). The motivations for this shift need to be considered. Looking back to Myanmar's modern history, a huge political change can be seen from the late 1980s onward that relates with the economic situation.

It is believed that the basic economic problem in Myanmar was started in 1962, in which isolationist policy was implemented that aimed at the isolation of Myanmar from the rest of the world. In 1964, widespread nationalization policy meant the forced claim of private enterprises by the government, and launched the era of Burmese Socialism based on a restricted development strategy with an emphasis on self-reliance, isolation and strict neutrality in foreign policy (Buzzi, 2001) Consequently, economic growth slowed down and per capita income also stagnated.

The declaration of suspension of bank notes

Starting from the mid-1980s, Myanmar's economic failure was mainly triggered by the announcing of canceling bank notes circulated in the country. In November 1985, Nay Win, the president of Myanmar, declared K 100, K 50 and K 20 currency notes as illegal and the citizens who owned a total of K 5, 000 were allowed to exchange

immediately for legal tender of the same value at the particular banks and the offices initially from 11 November to 31 December. However, for anyone who held more than K 5,000, had to prove that their money had been earned legally and the tax had been paid correctly, or else the officials were allowed to retain one half of the excess notes. Moreover, if the money was earned through illegal actions such as the black market, all the bank notes would be confiscated by the authorities. The declaration was previously applied in 1964 whereby anyone hold less than K 2,400 could exchange at the banks in full amount while anyone who hold more than K 4,200 would face 'special scrutiny of the individual concerned' and the imposition of a 'special tax'. The compliance deadline was later extended and finally taken into action in 1985 as described above (Brown, 2013)

The primary aim of the 1964 declaration on notes was justified on, in the Revolutionary Council's own words, 'the indigenous and foreign capitalists who have for many years unfairly accumulated the people's money with which they now oppose the Burmese Way to Socialism'. However, the motive changed in 1985 on Hmaung-Kho (illegal) traders who became very popular beyond the state's control (Brown, 2013).

In 1987, Nay Win's further announcement on K 25, K 35 and K 75 currency notes without consulting the BSPP Central Committee. Unlike 1964 and 1985 declarations, the citizens were not allowed to exchange their money for legal tender. In other words, more than half of the money in Myanmar had been declared as illegal and worthless. The result and impact was shocking and terrifying for ordinary people (Brown, 2013).

1988 Demonstration

From 1974 to 1988, the BSPP ruled Myanmar as a one-party state, suppressing all public protests and demonstrations by using armed forces. In this period, the nation's

economic problem became bigger and the country reached to the bottom of 'least developed country' status according to the United Nations (UN) in 1987 (Fink, 2001), even though the country was once one of the richest countries in Southeast Asia during the colonial period.

Under the military regime, media was completely controlled by the state censorship, civil society was eliminated, pluralism was muted, and fear pervaded and enveloped the society. Social issues such as military dictatorship, the failing economy and human rights violation triggered public gatherings and demonstrations to protest against the government.

In 1988, a social breakdown in Myanmar started with university students' dissent and led to a nationwide revolution that caused a major transition of the country (Fink, 2001). In July 1988, General Nay Win, the chairman of the Burmese Socialist Program Party (BSPP) resigned after 26 years of domination.

In September 1988, the country was taken over by the military which created the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) (Brown, 2013). The junta violently handled pro-democracy demonstrators and arrested thousands of students (Buzzi, 2001). Aftermaths of the demonstration resulted in thousands of students and political activists fleeing to bordering countries, especially into Bangkok, and many of them joined with the ethnic forces on the Thai-Burma border in order to fight for freedom and democracy ("Time for UN Intervention in Burma/Myanmar: A Threat to International Peace and Security," 2003).

The violence and crackdown in Burma was then noticed by the international community and in order to divert attention, the SLORC held multi-party general election. Moreover, during the breakdown, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, daughter of the national leader and general Aung San, came back after living overseas for a period of time to look after her ailing mother. After witnessing the breakdown in the country

and the persuasion of students and others opposed to the regime, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and a group of like-minded people founded the National League for Democracy (NLD) and gained support nationwide.

In 1989, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi was arrested and placed under house arrest by the military junta. In the 1990 election, although the NLD won the majority of seats, the party was defeated by the junta under the accusation of disqualification of the party to rule the country and the party's members were detained, arrested or sent to exile ("Time for UN Intervention in Burma/Myanmar: A Threat to International Peace and Security," 2003).

After the election, the country was left without freedom of speech, lack of democracy, increasing crime and violation against humanity and the civil war between junta and different ethnic groups. Moreover, genocidal actions on the account of religious and political differences by the junta have forced the citizens to leave the country and flee into neighboring countries seeking political asylum. The growing number of refugees threatened the border security and created social problems in those areas ("Time for UN Intervention in Burma/Myanmar: A Threat to International Peace and Security," 2003).

Since the military junta assumed power in 1988, the socialist economic system was abandoned and the economy was transformed into a market-oriented economic system, initiating an outward-looking development strategy. Agriculture remains the dominant sector for the national economy and new laws regarding economic policy, such as 100 percent retention of export earning law and the commercial tax law have been promulgated with the aim of facilitating private enterprise in the emerging

market-oriented economy⁶. However, economists contend that some necessary fundamental changes are still absent that many scholars agreed.

Moreover, military-supervised business such as Union Myanmar Economic Holdings Limited and the Myanmar Economic Corporation play a major role in the country's economy (Brown, 2013).

Most private businesses lack free enterprise opportunities in the economic sector, except for associations and businesses which are closely related with the military officials who gain tremendous benefits from the system. As a result, middle class and ordinary people suffer from poverty, inflation, high-commodity prices and unemployment (National Council of the Union of Burma, 200). Consequently increasing number of Myanmar people migrant to Thailand to seek a safer and better life.

Urbanization in Bangkok in 1990s

Generally, urbanization is the ratio of people moving from rural to urban areas. However, Yap Kioe Sheng and Moe Thuzar (2012) argue that urbanization is more than just the number of people in movement; because urban areas differ from rural areas in term of demography, economy, administrative status, physical landscape, and social feature.

Surprisingly, there is no specific definition of rural; it is just defined as that which is not urban. Likewise, there is no agreed definition of urban. However, each country in Southeast Asia has its own definition (Yap & Thuzar, 2012). Jones (2002) says that the classification of an area as "urban" has political motives. In Thailand the definition of "urban" is primarily based on "municipalities"⁷ which have special administrative

⁶ The complete list of laws promulgated by the SLORC since it took over power can be found in three books in Burmese published by the Attorney General's office in 1990,1991,and 1992

⁷Source UNDP 2004

status, and not all towns are defined equally even though some can be quite large compared to others. Non-municipal towns are under the control of the provincial governor, whereas municipalities are with elected local governments.

Nevertheless, many scholars agree that the process of urbanization has been associated with economic and social transformation. Urbanization is often viewed as a negative trend because rapid urbanisation brings challenges and impacts such as dense low-income settlements, un-employment, poverty, environmental issues, and health problems.

However, Orum and Antony (2011) argue that urban residents normally benefit from better forms of education, improved health care, the availability and distribution of information, and the greater supply of life sustaining goods, such as food and shelter. Thus it is undeniable that urbanization comprises with disadvantages and advantages. In Thailand, the acceleration of urbanization is connected with economic development. Likewise, political changes are also related to economic and social transformation. It is said that Thailand's economic and social changes started in American period particularly after the Second World War.

In 1961, Thailand's first five-year development plan was introduced and stimulated the economic growth in the private sectors. Early economic plans were set up with three objectives as follows (Baker & Phonegpaichit, 2009);

- Intensify exploitation of Thailand's natural resources to deliver growth
- Transfer some of the resulting surplus for investment in the urban economy
- Facilitate foreign investment to acquire technology

The initiation of the First National Economic Development Plan in 1961, the country's development strategy triggered industrial development at the expense of the agriculture sector, which caused mass rural-urban migration (Siamwalla and

Sethbunsang: 1989). Bangkok's population erupted from 1.8 to 3 million people. Developing city created many job opportunities such as factory workers, drivers, domestic workers, shop assistants, restaurant workers and construction laborers (Baker & Phonegpaichit, 2009). Sungthongjeen (1991) and Nirathron (2006) explain that people from rural areas moved to the capital because of the huge income gap between Bangkok and the provinces. Moreover, the better transportation system that connected the northeastern provinces and Bangkok also encouraged migration.

Moreover, since a liberal market economy was established in American era and after the cold war, international cooperation has become stronger. In the early 1980s, Thailand moved to a more labor-intensive export-oriented economy from agriculturally based sector; this created enormous industrial work centers for many Thais from rural areas.

From 1988, foreign investment escalated because East Asian Firms moved export-oriented manufacturing to Thailand (Baker & Phonegpaichit, 2009).

In 1991, the government liberalized the automotive industries, which persuaded foreign investors particularly Japan and America to accelerate their investment. Consequently technology based goods were the fastest-growing sector of exports. Besides, the Thai government promoted tourism by helping develop many beach and island resorts. In the late 20th Century, the urban economy grew faster than before and about 25% of working population quit working in the agriculture sector (Baker & Phonegpaichit, 2009)

Consequently, millions of people from rural villages and across the borders are found amongst the large group of urban working class people. The emergence of new slums is evidence of huge rural urban movement into Bangkok (Patpui, 1984; Tantuvanit, 1999). Thus Bangkok, "the most populous city on earth", over 40 times

bigger than the next largest place (Khorat), dominates the urbanization with over 10 million people (Baker & Phonegpaichit, 2009).

The role of education in Bangkok urbanization

Education plays a crucial role for economic development and the empowerment of human capacity. Regarding evolution of education, according to Thailand's Ministry of Education, there are three significant periods for higher education in Thailand including the Early Modernization Period (1889-1931), the Post Revolution Period (1932-1949), and the Development Planning Period (1950-present).

