Chinese Investments in Asia:
A Labour Perspective

Chinese Investments in Asia: A Labour Perspective

ISBN:

Asia Monitor Resource Centre
The Asia Monitor Resource Centre is an independent non-governmental organization focusing on Asian labour concerns. The Centre provides information, research, publications, training, labour networking and related services to trade unions, labour groups, and other development NGOs in the region. The Centre's main goal is to support democratic and independent labour movements in Asia.

Flat 7, 9/F, Block A Fuk Keung Industrial Building 66-68,
Tong Mi Road Kowloon Hong Kong
Tel: (852) 2332-1346, Fax: (852) 2835-5319
Email: amrc@amrc.org.hk Website: www.amrc.org.hk

Responsibility for the contents, presentation of findings, and the recommendations rests with the study team.

Contents

A Confluence of Development Agendas: Assessing the Impacts of Chinese Direct Investment in Thailand

Just Economy and Labor Institute (JELI), Thailand

INTRODUCTION

A confluence of economic development interests is driving an increase in Chinese foreign direct investment (FDI) in Thailand. While the two countries have had a long history of economic ties, mainly in the form of trade and Chinese immigrant business, Chinese companies (both state-owned and private) historically have not been a major source of FDI in Thailand, ranking well below that from Japan, Singapore, the United States, and some European countries since Thailand became a popular investment destination in the 1980s. This picture, however, is now changing, as Chinese investment in Thailand is on the rise. In the past few years, China has emerged as a highly engaged, and highly sought after, source of investment in the country, and economic analysts project the rising global economic power to be among the top sources of FDI in Thailand moving forward.

This budding economic partnership appears to be driven for the most part by mutual interests in large-scale infrastructure development. China sees Thailand as an entry point and key logistical hub to advance its Belt and Road initiative (BRI) – an ambitious development strategy involving infrastructural investments to foster trade and economic growth across Africa, Asia, and Europe – throughout an economically integrating Southeast Asia. As a well-established production, logistics, and export base in the region, as well as large consumer market, Thailand can serve Chinese interests in reaching into consumer markets of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and beyond. For its part, Thailand seeks to harness China's

capital and expertise (among that from other foreign investors) to support its "Thailand 4.0" economic agenda, which seeks to develop infrastructures that will enhance connections to regional and global trade partners while also advancing an economy based on technological innovation to propel the country out of the "middle-income trap" and into the echelon of "developed" countries. This growing partnership, and the development ambitions that are riding on it, is at an early stage, with Chinese state-owned enterprises assuming key roles in Thailand's railway development projects and several companies committing to investment projects in the Eastern Economic Corridor (ECC), Thailand's flagship development project.

At this stage, when large-scale Chinese investment in Thailand is on the rise, it is important to assess the causes and impacts – current and potential – of these developments. Thus, we ask: What is driving the recent increase in Chinese direct investment in Thailand? And what impacts will the growing investment relationship have on Thai labor? Drawing from an extensive review of academic literature, news articles, government investment data and promotional materials, as well as from interviews with workers in Chinese-owned enterprises in Thailand, Thai labor leaders, and academics and Thai government officials, this chapter seeks to provide some initial answers to these questions by mapping the history, trajectories, and potential impacts of Chinese direct investment[18] in Thailand. The chapter starts with a history of the economic relationship between China and Thailand before detailing their current investment relationship, focusing on the convergence of China's Belt and Road Initiative with Thailand and Southeast Asian development agendas. It then turns to current and potential impacts of this budding investment relationship, highlighting key issues to monitor from a Thai labor perspective as it develops.

IMMIGRATION, TRADE, AND INVESTMENT: THE ECONOMIC RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CHINA AND THAILAND

Chinese actors have long played prominent roles in Thailand's economic history. Chinese traders lived and did business in Ayutthaya, the former capital of the Kingdom of Siam, as early as the 14th century (Baker and Pasuk, 2017). By the 19th century, Chinese immigrants were common in Thailand, with around 1 million Chinese people added to the Thai popu-