Although the Thai government adopted the idea of universal primary education in the 1920s, invested seriously in the expansion of primary schooling after the 1932 revolution, the primary schooling only extended little beyond the main provincial towns. In 1960, with the acceleration of the economy, the increase in government revenues, and the campaign against insurgency, primary schooling was extended into the villages. By the 1980s, most children legally acquired the minimum four years of primary education. Half of all the children dropped out after primary school but this began to change in the late 1980s. Secondary classes were set up more in rural schools and free tuition, school uniforms and lunch were provided to reduce financial burden for education. Education's share of the government budget rose from a sixth to a quarter (Baker & Phonegpaichit, 2009).

After launching a five-year economic development plan in 1961, there was a tremendous expansion and change in Thailand's higher education system. Many new regional universities were opened and special attention was paid to promote engineering, agriculture, medicine and natural sciences. In 1971, Ramkhamhaeng University in Bangkok was opened as Thailand's first Open University. Moreover, new private and public colleges were opened from the mid-1980s onwards. Within three decades began from 1970, the numbers of university students expended 20 times up

in Thailand and have produced professionals, technicians, executive and managers in commercial economy (Baker & Phonegpaichit, 2009)

Accessible, affordable and better education plays a crucial role to push many professionals to migrate from rural to city because Bangkok is the economic center to provide decent jobs for educated people from across the country with attractive salary.

Growing urban middle class and new international labor market in 1990s

Economic growth had led to the emergence of an urban middle class with higher education, proper job opportunities and reasonable income in Thailand. Thus, Thailand's speedy economic development and plentiful job opportunities have led many Thai citizens to drop out from physically demanding, often low-paid work in the country's growing fisheries industry, creating a serious shortage of labor (Baker & Phonegpaichit, 2009).

Growing urban middle class in Bangkok made the new labor market from neighboring countries in the early 1990s as a result the borders were implicitly opened to allow labor migration from neighboring countries such as Myanmar, Cambodia, Laos and even China but majority were from Myanmar because of its collapsed economy and repressed regime (Baker & Phonegpaichit, 2009). In 2014 it is estimated that there are between 3-4 million migrants working in Thailand's labor-intensive industries, including sea food processing and fisheries, construction, agriculture, domestic work and manufacturing sectors.

Effects of push and pull factor for both countries since 1990s

From the 1980s until the late 1990s, the migration between Thailand and Myanmar was mainly the result of economic reasons and political unrest. Economic

development and labor shortage in Thailand also demanded the labors from neighboring countries.

Labor demand in Thailand created low-paid jobs in the fields such as construction, plantations, food industries, factories and brothels which are also classified as "3D" jobs (dirty, dangerous and difficult).

In contrast, slow economic growth, unemployment, human rights violations and forced labor in Burmese government development projects such as railway construction encouraged both Burmese and minority ethnic groups to move to Thailand in order to avoid oppression and to seek job opportunities Myanmar migration to Thailand can be classified into two main reasons as follow

1. Employment opportunity and possible better life condition
2. Fleeing from the political unrest in Myanmar

These factors are mentioned in Everett Lee's Push and Pull (1966) theory. It describes migration into two groups; push and pull factors, which either forcefully push people into migration or attract or pull them toward a new country.

Push and Pull Factors

<i>Push Factors</i>	<i>Pull Factors</i>
Not enough jobs	Job opportunities
Few opportunities	Better living conditions
Primitive conditions	Political and/or religious freedom
Desertification	Enjoyment
Famine or drought	Education
Political fear or persecution	Better medical care
Poor medical care	Security
Loss of wealth	Family links
Natural disasters	Industry
Death threats	Better chances of marrying
Slavery	
Pollution	
Poor housing	
Discrimination	
Poor chances of marrying	

Those who came to Thailand in the 1990s came in order to have better life and/or to escape human suffering from their homeland. Most of the push factors can be applied to those people. Likewise, they were attracted by the job opportunities, secure life and better living conditions in Thailand. These push and pull factors are still active factors until now in explaining migration between Thailand and Myanmar. Migrants in Thailand can be classified into two main categories as follows:

- **Regular migrant** is defined as a person entering into the country legally.

- **Irregular migrant** is defined as a person entering into the country illegally. The irregular migrant includes the person fleeing from the political unrest in their original country.

However, Thailand is not a signatory state of the UN convention regarding the refugee status, and migrants fleeing from the unrest in their homeland are not provided a status of 'refugee.' They are called 'Displaced Persons.' They have poured into Thailand since the late 1980s. These people stay at the 'temporary shelters,' which are located near Thai-Myanmar border. However, this paper focuses entirely on people who came to Thailand for looking for jobs and does not include the migration of refugees or asylum seekers to third countries for political or ethnic conflict reasons, but the two issues are closely related.

The meaning of labor migration

Understanding the meaning of labor migration is very important for everyone who is interested in issues associated with labor migration. The term 'migrant' appears to be broader than the term 'migrant worker'. Migrant include both voluntary and forced migrants. According to World Migration Report 2000, "Voluntary migrants include people who move abroad for employment, study, family reunification, or other personal factors. On the other hand, forced migrants leave their countries to escape persecution, conflict, repression, natural and human-made disasters, ecological degradation, or other situations that endanger their lives, freedom or livelihood".

According to the International Organization for Migration, labor migration is a movement of persons from one State to another, or within their own country of residence, for the purpose of employment. Moreover, The International Labor Organization Convention on Migration for Employment 1949 (No. 97), Article 11, states, "Migrant for employment means a person who migrates from one country to another with a view to being employed otherwise than on his own account and

includes any person regularly admitted as a migrant for employment.” It excludes frontier workers, short-term entry of the members of liberal arts professions and artists, and the seamen, from its application.

The 1990 United Nations Convention on the Protection of all Migrant Workers and their families defines a more comprehensive definition of "a person, who is to be engaged, is engaged or has been engaged in remunerated activity in a state of which he or she is not a national.” The UN definition specifically includes those migrant workers who may currently be out of work, but had been working earlier.

It is said that nowadays the complexity of the migration stream has intensified with the distinctions between migrant workers, trainees, tourists, refugees and displaced persons becoming increasingly blurred.

Government Policy toward Myanmar migrant workers

In fact, the restrictive employment laws did not previously allow low-skilled migration. In fact, the restrictive employment laws did not previously allow low-skilled migration but Thailand started to recognize in the 1990s the existence of low skilled migrants from the neighboring countries including Myanmar within its borders (Huguet & Chamrathirong, 2011). That is why an amnesty programme was initiated in the 1990s. According to the Cabinet resolutions, “illegal” workers can register legally to work for one to two years as “laborers” or as “domestic servants,” but there are restricted registrations by province, work sector or quota. By 2001, all provinces and most sectors could use low-skilled migrants. However, from an immigration aspect, a worker’s status remains “illegal, “pending deportation” because of illegal entry. Since 2004, in recognition of the increasing number of children born to migrants, registration of dependents has been granted occasionally (Huguet & Chamrathirong, 2011; Huguet & Punpuing, 2005) . After the first decade of this practice, there has been some progress regarding the recognition of migrant

workers to be more flexible and legalized. According to Thailand's Migration Report of 2011 (Huguet & Chamrathirong, 2011), regular and irregular migrants can be divided into the following four groups:

Registered migrant

Irregular migrants register for temporary stay registration (Tor Ror 38/1) will receive a 13-digit ID number from the Ministry of Interior beginning with 00. These workers need to pass a health check and apply for a work permit with the Ministry of Labor. Finally, they will have three official documents:

- A temporary stay document (Tor Ror 38/1),
- A health insurance card and
- A work permit card

Unregistered migrants

These are migrants who work without work permits, although they may have the Tor Ror 38/1 document. The number of unregistered migrants in Thailand is unknown. These workers live under risky conditions. They live with fear of arrest, extortion and deportation.

Nationality Verification (NV) migrants

The NV procedure for migrants from Myanmar began in 2009. The procedure has been complex and slow because some parts have to be completed in Myanmar and consist of several complicated steps. As a step of the NV process, registered migrants need to provide personal data to home countries for verification to receive a temporary passport or a certificate of identity, a visa to remain in Thailand for two years (extendable for two years before they must return home for at least three years) and a change of work status to "legal." They have rights to social security, work accident compensation, access to motorbike licenses and no restrictions on

travelling within Thailand and between Thailand and Myanmar (but a re-entry permit must be requested at the immigration office if the worker wants to return to Thailand after their departure). Migrants passing NV should not be subject to arrest or deportation. NV migrants are obliged to report to an immigration office every 90 days. These workers are not permitted to extend their work permits beyond four years (2 years x 2 times) and must wait three years before they can reapply for employment in Thailand after four years of work are completed.

MOU Migrants

The memoranda of understanding (MOU) between the Government of Thailand and the Governments of Cambodia, Myanmar and the Lao People's Democratic Republic in 2002 and 2003 also established a framework for low-skilled migrant workers to enter and work in Thailand "legally". Migrant workers under this scheme are entitled to the same welfare, health care, rights and other benefits provided to Thai workers and migrants who pass NV. MOU migrants from the Lao People's Democratic Republic and Cambodia have been coming to Thailand since 2005 but for MOU migrants from Myanmar, it has taken seven years for the agreement to be operational and they have only started to come to Thailand recently in very small numbers. Similar to NV migrants, MOU migrants cannot extend their work permits beyond four years (2 years x 2 times) and must wait three years before they can apply for a new work permit after four years of work are completed. However, there are many Myanmar migrant workers who are still with illegal status because some of procedures which must be followed in order to receive legal status are not accessible to them. Moreover, legal channels are expensive and time consuming. Some people have lost their rights to have protection because of their ignorance. As a result, it is still difficult to know the actual numbers of Myanmar workers in Thailand, and their existence remains quite invisible

Chapter III

Self-Employment in Street Food Sector and Thai Roti Carts in Bangkok

Brief Historical Development of Street Food in Bangkok

Bangkok has flourished as a melting pot of different societies and one of the most popular cities in the world among tourists. Street food culture also attracts many people to visit. The city is filled with food carts at almost every corner of the alleys (sois) and the public pavements are filled with fold-up tables and chairs.