18 We define such investment as involving both Chinese state-owned and private enterprises based in China.

lation between the 1880s and 1930s (Hewison, 2018). Dominating commerce in Bangkok, Chinese immigrants made up the majority of the emerging capitalist class (Porphant and Yoshihiro, 2001). Ethnic Chinese also constituted much of Bangkok's working class, which experienced upward mobility to eventually dominate the city's middle class by the mid-twentieth century (Hewison, 1989). With such immigration, ethnic mixing became common, with about 14% of Thailand's population being ethnic Chinese by the 1980s (Liu and Jayanthakumaran, 2016:78). Thai-Chinese entrepreneurs have been very influential in Thai society, particularly in such industries as agriculture, banking and finance, real estate, and wholesale trade, and cultural links have facilitated Chinese investments in agribusiness, textiles, electronics, rubber, and real estate, among others (ibid, 79). This history forms a background for much of the "shared culture" rhetoric that governments use when promoting new investment partnerships between the countries. More recently, a "new wave" of Chinese immigrants, coming from diverse origins for work, education, and investment opportunities, have been converging in new Chinatowns throughout Bangkok (Wangkiat, 2016).

Historically, active trade has been the main feature of the economic relationship between the two countries, much more than investments. Following a period of cold-war economic and diplomatic distance, China and Thailand resumed diplomatic relations in 1975 (Chinwanno, 2009:88), and a renewal of trade relations soon followed. The countries signed their first trade agreement in 1978, launching a trade partnership that would continue to flourish. Though Chinese companies pursued a limited amount of select investments (e.g., construction and trade) in the late 1970s and early 1980s, they were mainly precursors to actual industrial investment that would commence in the mid 1980s. The supportive response of the Chinese government in expanding bilateral trade after the 1997 economic crisis reinforced the economic friendship (Hewison, 2018), and by 2013, spurred by a boost in trade activity under the China-ASEAN Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA) (Hongfang, 2013), China had surpassed Japan to become Thailand's largest trading partner.

Chinese investment in production in Thailand took off in the 1980s, especially after the two governments signed the Agreement on Promotion and Protection of Mutual Investment in 1985 during a China state visit to Thailand (Manarungsan, 2009:315). This trend coincided with a general surge of FDI flows into Thailand as the government shifted to an export-oriented economy (Anuchitworawong, 2011:181-185). In the years that fol-

lowed, investments from China grew and diversified as companies sought a share of the Thai consumer market while also establishing the country as an important export base (Suvakunta, 2006:130). Between 1987-1991, Chinese companies invested around 5,993 million Thai baht, mostly in agriculture (Manarungsan, 2009:318). In the next five years, between 1992-1997, investment value was around 5,109 million baht but diversified as chemical products and paper projects grew in popularity, while mining and ceramics had the largest investment value (Suvakunta, 2006:127; Manarungsan, 2009:320-322). The period between 1998 and 2004 showed a huge spike in the post financial crisis (1997) period, also coinciding with China's "Go Out strategy," an agenda highlighted in the country's 10th five-year plan (2001-2005) to promote outward investment (Suvakunta, 2006:123). During this time, investment value reached 17,488 million baht, with the highest number of projects in the agriculture sector and textile and garments exhibiting the highest value (Manarungsan, 2009:322-324). Investments in real estate and construction also grew. In 2003, the Thailand Board of Investment opened an office in Shanghai and established a special unit to promote investment in Thailand (ibid, 2009:335), signaling its long-term interest in attracting Chinese capital. As many joint ventures in agriculture and agro industries commenced, investment values amounted to 22,851 million baht between 2005 and 2008, a time when investments in the manufacturing sector also grew (ibid, 2009:324-325). Manufacturing projects continued from 2009 to 2012, along with finance and financial services, and by 2016, investments scattered and diversified into several sectors, including manufacturing, real estate, construction and finance (BOT, 2017).

Though Chinese FDI in Thailand has diversified, much of the activity has been geared toward production and export, as reflected in some of the major Chinese companies operating in Thailand. In 2001, China Worldbest group, for example, a Shanghai-based, state-owned enterprise, built four factories for textile spinning and printing, along with a citric acid lab, in the Rojana Industrial park of Rayong Province. At the time, the endeavor was China's biggest investment project to date in Thailand, worth $175 million (Suvakunta, 2006:128). These projects were geared toward both upstream and downstream production for Thai markets as well as international exports (mostly to US and EU markets). Haier, a private Chinese enterprise from Shanghai, is another major company investing in production facilities geared toward the Thai domestic market as well as international exports. Entering into joint ventures with Thai companies, Haier uses Thailand as

its production base for manufacturing refrigerators, washing machines, and other electrical appliances (Suvakunta, 2006:140-141; Manarungsan, 2009:327-329).