The term "street foods" is described by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) as "ready-to-eat foods and beverages prepared and/or sold by vendors and hawkers especially in street and other similar public places"⁸

Another explanation provided by Peter Fellows and Martin Hilmi (2011) is that "street foods are little- processed to highly processed foods that are sold on the streets and other public places, consumed on the spot and/or ready to take home or delivered to the work place, including catering activities that can serve celebrations such as weddings".

Narumol Nirathron (2006) explains that street food vending either mobile or fixed is an economic activity which normally utilizes a small space, such as a pavement or an alley, as an operating area.

A mobile vendor is defined, according to the 1976 Bangkok Metropolitan Administration Act (BMA), as a hawker who sells food or ice on land or in the canal and the fixed or static vending unit is defined as a stall in a public space or building,

⁸This definition of street foods was agreed upon by the FAO Regional Workshop on Street Foods in Asia, held in Jogjakarta, Indonesia in 1986 (Winarno, 1986)

mat, ground, boat or boathouse for selling food, ice, or other items. BMA's definition implies that food is a major commodity of street vendors.

Nevertheless, back in olden days, Bangkok was known as the "Venice of the East" because of the floating markets where the locals enjoyed working in the rivers (Nirathron, 2005). However, food vending was available both in the canal and on land in the early period but after the construction of roads in the reign of King Rama IV (1851-1868) street food has become more popular (Nirathron, 2006). It is said that Thai vendors sold Thai food and desserts in the Bang Luang canal while Chinese people sold Chinese food in central Bangkok so it looked like two different towns (G. Yasmeen & Nirathron, 2014).

Although many people say that vending, especially food, in public places is the tradition of Southeast Asia countries, some people argue that, in the region, especially in Thailand, its turning point started along with the arrival of Chinese migrants particularly in 19th century (Esterik, 1992; Nirathron, 2006). Interestingly, Thai women dominated in street vending because Thai men were conscripted in the *sakdina*⁹ system (Chivakul, 1982; Skinner, 1957). Even though the system was abolished in 1905 most Thai men still participated in rice farming which made more money than other occupations and some served in the court that created better opportunities for social mobility (Ouyyanond, 1996) so Thai women played a prominent role in street food selling history.

Contrarily, most Chinese vendors were men, as were most Chinese migrants in general (Skinner, 1957). Street vending was a stepping stone for them to alter into

⁹The *sakdina* system, which started in the thirteenth century, granted land ownership to the princes, noblemen, and soldiers. Common people were able to farm the land but male adults had to spend six to eight months per year working or fighting in battles under the command of noblemen or soldiers who were granted ownership of the land. (<http://thaiarc.tu.ac.th/thai/peansiri.htm>)

the capitalist system. In the beginning, they occupied the level of wage based laborer positions as a typical career route and after having enough savings they entered into the street food business, which helped them to move forward into larger scale businesses (Skinner, 1957). In Thai society, the success stories of wealthy Chinese immigrants who transformed from street food vendors are the inspiration of many writers (Sevikul, 1992; Virachon, 2001).

Nirathorn (2006) asserts that Thai people were latecomers in food vending and Chinese immigrants were the first innovators in land-based retailing (Nirathorn, 2005). There are three factors that pushed Thai people to participate in street vending businesses:

- (1) Economic mobility of Chinese vendors, partly the result of the Chinese people's eagerness to improve their economic and social status (Skinner, 1957);
- (2) Thai government's encouragement to Thai people to take part in trade and industry (Skinner, 1957);
- (3) Difficulties experienced by Thai farmers due to the falling price of rice in the world market and the economic depression after World War Two

These three things forced Thai people to participate more in street vending, including food. The members of street food shops represent the significant role of street food business in Thailand and particularly in Bangkok.

Urbanization and Self-Employment as Street Food Vendors

Street vending is deeply rooted in local culture and is connected with the development of urbanization (G. Yasmeen & Nirathorn, 2014). Eating street food in Bangkok is related with culture as well as shows variety of food, plenty of raw ingredients support creativity in food production, which can be consumed throughout the day, in the ritual and religious ceremonies (Nirathorn, 2006).

In the 1980s in Bangkok, development of service sectors, industries, trade liberalizations and globalization created work opportunities as well as employment fluctuation because of competition at the global level. As a result, self-employment became an option for many migrants and the number of street vendors increased (Bhowmik, 2005; Nirathron, 2006; Redclift & Mingione, 1985).

According to Ever and Korff (2000), migrants to Bangkok who have difficulty finding a job often engage in vending. Economic growth persuaded labor migration from rural to city of Bangkok but many married women with low education level were difficult to have a proper job in informal sectors and become self-employed with low investment in street food business (Koseyayothin, 1983)

Street food sellers are self-employed. Self-employment is different with wage employment and characterized by one's ownership of the means of production. Self-employed persons are those who run their own businesses either alone or in association with other owners. They make profit from their small businesses and do not regularly employ wage workers (Scott, 1979).

According to Bromley and Gerry's 1979 (Bromley & Gerry, 1979) classification of categories of self-employment in third world cities, Bangkok can be conceived of in three categories:

- **Disguised wage work.** This is a type of self-employment where the vendor works as a commissioned seller selling products of one firm or a few related firms. In many cases, vendors are supplied with equipment, credit, and raw materials.
- **Dependent work.** The vendor is dependent on one or more larger enterprises for credit, the rental of premises or equipment, a monopolistic or oligopolistic supply of materials or merchandise.

- True self-employment. The vendor works autonomously with considerable choice of suppliers and outlets. This classification draws out the diversity in street food vending and linkages between small vending activities and larger establishments.

Before the 1970s, most street food vendors were categorized as poorly educated with low income and their selling products were for urban poor (Terence Gary McGee & Yeung, 1977) but street food has become more popular and eating decisions are based on taste, convenience, location, and authenticity (Bhowmik, 2005; Esterik, 1992). In Bangkok, the growth of urban community from formal sector workers to student who are living at condominium and expensive dormitories have relied on street food so it is not only for urban poor anymore.

Moreover, self-employment in the street food sector includes the informal sector. In Thailand, the informal capitalist sector plays a significant role in job creation that make up a strong share of the national economy and it tied up 70 % of employments in 1991 (Bhowmik, 2005; Chandoevrit, 2004),

Shart K. Bhowmik (2005)says that the "lack of gainful employment with poverty in rural areas has pushed people out of their villages in search of a better existence in the cities. These migrants do not possess the skills or the education to enable them to find better paid, secure employment in the formal sector and they have to settle for work in the informal sector".

According to The World Bank, the concept of the informal sector¹⁰ is defined informality as a “way of doing things characterized by

- (a) Ease of entry;
- (b) Reliance on indigenous resources;

¹⁰ Introduced into international usage in 1972 by the International Labor Organization (ILO) in its Kenya Mission Report

- (c) Family ownership;
- (d) Small scale operations;
- (e) Labor intensive and adaptive technology;
- (f) Skills acquired outside of the formal sector;
- (g) Unregulated and competitive markets.”

Nevertheless, street food is very necessary for urban people because it is a source of food, labor and income generation. This shows that the function of street food is not only for consumption but also for job opportunities and earnings. It is undeniable that for local people street food is an essential part of their daily routine. Yet, the street food of Bangkok is particularly famous for its low cost, good nutritional value and taste, which is unique.

Bangkok's Street Food

McGee and Yeung (1977) classified food into unprocessed, semi-processed, and prepared food based on the major types and range of street food available in six Southeast Asian countries. Sirisamphand and Szanton (1986) categorizes food vending as rice with viand, light meals, snacks, desserts, drinks, bakery products, and *Isan* or northeastern food in Thailand. On the other hand, food can be classified according to cooking methods such as grilling, roasting, steaming and deep frying. Moreover, food is sometimes defined by the kind of meal in which they are usually taken: breakfast, lunch, supper, and snacks (Nirathron, 2006). In addition, food is also associated with religious beliefs and health (Norapallop, 1993).

Regardless of different definitions and views by scholars we can conclude that all kinds and varieties of food prepared by various methods can be found on the streets of Bangkok.

Culture and religious influences on food

Peter Fellows and Martin Hilmi (2011) explain that "food and snacks that are consumed in a particular area are associated with culture and climate. Cultural, ethnic and religious differences influence the diversity and nature of food and snacks which are prepared and eaten based on local understanding and tradition. Each area has own preference so street food ingredients are vary". It is true that in Thailand, one of the street foods called roti is famous for its authentic and unique combination of local cultural and religious influences.

Unique style of Thai "Roti"

Roti is unavoidably real proof of the cultural effects of migration in Southeast Asia as the food is well known and popular not only in Thailand, but also in Myanmar, Singapore, Malaysia, and Indonesia with different names such as *parata*, *roti parata*, *roti canai* and different styles found in each region.

Karenna Cochrane (2014) explains that roti is originally from India and has roots in a variety of countries throughout the world and it is a form of bread that is often used as a side dish but its origin was as a meal or large snack, served on its own. Snack is, in the words of Webster's definition provided in the year 1757, 'a light meal eaten between regular meals' so it is consumed between main meals (Fellows & Hilmi, 2011)

Jared Ingram says that *roti parata*, as it is called in Singapore, has a unique style with its own version depend on the individual country that influenced its taste and food history.