Much of China's investments in manufacturing have occurred in the Thai-Chinese Rayong Industrial Zone in Thailand's eastern seaboard, where years of production and export projects have served as precursors to the current investment focus in the Eastern Economic Corridor, discussed below. Beginning in 2005, China's Ministry of Commerce introduced a series of "jointly going out" policies to encourage the establishment of "economic and trade cooperation zones" in foreign countries (Song et al., 2018:1289-1293). In 2006, the Chinese government stated aims to establish up to 50 such zones,[19] and the Thai-Chinese Rayong Industrial Zone became one of the first (Brautigam et al., 2010; Kosaikanont, 2019:176). For its part, Thailand offered an attractive location in the eastern seaboard. Initially financed with the help of Japan in the 1980s, the purpose of the eastern seaboard was to establish an infrastructural network to enhance industrial development and global export of Thai products (Kosaikanont, 2019:170). Chinese incentives to invest in the zone, as stated by Wu Guangyun, Vice President of the Holley Group, included the size of the Thai market, the capacity to distribute goods to other ASEAN countries, high quality infrastructural facilities (e.g., road and seaports), and welcoming FDI policies (Kosaikanont, 2019:180). On the Thai side, the government saw Chinese FDI as key to financing development and spurring economic recovery after a 2005 financial crisis that was the worst since the 1997 Asian financial crisis (Kosaikanont, 2019:180). At this time, Surakiart Sathirathai, Thai Minister of Foreign Affairs, proclaimed an "Asia for Asians" approach to economic diplomacy (MOFA, 2006), encouraging stronger economic partnerships with China.

In this context, after a Beijing meeting between then Thai Prime Minister, Thaksin Shinawatra and Chinese Prime Minister, Wen Jaibao, in 2006, Holley Group (Chinese) signed an MOU with Amata Group (Thai) to establish the Thai-Chinese Rayong Industrial Zone in the eastern seaboard (ibid, 171). This zone offers corporate tax breaks for eight years, additional 50% reduction in corporate income tax for five years, import duty reductions or exemptions on machinery and raw materials for up to five years, among other incentives (Kosaikanont, 2019:174). Now considered an "industrial Chinatown," the zone is a key piece of Thailand's eastern seaboard, which has attracted approximately 100 Chinese enterprises with investments total-

19 By 2017, 56 zones were set up (Kosaikanont, 2019)

ing over $8 billion (Songwanitch, 2018). These companies, both state-owned and privately-owned enterprises mainly based in Zhejiang, Shenzen, Beijing, Heibei, and Shandong, have invested in automotive, electronics, chemical, and food industries (Kosaikanont, 2019:175).

Despite this background of active and increasing economic activity between China and Thailand, China has been a relatively small source of FDI in Thailand compared to other countries. China's FDI in Thailand in 2015, for example, was $3.19 billion, behind Japan's $66 billion, Singapore's $27 billion, USA's $15 billion, and the Netherlands $12 billion (Hewison, 2018:120). Even so, analysts expect FDI from China to Thailand to increase given China's economic rise and interest in Thailand, and Thailand's current courtship of Chinese capital (Chaitrong, 2017; Songwanitch, 2017, 2018). Indeed, since 2016, investment values of approved project applications to the BOI from Chinese companies have ranked third overall, behind Singapore and Japan (BOI, 2019). Previous investments have demonstrated a successful track record of production within and export from Thailand, particularly through projects located in industrial zones of Thailand's eastern seaboard. As will be detailed below, current and planned investment projects of China in Thailand are now launching off from these previous activities, expanding and diversifying in infrastructure and innovative technology sectors. Furthermore, previous motivations on both sides to engage in investment partnerships foreshadow the current investment relationship between the two countries – China's use of Thailand's infrastructure, geographic location, and export capacity to increase its footing in new markets, and Thailand's harnessing of Chinese capital to spur economic recovery and to propel a national development agenda.

THE CONVERGENCE OF BELT AND ROAD, THAILAND 4.0, AND SOUTHEAST ASIAN ECONOMIC INTEGRATION AGENDAS

Decades of investments in production and export has set the stage for the next phase of Chinese FDI in Thailand. Currently, Chinese production and manufacturing projects are ongoing, especially in the eastern seaboard, and there has been a recent boom in real estate investment (Srimalee, 2018). The Thai government has also attempted to advance Chinese investment projects in extractive industries, particularly potash and coal mining, which have been met with local resistance (Greenpeace, 2014; Isaac Record, 2018; Reuters, 2017; Rujivanarom, 2016, 2018; Saisom, 2018). The current

investment relationship, however, and the focus moving forward, is characterized primarily by Chinese enterprise participation in Thailand's intertwined transportation infrastructure and technological innovation projects. A closer look at recent project commitments and projected investments reveals a convergence of development agendas, namely among China's BRI, the "Thailand 4.0" development model, and regional economic integration agendas in Southeast Asia.

China's motivation for expanding its FDI in Thailand is directly related to the outward-looking, expansive, and long-term ambitions of its Belt and Road Initiative. This initiative aims to assert China as a prominent economic player across Africa, Asia, and Europe through investments in infrastructure and facilities networks, policy coordination, enhancing investment and trade relations, and financial cooperation (Johnston, 2018; Liu and Dunford, 2016). Reflecting the importance of the Mekong region in the BRI, in 2015, China and five other countries located along the Mekong river (Lancang in Chinese) launched the Lancang-Mekong Cooperation (LMC), a sub-regional economic cooperation mechanism that links trade and investment within the Mekong region with the BRI. Thailand is of particular interest to China given its central geographic location in Southeast Asia (neighboring the emerging "CLMV countries" – Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, and Vietnam – on the mainland and sharing oceans with Indonesia and Malaysia) and its background as a production and export base with strong infrastructure and logistical capacity to ship Chinese products to the ASEAN market and beyond (Kosaikanont, 2019:177; Li et al., 2014).

In Southeast Asia, overlapping regional economic integration agendas also correspond with China's BRI. The ASEAN has been developing its Economic Community (AEC), which seeks to foster a common regional production base and consumer market able to compete in the global economy (ASEAN, 2008, 2012). In line with these goals, the Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity highlights priorities of sustainable infrastructure, digital innovation, and seamless logistics, among other cooperation areas (ASEAN, 2016). Furthermore, since the early 1990s the Asian Development Bank (ADB) has emphasized subregional economic integration through the development of infrastructure and trade connectivity among countries in the Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS)[20] (ADB, 2012). It has done so by investing in hard and "soft" infrastructural upgrades along "economic corridors" that aim to foster economic development within designated geo-

20 See Glassman (2010) for a class-based analysis and critique of the ADB's GMS program.

graphic areas (ADB, 2018:4). Due to its geographic location and production and logistical capacities, Thailand is a key actor in both ASEAN and GMS economic integration efforts. As such, China sees Thailand as providing a strategic gateway into ASEAN (Li et al., 2014; Zawacki, 2017) and its accelerating economic integration processes.

Thailand is seeking to attract Chinese (among other) capital to bolster its stagnant economy and advance its own national development agenda. Thailand's economy has had the slowest growing economy in Southeast Asia in the past few years, lagging behind its neighbours, and its share of FDI in the region has also fallen from 14% in 2013 to below 6% in 2017 (Mellor, 2018). The Thai state sees FDI, particularly from China, as an opportunity to boost the national economy. Furthermore, Thailand's courtship of Chinese FDI is oriented to its long-term development goals. In 2015, Prime Minister, Prayut Chan-Ocha announced a 20-year national vision and strategy, aimed at restructuring the economy around infrastructural upgrades and development of innovative technology sectors. The national strategy complements the "Thailand 4.0" development model, which boasts the country's ambition to be the hub of Southeast Asia's forth industrial revolution, building on the progress of previous agriculture (1.0), light industries (2.0), and complex industries of production and export (3.0) to transform Thailand into a "developed" country by 2037 (BOI, 2017; Mellor, 2018). The twelfth National Economic and Social Development Plan (2017-2021) details the agenda for the first five years of the 20-year strategy, emphasising "investment in large-scale infrastructure and logistics systems (NESDB, 2016:30-31) and developing technologies and skilled labor to advance new industries. The plan explicitly states the intention to build from Thailand's existing strengths as a diverse production base to "step up to knowledge-based and innovative production processes" (ibid, 45). The plan focuses priorities on developing so-called "S-Curve" industries, including automotive, electronics, affluent medical and wellness tourism, agriculture and biotechnology, and food, which Thailand has already been fostering, and expanding into new industries of robotics, aviation and logistics, biofuels and biochemical, the digital industry, and medical hubs (BOI, 2017).