Actually, in *roti*, Indian Muslim culture is embedded and integrates with local culture so it has its own features depending on each country. It is obvious that religion is the most powerful factor that influences eating habits. Islam stresses cleanliness, both spiritually and in the context of food and drink. Halal in Islam means legal or permitted.

Food and drink products need to be approved for consumption according to the Islamic laws as indicated in the Quran (Holy Book). Halal foods are foods that are allowed under Islamic dietary guidelines. It is not doubtful that roti is compliant with Halal status and so it can be said to be one of the Muslim foods.

There are different types of roti in Thailand:

- *Roti Mataba*, which is filled up with chicken or beef mince, herb and egg,
- *Roti Saimai* (cotton candy) which is a kind of sweet,
- *Plain Roti* that can be eaten with curry or sugar or condensed milk or both,
- *Roti mixed* with banana or egg topped with sweetened condensed milk, sugar even chocolate and jelly, jam.

Roti is rooted in India but it is integrated by local style and preference. According to David Luekens (2014) "Abdul Kareem, Indian Muslim, from Southern India is one the innovators who blended Indian, Thai and Malay tastes. Within World War II he moved to Bangkok where he could practice his region and culinary art freely. In 1943, he opened a restaurant called "Roti Mataba". He stuffed with Indian and Thai curries to make Mataba and provides curries which mixed Thai and Indian style to have with roti or rice. Moreover, his banana roti with sweet condensed milk is the good fusion food of differences between local taste and its originality of Indian tradition". It is because Thai people like sweet and bananas are growing all over the Thailand (Cheepchaiisara, 2003) so it has unique Thai style. All kinds of roti are adapted with local style but among them roti mixed totally represents the authentic Thai style and famous as a street food in everywhere of Thailand.

Muslim community in Bangkok

Although in Thailand the majority is Buddhist, according to the information from official website of Royal Thai Embassy("Muslim in Thailand ", 2014), Muslims are the largest religious minority and are concentrated mainly in the southernmost provinces of Yala, Pattani and Narathiwat, where muslim recipe such as massaman and roti are common(Cheepchaiisara, 2003).

However, the Thai Ministry of Foreign Affairs' research indicates that only 18% of Thai Muslims live in those provinces. The rest are scattered throughout the country, with the largest population in Bangkok and throughout the larger Southern region.

(Raksaman, 2008) says that Bangkok was established in 1782 as a capital city of Siam with a diversity of people such as Siamese, Chinese, Mon, Khom, and Khaek, which included Muslim populations. Moreover, according to the Muslims of Bangkok, Thailand, ("Muslims of Bangkok, Thailand, People Profile," 2014) "Bangkok is home to Muslims from other parts of the world, such as Cambodian Cham Muslims, Iranians, Arabs, Pakistanis, Afghanis, Indians and Burmese". In fact, Muslims in Bangkok originally came from different countries in different periods with different reasons.

Availability of Thai roti in Bangkok

Food is one of the most essential components for people's daily life and Muslim people are normally concerned about Halal status according to their religious beliefs. So, Halal food is typically available around Muslim communities including Roti as a Halal food.

Muslims regard mosques as the secular and religious center of society, as mentioned in the Quran, and there are about 2000 mosques across the country and 100 mosques situated in Bangkok alone (official website of Royal Thai Embassy). There are different Muslim communities near the mosques because mosques are a place for Ibadat 'God worship' and a community center for people to practice their daily

life so enjoying food is also a part of human daily routine. It is a common thing to have Halal foods around the mosques, either at restaurant or on street shops in Bangkok so roti is one of them.

However, Thai roti exists with its own unique style and reflects local culture. It is a genuine local food. It is not only for Muslim people but also for all the people. That is why it can be accessible across the country.



Chapter IV

Inside stories of Myanmar roti sellers from Charoan Krung Road and people perspectives

In Thailand, roti can be found everywhere from expensive restaurants to street side stalls made by Thai or other nationalities. Generally, Myanmar migrant people who work as roti sellers in Thailand are involved primarily in running street food businesses in the informal sector. In fact, street roti carts can be found across all of Bangkok, particularly near Muslim communities as well as in busy areas. Roti is a Halal food but is not only for Muslim people. It can be consumed by all people regardless of their faith or dietary needs, including vegetarians.

According to the limited time and capacity available to conduct research, it was not feasible to focus on the whole of Bangkok as my research area. That is why I chose only Charoan Krung Road as my research location. In fact, Charoan Krung Road was the first road in Bangkok to be constructed with Western techniques and runs nearly parallel to the Chao Phraya River. Chinatown, along with Yaowarat road, is also considered part of the Charoan Krung Road area. It is well known because it is the oldest road in the area, and many important and prominent buildings are situated along it. There are various reasons to choose this road for conducting research on Myanmar Muslim roti sellers.

First of all, the presence of Asiatique: the Riverfront provides a popular nearby tourist attraction site for shopping, dining, sightseeing and boat rides. This embellishes the road with many foreign and local visitors. Moreover, Charoan Krung is more alive with Bang Rak market and Robinson Shopping mall. Many Myanmar migrant workers are also taking part in this busy area as waiters, waitresses, shop assistants, helpers at restaurants, and shop helpers. Furthermore, some Myanmar people are shop owners

because they have intermarried with Thai people and have been living in Bangkok for many years. Even at my apartment which is situated on Charoan Krung Road (Soi 63), the security guard is also from Myanmar. My landlord told me he appointed him based on his dutiful attitude and legal status. He has been working at this apartment for about 4 years.

Another reason for basing my research on Charoan Krung Road is that there are many historical mosques located throughout this road. Among them are Haroon (Soi 25), Ban Oou (Soi 46), Bayan (Soi 75), Bang U-Tis (Soi 99), and Al-Atiq (Soi103). These are well known and many Muslim people are living near these mosques. As mentioned above, Muslim people set up their communities around mosques.



Muslim students from Sassanasuksa Bang U-Tis School at Bang U-Tis mosque

Kong Rithdee's article published in 2012 shares insights about Haroon mosque and the surrounding local community. "Haroon mosque shows the great diversity and

cosmopolitan nature of Bangkok life (Rithdee, 2012). Every Friday prayer, the most important for Muslims, the Imam (religious leader) gives a sermon in Thai and English that shows a huge number of non-Thai worshippers come to it. Moreover, in the Holy month (Ramadan), the community welcomes and sponsors food for breaking fast to international guests such as travelling Pakistani, Indian merchants, Afghans, and even Francophone Africans with donations from individuals, Thai and foreign, as well as from embassies. It is famed for its mix of Thai and Indian cuisines and mutton curry is one of the best in the country which is cooked by a Rohingya chef. Besides, one of the community members named Nattawud Chusi products his own brand of microwaveable roti and receives small tour groups of foreigners who come to visit his roti studio." This overview reflects the function of community, unity of Muslim people and mixture of diverse ethnic groups. I also attend the Friday prayer Rithdee mentions and break fasting in Ramadan at Haroon mosque, so I feel warm to witness of the hospitality of this society. Interestingly, Bangkok Muslim migrants are from different parts of the world so from community to community there are some differences. However, being Muslim they have many things in common under the same principles of religion.

Another reason to focus only on this road is that there are a range of Halal foods available. Around Haroon mosque there are many Halal street foods and restaurants with different styles such as Indian, Pakistani, Turkish and Afghani. Thus, this environment is more likely to encourage an international atmosphere. One famous restaurant simply named "Muslim Restaurant" on the Charoan Road Soi (42) has been there for over 70 years and was founded by the Hajee Maidin Pakyawong from Southern India¹¹. He is also a Bang Rak market goat butcher so his mutton biryani is popular. His mataba is also one of the best menu items (Punyaratabandhu, 2012).

¹¹ Interviewed with Hajee Maidin Pakyawong's grandson (April 2015)

Near Bang U-Tis and Al-Atiq, there are also varieties of Halal street food and restaurants, though most restaurants provide Thai style foods. For example, Bukaree Thai Restaurant Soi (105) and Mesan Mee Khaew Soi (107) are famous and serve a more local style.

Nevertheless, being a Muslim and resident from Soi 63, I would say Bang Rak [*near Haroon (Soi 25), Ban Oou (Soi 4)*], and Asiatique [*near Bang U-Tis (Soi 99), Al-Atiq(103)*] fsu are the best places to enjoy Halal food whether local or international at restaurants or street side stalls.



Halal street foods near Bang U-Tis (Soi 99)



Halal noodle soup with duck (Soi 103)

The main reason to conduct the research on this road is that there are a number of roti carts stationed along the road. After an initial data assessment, I found that there are a total of ten street roti sellers. Interestingly, only one roti street stall provide teas along with different kind roti such as mataba, plain roti, roti mixed with egg, roti sausage, roti pizza , roti crepe and roti with curry that are created by the shop owner who has lived on Soi 103 (Suan luang community) for 12 years from southern part of Thailand. The rest of the roti sellers mix roti only with egg, banana and some sweet stuff.



Thai Roti shop from Soi 103

Although there are altogether ten people selling roti, I was able to interview only seven people who met my research criteria. This was because two of the roti sellers are Thai and one was Myanmar, but not eligible for my criteria because he is not directly involved in making and selling roti. His Thai wife runs the business and she learnt to make roti from his Myanmar friend. This is why he was excluded from my sample lists.



Thai roti seller with Myanmar Husband

All of the roti sellers are Muslims whether Thai or Myanmar migrants. In fact, in Myanmar, Islam is a minority religion which is practiced by 4% of the total population based on Myanmar official statistics (Central Intelligence Agency 2008). However, many scholars estimate that it would be about 10 % to 14% of total population. It is believed that the first Muslims arrived to Myanmar in the 9th century, settling on the Ayeyarwady delta, Tanintharyi coast and Rakhine region before the emergence of the first Myanmar Empire (Tin & Luce, 1960; Yegar 1972),(Tin & Luce, 1960). Ancestors of Myanmar Muslim are from different countries. They are Arabs, Persians, Turks, Moors, Indian-Muslims, sheikhs, Pakistanis, Pathans (Pashtuns), Bengalis, Chinese Muslims and Malay who intermarried with local women and settled in Myanmar (Yegar 1972).

That is why these Myanmar Muslim migrants' ethnic origins as well as hometowns are different. Five out of seven migrant roti sellers are from Rakhine state. Only one of them said he is Kaman Muslim which is one of the recognized Myanmar national ethnic races; the rest are Rohingya. As explained previously, Rohingya are one of the most persecuted minorities in the world according to the United Nations and are not recognized by the Myanmar government as an ethnic group. Two of my interviewees are brothers from Mawlamyine, Mon State.

I collected the data by observing and interviewing people since I relied on both the ethnographic approach as well as secondary sources. In ethnographic approach to an interview, a subject is approached in informal conversation more than like a traditional interviewee, and observation is a main tool of gaining information (Lapan & Quartaroli, 2009). I applied both of these methods in my research. I visited the research areas several times and talked not only with targeted people but also with other different people as much as possible. Moreover, as a Muslim, a resident of Charoan Krung Road and a Myanmar citizen, I became a partly participatory observer as well as a non-participant observer.

Although I set up a questionnaire in order to answer my research questions, in practice I found that informal conversation was essential for my research and that trust building was the basic requirement for gaining information. Being marginalized people they have some fear and not easily trust others to confide their experiences, even though they are talkative and friendly on the surface. It takes time to build trust. Once they trusted me they shared their experiences openly. They liked telling their life stories rather than participating in a formal interview style. That is why I decided it was better not to apply my interview form directly. However, it helped remind me to focus on the key information I intended to gather for my research. We talked on the road at their selling place, which has advantages and disadvantages. It was a good chance to observe their customers' response. On the other hand,

sometimes they got distracted while telling stories because of needing to serve their customers. While they were busy with customers I had to be patient and waited until they were free to talk more. After listening to their stories I analyzed each individual story and combined the key information, which supported me to reach my objectives.

Life story of Myanmar roti sellers from Charron krung Road

Overall information of the Key informants' interview

Name	Kyaw	Bali	Zaw	Hala	Win	Min	Myat
Category							
Age	40	40	70	40	40	21	18
Ethnicity	Rohingya	Rohingya	Rohingya	Rohingya	Kamar	Bangali	Bangali
Religion	Muslim	Muslim	Muslim	Muslim	Muslim	Muslim	Muslim
Gender	Male	Male	Male	Female	Male	Male	Male
Original Country	Myanmar (Rahine)	Myanmar (Rakhine)	Myanmar (Rakhine)	Myanmar (Rakhine)	Myanmar (Rakhine)	Myanmar (Mon)	Myanmar (Mon)
Education	Grade 6	-	Grade 2	Grade 5	Grade 8	Grade 7	Grade 6
Marital Status	Divorced	Married	Married	Divorced	Divorced	Single	Single
Immigration Status	Legal	Legal	Legal	Legal	Legal	Under process to have full documents	Under Process to have full documents
Living with	Son	Wife	Alone	Alone	Alone	Brother and Aunty	Brother and Aunty
Monthly income	About 20000	About 20000	About 10000	Above 15000	About 10000	About 20000	About 20000
Remittance	Sometimes	Sometimes	No	Sometimes	No	Every Month	Every Month
Cook at home	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
How many years in Thailand	6	8	40	15	14	5	4
Reason to migrant	Family reunion and make money	Make money	Make money	To marry and get better life	Make money	Make Money	Make money and stay with brother

***The names mentioned are not their real names

I interviewed seven Myanmar roti sellers from Chareon krung Road. This above table shows their general information. All of them are Muslim from Myanmar and were born in Myanmar although their ethnicities are different. The main reason of coming to Thailand is to get better life especially to make money and another important reason is to stay with family members. Their education is not higher than secondary level and one of them even didn't go to school. For the marital status, 3 out of 7 are divorced, 2 of them are married, and the rest are single. Most of them came to Thailand without any document but later they tried to be legalized as migrant worker even though self-employed is not legal for migrant workers. Majority started doing own roti business at the age of 30 but some are older and younger than 30 when they started. Income is also attractive because they earn between 10000B to 20000B and above which is based on working hours. As you can see from the table, 2 out of 7 who are single send the remittance regularly. Young single men seem to be more responsible for their parents and siblings who left in their home country rather than married and divorced people because they send back their remittance every month. Some of them stay alone but majority are with their family members in Bangkok.

Kyaw stays with his son who is attending grade two at Thai government school. He arrived to Yangon from Rakhine to look for a job just before the 1988 crisis in Myanmar. He stayed at his brother's house in Tharkayta, which is a slum area in Yangon. He worked as a helper at the small glossary store. Later, he decided to go to Thailand where he believed he would have a better job. He went to Thailand from Ran Naung. Then, he worked at a roti shop as a worker in Phuket. He did not earn much but life was better than in Myanmar. He saw many tourists and the environment was also very beautiful compared to where he came from. He said life was not very smooth being a laborer, but he was happy and kept contact with his brother from Yangon. He said he did not have any document but there was a broker

who arranged everything for him to come to Thailand. However, he did not have a chance to go to Bangkok since he lacked travel documents.

One day while he was working in Phuket his brother called him to come back to Myanmar and asked him to get married with his friend's daughter, so he went back to Myanmar after a year in Thailand. He had saved up some money to get married. He settled down in Yangon and had two children. Life was up and down in Myanmar. Later, his wife left him with two children and went to Thailand where one of her sisters is married with a roti seller from Rakhine. This was his reason to go to Thailand a second time, but this time he went to Mae Sot. He arrived to Thailand around 2009 without any document like before but after entering Bangkok he started his life as a roti seller because this time he had a good network with better investment. He says he wants to stay in Bangkok legally but he doesn't know how to run the process because of the language barrier and his lack of the required documents. Thus he had to rely on a broker in order to get documentation to stay in Thailand legally.

Moreover, he explained that, as far as he knows, he is not allowed to run a business by law as a street vendor. In order to handle this issue he has to deal with the municipal officer, the immigration officer and police officer. He said he has no confidence to talk with them directly but money can solve the problem because he knows a man who is also a roti seller and collects the money every month from the vendors to give these officers.

Regarding the reason why he entered into this business, he explained that he does not want to work at the factories because of the very low salary and poor working conditions. Another reason is that his food needs and customs are different from other Myanmar people since he is a Muslim. According to his religion he has some eating restrictions to follow and needs to be able to practice his religious matters. Most of the workers from the factory are provided with accommodation in a place

where he doesn't want to live. He said he is not rich but he is not poor enough to work at the factory.

He lives near Ban Oou mosque which is located on Charoen krung Soi 48 which is very close to his selling area, his son's school, and a market where he can get Halal meat and products to cook. His main customers are children because he sells near the school but after the school time, he moves his cart around in this area.

He pays 3000 baht per month for the room rental. Mostly he cooks in his room for two reasons. One is to prepare the food in the same style that he enjoyed in his native town. The other is that, being a Muslim, he follows the Islamic consumption rules so it is more convenient when he cooks by himself. However, sometimes he eats out because there is a Muslim community around his area.

With regard to religious practice, he prays at home mostly but on Friday he attends mosque. Moreover, he goes to mosques and visits to other friends from his home town who also stays in Bangkok to celebrate the religious ceremonies such as Eid festival and holy days.

He usually opens his shop seven days a week, but being self-employed he can close his shop depending on his requirements. Health problems are the main reason to close his shop but he said he is healthy and does not often get sick. He appreciates the Thai 30 Baht health care scheme, so if he has any problem with his health he can go to the hospital with his labor card. Besides, social life is also important for him, as a migrant living away from his home country, so sometimes he closes his shop to meet with friends and participate in social events likes weddings and gathering parties.

Being an economic migrant his income is also a crucial reason why he has chosen this business. He earns than between 700 to 1000 Baht daily - more or less 20,000 Baht per month, but after deducting living cost for him and his son, he can save some extra money every month. He does not need to support his daughter who

lives at his relative's house in Myanmar so he does not send back his remittance every month. However, sometimes he gives some amount of money to his mother and siblings from Rakhine via a broker channel. He said his aim is to support his son to be an educated person and have a better future. Although he misses his hometown where his mom and some of his siblings are still living, because of the clash between Buddhists and Muslims it is very difficult to go back to Rakhine State. So in reality it is nearly impossible to visit his native place.

Now that he has been in Bangkok for four years, he can earn a proper income by selling roti. At the moment he will keep doing that, but after saving a certain amount of money he wants to run a trading business by cooperating with his friends who have more experience in that industry. He can speak Thai, which accelerates his confidence, and he believes that in the future he will get a more decent job rather than roti selling, which has kept going back to Myanmar impossible recently. Moreover, he separated with his wife two years ago but he is not legally divorced yet. But he wants to start his life again in Bangkok by marrying a woman from Myanmar.

Bila sells roti near the mosque on Soi 75, opposite of the International School. He is quite short and a bit dark skinned. He has a very friendly manner and is about 40 years old. He has been working in this place for more than eight years, so people around this area are friendly with him.

He used to be a fisherman in his home village in Myanmar. He has ten siblings. He said his family had a hard time economically and did not have enough income, but luckily one of his relatives from America asked a broker to contact him and send him to Malaysia. His relative paid all of his costs to go to Malaysia. He went to Malaysia by boat via Ranaung. He worked at the construction site and he was not happy so he requested his relative from US to go to Thailand. He worked at the roti shop in Bankaphi for 3 months. Within 3 months he didn't have any salary except

accommodation and food but after working for 3 months, he had a roti cart and a place to sell roti.