To bolster its development agenda, Thailand is marketing itself as an attractive FDI destination, as reflected in the numerous brochures and promotional materials that are regularly released by the Board of Investment (BOI) to boast the "strategic location" and unique production, logistics, and trade capacities of the country. One brochure announces Thailand as

a "dynamic gateway to a fast-growing economic market," with a "growing economy, world-class infrastructure, competitive human capital and strong government support" that will foster its emergence as "the centre of a new economic engine of ASEAN" (BOI, 2016). As these documents reflect, Thailand's development plan corresponds to regional economic integration agendas, emphasising national infrastructure as complementary to that which reaches beyond its borders to regional trade partners, something that also corresponds well to the priorities of China's BRI. Importantly, Thailand is carrying out its marketing campaign in a context where its neighbours pose increasing competition as primary manufacturing production countries, particularly the CLMV countries, which offer much cheaper production costs due to low wages as well as a Generalised System of Preferences (GSP) that provides tariff reductions on many products. Thus, Thailand is highlighting its location, superior infrastructure, developed business climate, and track record of production and export in the region to stand out among these new investment frontiers. While Thailand is seeking FDI from many countries, several proposed projects from Chinese companies match well with the "Thailand 4.0" focus on infrastructure and innovation and further Thailand's aim of gaining technology transfers to improve the target industries mentioned above. Chinese investments in the EEC and railway development projects in particular are indicative of the confluence of Chinese and Thai development interests.

Chinese Investment In Thailand's Eastern Economic Corridor And Railway System

Decades of investments in production and export has set the stage for the next phase of Chinese FDI in Thailand. Currently, Chinese production and manufacturing projects are ongoing, especially in the eastern seaboard, and there has been a recent boom in real estate investment (Srimalee, 2018). The Thai government has also attempted to advance Chinese investment projects in extractive industries, particularly potash and coal mining, which have been met with local resistance (Greenpeace, 2014; Isaac Record, 2018; Reuters, 2017; Rujivanarom, 2016, 2018; Saisom, 2018). The current investment relationship, however, and the focus moving forward, is characterized primarily by Chinese enterprise participation in Thailand's intertwined transportation infrastructure and technological innovation projects. A closer look at recent project commitments and projected investments reveals a convergence of development agendas, namely among China's BRI,

the "Thailand 4.0" development model, and regional economic integration agendas in Southeast Asia.

Entering Thailand's eastern seaboard, one is presented with an intense industrial landscape filled with factories, stacks on stacks of shipping containers, billboards advertising industrial estates and ready production facilities, production zones, and ever-present road construction. Advertisements of factory, warehouse, office, and residential properties are displayed in English, Chinese, and Japanese languages. As a labor leader in the area tells us, while the industrial infrastructure is very developed, there is limited social infrastructure, characterized by a lack of hospitals and schools. This industrial area is the site of the new Eastern Economic Corridor, the emerging hotspot for Chinese investment in Thailand.

While the EEC is a new flagship project of the "Thailand 4.0" development model, it is actually the latest phase of infrastructure development in the eastern seaboard dating back to the 1980s (Kosaikanont, 2019:170). While the government conceived of another large-scale development plan – the construction of ten special economic zones (SEZs) along its borders – earlier than that of the EEC, the latter has surpassed the border SEZ projects in development, according to the head of the Tak SEZ office,[21] because of the existing infrastructure in Thailand's eastern seaboard. A senior official at the National Economic and Social Development Council[22] tells us that the EEC is essentially an upgrade of the eastern seaboard, which already has a developed road and water transport system, along with completed production facilities.[23] Aimed at enhancing as well as moving beyond export-oriented production, the EEC focuses on infrastructural enhancements and innovative technology development. A flashy BOI brochure hails the EEC as the "Gateway to Asia", touting plans for new production facilities, a strategic location, a grand vision for infrastructural upgrades (e.g., new airport and railway connectivity), and a variety of innovative industries in the three eastern provinces of Chachoengsao, Chonburi, and Rayong. As news reports indicate, there is much interest from Thai and foreign investors in the EEC (The Nation, 2017; Tanakasempipat, 2018).

Considered a "magnet" to entice Chinese capital (Songwanitch, 2017), the intended three-province-large EEC is beginning to attract new levels of interest from China. In 2017, the Chinese conglomerate, HNA Group,

21 Interview on September 6, 2018.
22 Formerly the National Economic and Social Development