Unfortunately, he was arrested by police and deported to Mae Sot where he met with another relative and came back to Yangon. In Yangon he stayed at his uncle's house. Because of the political situation, he was not able to go back to his hometown. He worked two years in Yangon but did not have proper income so he was not happy living there. At the time, his niece who was working in Malaysia contacted him and asked him to come to Malaysia. He decided to go there a second time. He did not want to work at a construction site and did not find a better job so he went to Bangkok for a while, then went back to Yangon directly from Mae Sot. He worked in Myanmar again and tried to contact his relative in the US. But his relative did not help him anymore.

However, he was lucky because he met a man who offered him work at his roti shop in Thailand. He worked for him and then was able to open a new shop as agreed upon with his boss.

His main motivation to come to Bangkok was to make money, but a good social network also supported him to have an easier life working abroad. He expressed great appreciation for all of his relatives and the people who brought him to Bangkok, because without their support he could not be who he is today. After he settled down in Bangkok he contacted a broker from Mae Sot to look for a bride for him. The broker introduced him with his future father-in-law who is from Mawlamyine, and he talked with him directly. His father-in-law agreed to set him up with his daughter, so his future wife came to Bangkok through the broker network. He had to pay all the costs for her transportation and broker fee. He said he was so excited because he just saw his bride's picture only and never saw her in person. He never even talked with her on the phone before her arrival. They got married according to Islamic law at the house of his friend who is also a roti seller from

Rakhine State. They do not have children yet, so his wife also works as a part-time domestic worker at a Pakistani household which also practices the same Muslim faith and eating restrictions. Their income is more than enough for them but they regularly send remittances to their family members who remain in Myanmar.

Bila said they have strong Muslim community from Rakhine in Thailand and since they are living together in a foreign country, they have connections with each other for many reasons. They live near the mosque so it's very accessible to attend prayer five times a day, and he feels like he is one of the community members in this area. His language and interpersonal skills help him to improve his social life within his own Rakhine Muslim community as well as in general Thai society.

Bila said that he and his community members can practice their religious customs because there is not much difference between Myanmar and Thai Islam. But the lifestyle in Bangkok is much better than their previous situation. It is not difficult for them to eat the traditional foods of their homeland because his wife cooks the local culinary style at their home. He loves his work because he has his own business, and this feels totally different from working under the supervision of other people as he experienced when he was young.



Friendly roti seller and smiling customer

Zaw has been in Thailand about 40 years and he has been arrested 23 times and deported to Myanmar several times. But each time he strived to come back to Thailand. Being a Rohingya, he faced many hardships and difficult situations in his hometown in Rakhine State, so he moved to Yangon where he opened a betel nut shop. After he lost his shop under the government's nationalization program he became a trader at the Thai-Myanmar border. At that time his business was quite good and he had saved money, but again he lost his money because of the cancelation of bank notes in Myanmar. He went back and forth from Myanmar to Thailand for the first twenty years but in the latter twenty years he has not gone back to Myanmar anymore because his business was not doing well enough for him to afford the trip.

However, he has been many countries, even to Mecca, so he is a Haji. Before he became a roti seller in Bangkok he worked at roti shop as a laborer near the border areas and other provinces of Thailand. After overcoming many difficulties he became a roti seller. He has been a roti seller on this road for ten years and resides in the Muslim community near Al-Atiq mosque.

Zaw is older but still working, and he says it is not only for money but because working makes him healthy. His wife could not come to Thailand and his children are married so he does not need to support them, and he passes his time by doing religious things. He said Rohingya people are still facing difficult situations and they run away from this suffering in many ways. They help each other as much as possible, so sometimes his relatives come and stay with him before going to other countries or while looking for a proper job. Some come to Bangkok as refugees and some do not have any documents whatsoever. He has his own room in outskirts area in Bangkok which is not a Muslim community, so he rents his room to others. He lost one leg because of diabetes but he said that people from his community were very helpful and warm to him while he was in the hospital. He was not born in Bangkok,

but he says he will die here. One interesting thing about Zaw is his appetite. He cannot replace his taste for traditional Muslim food from his hometown with the Thai style, so to this day he cooks his native food at his room.



Myanmar roti seller with Myanmar Muslim customer

Hla is about 40 years old and an active woman. She has been in Bangkok since 1999. Her parents are originally from Rakhine State but her family moved to Yangon, Takata Township when she was about four or five years old, so she was mainly brought up in Yangon. She attended school only until Grade 5 and could not continue her studies because of her family's financial situation. When she was about 16 she got married and has one daughter. Unfortunately she and her husband divorced within a short period and she faced social and financial problems as a young divorced woman with a baby girl.

Being a single mother she decided to take a risk and to go to Mae Sot where there were more opportunities to have a job. She first worked as a maid. She said her employer was a broker who sent people to Thailand through illegal channels, so after saving up for the transportation costs she went to Bangkok but was unlucky and was arrested and deported back to the Myanmar side of the border. While she was

back working at her former employer's house, her employer introduced her to a man who is a roti seller from her native Rakhine region and who was looking for a bride. They talked on the phone and had never seen each other. Her employer persuaded her to accept this man's proposal and go to Bangkok. In the end she decided to go to Bangkok second time with the broker who is her employer. Her bridegroom paid the broker fee for his matchmaking and transportation charges.

She said she was lucky because her husband turned out to be a good man, and she became a full-time housewife with a son who was born in Bangkok. After four years she was able to bring her daughter to Bangkok from Yangon via illegal channels. She felt more stable in her new environment with her family. Moreover, she learned to speak Thai language a little after living there for several years. Since she helped her husband she knows how to prepare dough to make roti, which was one of her motivations to become a roti seller. One day she asked her husband to allow her to open her own roti shop to help the family make more money. Thus she became a roti seller and it made her happy because of her increased income, but it was not for long. She was attacked with hot oil, the main ingredient for frying roti, by another roti seller who sells near her shop. This roti seller did not want her to sell near his shop and believed that she was in his own space. Her back was burnt but she was not able to report the attack to the police because, since both she and her attacker were from Myanmar and selling roti illegally, reporting the crime would create unwanted consequences.

Later Hla's husband found a new place for her to sell roti. Like other sellers, she has to pay 1500 Baht per month for the local authorities not to arrest her and to keep the shop open and running smoothly without disturbance. She says that every roti seller has their own secret recipe, and even though all the roti looks the same, the taste and style are slightly different depending on each seller's creativity. Cleanliness is also very important to be competitive in the roti market. Although she does not

wear hijab for religious reasons, she always covers with her hair with a headscarf in order to avoid her hair falling into the food while she is making roti.

Unfortunately, five years ago Hla divorced again because of social problems. Her daughter married three years ago and her son is boarding at a religious school in another province. So she stays alone, but does not feel lonely because she opens her shop six days a week. However, it not compulsory like paid work she can close when wants to. Besides, all of her family members and many relatives are now working in Bangkok, including her sister. Sometimes they visit each other.

She went back to Myanmar a few times to meet with her parents, but personally she prefers to stay in Bangkok. She said she is not rich but she feels more secure here and that her living status is higher and with proper income than it would be in Myanmar. She said her lifestyle changed a lot over the last 20 years. She said she is a Rohingya but she does not know about politics. Her philosophy is that we all are human beings. She was born in Myanmar and her parents have Myanmar identity cards, so she believes herself to be a Myanmar citizen and her original country is Myanmar.



Woman Roti seller

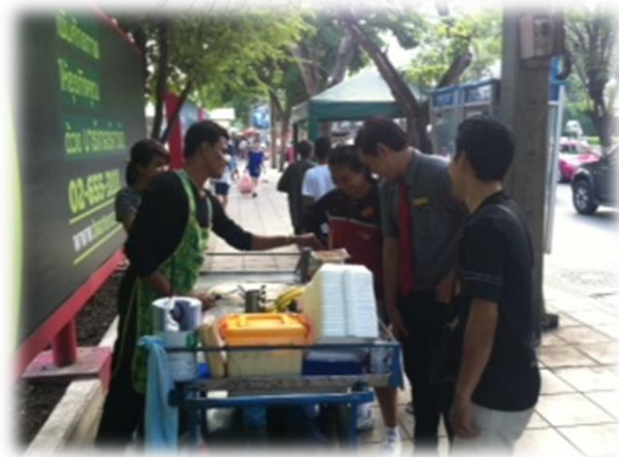
Win used to be a policeman in Myanmar and he is a Kaman Muslim which is a recognized nationality from Rakhine State. He wanted to do his own business so he resigned from his job but unfortunately he was cheated of all his money. This affected his family life and his wife divorced him. They have one daughter. He came to Thailand with full documentation by flight, but he overstayed his visa and worked at his friend's roti shop in another province away from Bangkok. Later he was provided all he needed to become a roti seller. After four years he moved to Bangkok because a friend of his who used to sell roti gave him all the materials for free when he switched to another career. His wife and daughter are now in Australia so he is alone in Bangkok and does not need to support them. He has been in Bangkok about ten years, so his life is quite stable. He said he makes only enough money to live. Moreover, it is an own business so he has a lot freedom and not many restrictions on his working schedule. But he respects his customers and keeps his cart clean all the time.

Min stays with his little brother, **Myat** who is a roti seller like him, and his aunt who sells street food near the post office on Charoen Krung Road. He is from a village in Mon State. He arrived to Bangkok in 2010 with the support of two relatives, a couple from his hometown and has been working in Thailand more than 20 years. This couple needed a helper for their roti selling business so they made an agreement to pay 500,000 kyat (about 16,000 B) to his parents over the course of one year, and took him to Bangkok to work at their shop.

His parents are over 60 and his father is a painter who cannot earn a regular salary, and his mother sells fish in the market, which earns her only a small amount of money. They have six siblings and he is the third one. But his elder brother is not mentally well developed and his second sibling is a sister, so he has always felt like the eldest one. He did not want to burden to their parents so he dropped out of school in Grade 7 and tried to find a way to support his parents. That is why when

his relatives offered him work he accepted the offer even though he was scared. For him it was a big challenge to go abroad because he had never even been to the capital city of Myanmar.

His relatives promised to provide accommodation, food and pay 20 Baht per day in exchange for his one year commitment to work for them. They told him that he would not need to work for the first three months, but in reality after a week he had to start working after another helper from Myanmar stopped working for them. While he was helping them he learned Thai language in order to communicate with customers. He did not have any friends and was not able to contact his family directly, though he heard family news from his relatives.



Myanmar roti man busy with customers

After working for one year, his relatives provided him a used roti cart for which he had to pay 10,000 Baht. This cost was deducted from his daily earnings and he was able to pay it all off within three months. Besides, he had to pay for food and accommodation as well because he was not his relatives' employee anymore.

Unfortunately, while Min was trying to send money back to his family he was arrested by police. However, he said he was lucky because he was not deported to Myanmar so he had a chance to try again. He said it may be coincidental or not, he

is not sure, but other people told him that he was arrested because his employer reported him to the police in order to repossess the cart that he had already paid off.

After that, he reopened a roti shop with the help of his formal employer like first time. This time he stayed separately from the relatives and shared a room with one of his friends from Myanmar, and bought a phone so that he would have more freedom to connect with other relatives and friends staying in Thailand. Within six months, he started to send back remittances to his family via his relatives. Every month he sends 3500 Baht but has to pay his formal employer 600 Baht sending fee which is more expensive compared to others. He also pays 2000 Baht to him as a bribe to pay police, much more than the usual rate.

Moreover, his employer's son-in-law also brought his 18-year old younger brother **Myat** to help them and his brother also had to work for them for one year. When the time was up, he and his brother moved to Bangkok where one of his aunts was working and arranged for them to open their own shop. Min said they can speak Thai and can save some money too, so they want to take some business risks with the hope of getting to a higher position. Min believes that he and his brother will get more opportunities by working in the city rather than by working in a rural area. In this way they have become roti sellers in Bangkok near Asiatique which is a tourist attraction site. Now they both are able to support their family and their parent does not need to work and other sibling also can go to school.

Common survival ways in Bangkok for roti sellers

Majority of roti sellers from my research area have full legal documents surprisingly including Rohingya but some do not have any legal document. Selling roti is a self-employed business but to obtain a work permit they must have a Thai employer, so they have to pay money for those who act as their employers, that is arranged by brokers.

However, according to the law, whether legal migrant workers or not they are not allowed to run their own business according to the law. Moreover, some need to pay bribe money to the local authority such a police, immigration officer and tourist police, monthly but some said they do not need to pay any money for selling roti in public because they are friendly with those people.

Most of them firstly arrived at provincial towns but they try to come to Bangkok because they believe living standard, income and network is better in capital city. Their income is above 300 Baht that is basic salary in Thailand and some earn nearly 700 Baht as net profits per day but it depends on the location and working days. Investment is also affordable for them. Used cart is about 3,000 to 5,000 Bath and new one is about 10,000 Bath and daily investment money for cooking ingredients is between 250 to 500 Baht.

Another thing is religious reason because other provinces where they stayed don't have many muslim people and mosque is also far from them so it is not easy to attend prayer every day. They want to stay in Bangkok where have more muslim communities.

Regarding religion, it is not difficult to practice essential things and participate in religious festivals but there are some differences due to customs of their original hometown even they all are the same religion. It is also one of the things to adjust in new environment.

All of them cook at their home to save money as well as to keep their local food which is very difficult to change completely. Besides, in Bangkok there are many Myanmar migrants so they can get Myanmar typical food and products nearby them. Language skill is a basic requirement to stand as a street vendor who needs to communicate with customers but it can cope easily within a few months because basically what they need to know are about price, number and kind of roti that they sell.



Halal Chicken shop at the market near Soi 107



Myanmar, Thai and Indian products at Soi 76, owner is Napali from Myanmar

Perspectives on roti sellers

The perspectives of local people and customers are also important, so I designed my samples to reflect the overall population. In order to reach my goal I divided into three groups of people such as:

- Thai Muslim
- Thai Non-Muslim
- Foreigners

Thai Muslims 'perspectives

A Halal food products grocery owner from Soi 103 is 59 years old and was born in this place, but his ancestors are from Iran. He explained that his place is a Muslim area so many Halal foods are available including roti. Roti is sold by Thai Malay and Khaek but he does not aware of the Myanmar roti sellers.

Latifa Hassan is a full-time housewife and is around 30 years old and lives on Soi 63. She thought roti sellers were from India or Bangladesh but now she knows they are from Myanmar. She said even Thai people know roti is originally a Pakistani or Indian food, but that Thai Muslims feel that roti is also one of their own foods, and that roti sellers are also part of their community because they have been everywhere in Thailand since she was young.

Ampannuch Shah is a Thai Muslim but her husband is from India. She opens a jewelry shop on Silom Road and she prays at Haroon mosque with her husband regularly. She said roti is not a Thai food so Thai people are not very good at doing roti; she prefers Indian roti sellers but now knows that roti sellers are from Myanmar, not from India. She said Thai people accept them so Myanmar roti sellers can run their businesses freely.

Jamilah Zha lives at State Tower¹², is about 30 years old and a career married woman. She said roti is her favorite because it has a special taste and makes her full after eating just one. She does not care or pay attention to the nationality of roti sellers; she only checks whether the cart is clean or not. She thinks roti sellers are nice and hardworking, and notices that each has their own secret taste.



Halal food products grocery owner from Khlong Suan Luang, Soi 103

Thai Non-Muslims 'Perspectives

A third-year liberal arts student said roti sellers seem to be of Indian origin but may be Thai citizens. He does not have a bad attitude toward them because it is a right for everybody to work and earn money with a legal job. He comments that there were more roti sellers when he was young.

One of the office staffs from ASEAN studies center at Chulalongkorn University shared his opinion. He is about 30 years old. He has eaten roti since he was around 6 years old. He does not know that roti sellers are from Myanmar but he knows they are

¹² State Tower is a skyscraper situated on Silom Road , Rang Rak district , adjacent to Charoen Krung Road

Muslim and thinks they are Indian. He said he is only concerned about hygiene and taste of roti no matter where the sellers are from.

One businesswoman who is 26 years old from Bangkok also explained her that she always thinks roti seller must be Indian. She says selling roti and nuts are the career of Indian people because they are the experts for these things. They are the most knowledgeable about how to make roti, how to sell it, and what ingredients are required. They are not strangers but are also not Thai. Because the majority of roti sellers are not Thai, Thai people have no choice but to eat roti from them, she says. Moreover, roti is an Indian dessert that Indian people brought it to Thailand.

Foreigners' perspective

One of Ko Kaw's customers is a grade I student from Assumption College and says that the Halal symbol attracted him to buy from this roti seller. Roti is familiar to him since both sides of his grandparents are from Pakistan and they eat roti very frequently. He said he always checks whether food is Halal or not before he eats it. This student assumes that Ko Kyaw is from Malaysia because when he visited to Malaysia he saw many roti shops and Ko Kyaw also does not look like Thai.



Roti seller and his customers

It is interesting that one of the Indian customers from Min's shop said he has never seen this kind of roti in India; this is the first time for him. The reason he buys from this roti seller is because of his Thai friend's recommendation that he can get roti with chocolate topping, and chocolate is his favorite. He thinks the roti boy is a Bangladeshi. One of the groups is from Malaysia and they say that in Malaysia they have roti but not roti with egg, banana and jelly. It seems new and strange for them so they want to try Thai roti; in Malaysia they normally eat roti with curry. They think Min is from India or Pakistan.

Another group is from Korea and said they don't have roti in their country so they wanted to try it. They have no idea where Min is from but notice that he is quite different looking from Thai people.



CHULA Malaysian tourist customers

Common perspectives from different customers

According to the customers' perspectives, taste and cleanness are more important than their nationality. Moreover, local people have been familiar with roti and non-Thai sellers so it cannot make them uncomfortable. Even if, they know original country of the sellers it does not effect on decision for consumption. Moreover, Thai roti is one of the tourist attraction products because it has its own local style even though in India which is an original country of roti, that kind of roti cannot be bought.

Chapter V

Conclusion and Finding

Neighboring countries have many things in common and crossing border is one of the shared issues. Economic and political differences between Myanmar and Thailand encourage people from Myanmar to migrate to Thailand.

Seeking a job abroad for a better quality of life is a popular trend among Myanmar people regardless of their ethnicity and faith because of the country's economic situation. That is why labor migration is a possible option to grab opportunity in order to free oneself from poverty. Remittances help to improve the life of family members who remain behind in the original home country.

However, migrant workers have not only good experiences but also face unwanted and difficult circumstances in foreign countries. Nevertheless, successful stories make a more powerful impression on people deciding to migrate, because people are more influenced by what they see than by what they hear. Moreover, labor shortage in Thailand pulls the migrant workers from Myanmar to fulfill their requirement.

Most of the roti sellers are not from the capital city of Myanmar and are not educated people, so it is difficult to find a proper job as well as have enough income in their home country. Besides, they are Muslim minorities in Myanmar, so they are a marginalized people, especially the Rohingya people who have been facing many controversial situations for decades. For these people, going out of country to look for job is one of the ways to solve their financial difficulty.

Obviously, the expectation of a better life is the biggest motivation to cross the border, but lack of knowledge, insufficient money for transportation and worst, the lack of required travel documents, force Myanmar migrants to rely on illegal

migration channels. One other reason to rely on brokers is that it is easy to make contact with them. Brokers are often either relatives or community members in whom potential migrants trust. It is undeniable that the community network is very important and plays a crucial role in encouraging roti sellers to go to Thailand.

In fact, roti itself is already popular among in Thailand especially around Muslim communities as well as people crowded areas. It makes easy to run this business because there is a demand for this product. Moreover, roti is associated with religious matter so it is a one convenience thing for Muslim people to involve in this business.

Some migrants could not able to enter into Bangkok directly but when they arrived to Thailand they have more information and experience which help them to move to Bangkok where more opportunities and strong Muslim communities exist.

Freedom of religion in Thailand also welcomes people who have different practices; so many Muslim people choose to stay in Bangkok to fulfill their economic requirements while also being free to practice their religious faith. Moreover, local people also accept migrant roti sellers, which is one of the essential requirements to run their business in Bangkok.

Roti business in Bangkok is dominated by people from Rakhine and Mawlamine because they have their own strong community in Bangkok. Some of them who have already been in Thailand for many years know very well how to manage and survive as roti sellers.

One beautiful thing about the roti sellers' network is that they support each other well. After working for a certain period of time for an employer they are provided with the supplies to open a new shop. They are handed down the recipe and arrangements to open the new shop, which includes negotiating with local authorities in order to open the shop in a public place. When they need to hire

helpers they first consider people from their native town, which is one of the causes of the extensive roti sellers' network in Bangkok.

In addition, they have their code of conducts or ethics which implies that newcomers are not allowed to open a shop near existing ones. Surprisingly, the custom that is practiced among roti sellers is that the right to a selling location is believed to be owned by the person who first opens their shop in a certain place. This person has the rights to sell within a certain area or give their space to others at will, even though it is a public space that no one owns legally.

However, some bad employers betray and exploit their employees. The worst thing is that when their agreed period is over they report to the police to arrest and deport to Myanmar their employees. Thus they can take over all the equipment and sell them to another employee or newcomer.

Some roti sellers have full documents but some do not. But neither illegal nor legal migrant workers are technically allowed to run a street vending business. However, roti sellers from Myanmar have been doing it for decades so they have means of survival by paying off corrupt local authorities; also the local people's demand for food ensures that they can stay in business.

Interestingly, all the roti sellers have one thing in common, which is that they do not want to work under the control of someone else. Being a roti seller, there is no one to boss them around and their prospect is dependent upon their effort. Roti selling business is included in informal sector so it is easy to enter for those who have limited skill and investment but it is a self-employment which is not under controlled by someone else.

Besides, flexibility of working time helps them to be able to do religious practices and to have more freedom. These are two important motives to choose this business.

Bangkok is a cosmopolitan city and famous tourist attraction place with its street food culture so roti sellers are fulfilled because roti holds significant cultural value that is embedded in and reflects the diversity of Bangkok, their new home and they are part of Bangkok community.

Nevertheless, every single migrant person faces many difficulties to make money in an alien country as a marginalized group. Among them, significant barriers are language and eating habit differences, but they overcome these things within a short period of time. On the other hand, they enjoy economic progress and gain other skills such as language, social skills and other related capacities.

Regarding women, they are also involved in the push and pulls factors of labor migration. Most Myanmar roti sellers are men and some are single so after settling down in Thailand they want to get married with Muslim women from their home country. Likewise, there are many Muslim women in Myanmar struggling with life who cannot afford to go abroad, so they think it is a good idea to marry men who are already abroad. Again, in this case brokers play a role as matchmaker and transporter as well. Although some of the women meet good men this way, there are many risks because this practice is related with human trafficking and different kind of exploitation.

Whether or not roti sellers wish to go back home is profoundly dependent upon work opportunities in Myanmar and many other things that must be taken into consideration such as lifestyle, education, health care and security. It is not easy to restart a new life especially for those who have been in Thailand for more than 10 years. These roti sellers said that they do not yet plan to go back home even

though they miss their original country. They go back and forth occasionally depending on their financial situation and legal status. It is undeniable that there are many bad experiences but they try to overcome their suffering and adapt to their new environment in many ways.

Many Myanmar economic migrants can be seen across Bangkok but their appearance, beliefs and social practices are different depending upon which region they come from and their ethnicity. Their national identity is quite invisible compared to other migrant people from Laos and Cambodia. According to my interview results, most Myanmar migrant workers are more willing to identify themselves by their ethnicity or race rather than their country of origin so local people do not notice roti sellers are Myanmar.



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The Interview form of the research

PART I GENERAL STATUS OF INTERVIEWEE

1. Nationality

.....

2. Religion

 Buddhism Christian Islam Others

3. Which part of Myanmar are you from?

.....

4. Age

.....

5. What is your level of education?

 Primary school Secondary school High school Others

6. Occupation in hometown

.....

7. How long have you been in Thailand?

.....

8. Which border did you cross to come to Thailand?

 Mae Sot Mae Sai Three Pagodas Ranong

9. How did you come to Thailand? Mean of transportation

 Bus Boat Flight Others

10. How did you come to Thailand?

 Yourself Friends Relatives in Bangkok Agent or Broker

Others

11. (If broker or agent) how much did you pay?

.....

12. Can you speak Thai?

.....

13. Can you write Thai?

.....

14. Can you read Thai?

.....

15. Which languages can you speak apart from Thai and Myanmar?

.....

16. Which documents do you have?

 Vat Work permit Passport Visa Others

17. Marital status

 Single Married Divorce Widow/Widower Others

18. Where did you get married in Myanmar or in Thailand?

.....

19. Nationality of spouse?

.....

20. Religion of spouse?

Buddhism Christian Islam Others

20. Does she or he stay in Bangkok?

Yes No

21. (If yes) what does she/he do?

.....

22. How many children do you have?

One Two Three More than three

23. Where they were born?

Thai Myanmar

24. Their age?

.....

25. Do they stay with you?

Yes No

26. Do they go to school?

Yes No

27. Which school if in Bangkok?

.....

28. Which grade?

.....

29. Who takes care of them if in Myanmar?

Parents Family Others

30. Where did you stay before come to Bangkok?

.....

31. What kind of job did you do before a roti seller?

.....

PART 2 LIVE OF ROTI SELLER IN BANGKOK

32. The reason of coming to Bangkok?

.....

33. How long have you been in Bangkok?

.....

34. How long have you been being a roti seller?

.....35. Why did you choose this work ?
.....

.....
36. What didn't you choose another career apart from roti selling?
.....

.....
37. Where did you learn to make a roti?
.....

.....
38. Where do you buy the ingredient to make roti?
.....

39. Who are your regular customers?
.....

.....
40. When do you open and close?
.....

.....
41. Why do not open in the morning?
.....

.....
42. How many pieces do you sell per day?
.....

.....
43. How many types of roti do you sell?
.....

.....
44. Which type is the most popular?
.....

.....
45. Which type is the least popular?
.....

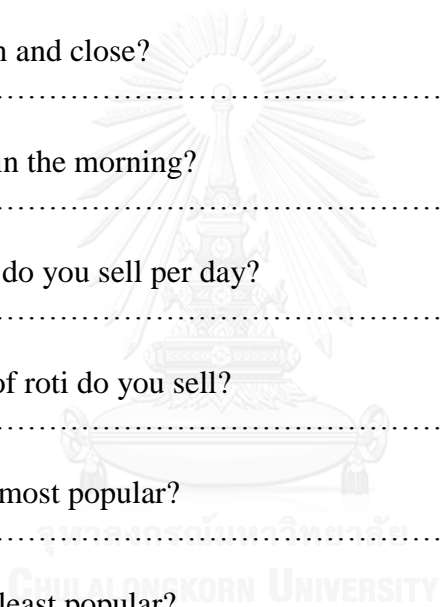
.....
46. What are the difference between Myanmar and Thai roti?
.....

.....
47. Why you put Halal symbol or symbol of Islam on your roti cart?
.....

.....
48. Is it important for customers?
.....

.....
49. Why you chose this place to open your shop?
.....

.....
50. What processes did you do to open this shop?
.....



.....

 51. Which rules and regulations do you have to follow to open shop in here?

.....

 52. How much did you invest to open this shop?

PART 3 FAMILIES AND EXPENDITURE

53. How much do you earn per month?

.....
 54. How much average do you spend for living per month?

Accommodation.....

Food.....

Others.....

55. Is your income enough?

Enough Not enough Others

55. Who do you live with?

Family Relative Friend Alone

56. Do you send money to home from original country?

Every month Sometimes Never Others

57. Do you save money in each month?

Save Sometimes No save Others

58. How do you save money?

Bank Buy gold Send to family Others

59. Have you ever contacted with your family?

Ever Never other

60. How often do you contact with them?

Once per day Once per week Once per month

Others

61. How do you contact them?

Mobile Letters Email Others

62. Who will give money to you when you have a problem?

Friends No one Others

46. How many times do you go back to your home country per year?

PART 4 LIFESTYLE, SOCIAL AND CUTURAL PRACTICE

64. How do you prepare your food?

.....

 68. What things did you consider to choose your accommodation?

.....
.....

69. Can you practice your religious matter and how?

.....
..... 70. Do you have relative in Bangkok?

.....
.....

80. Do you have friend from Myanmar in Bangkok?

.....
.....

81. What kinds of social event do you usually participate?

.....
.....

82. How do you usually celebrate religious festival?

.....
.....

PART 5 FUTURE PLANS

83. Will you go back to Myanmar or not?

.....
.....

84. Do you have any plan to change any business?

.....
.....

85. What is your future plan?

.....
.....

PART6 OBSERVATION SRSULTS

PART7 CUSTOMER COMMENTS

PART8 LOCAL COMMUNOITY PERSPECTIVE

VITA

Khin Nan Oo is from Myanmar with Islamic faith. Her first degree is Law and she graduated with Bachelor of Law at East Yangon University in 2003. Then, she worked at Myanmar Red Cross Society and other Trading company. She is interested in conflict resolution and migration so she joined The Southeast Asian Studies Program in Master of Arts at Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok, Thailand.

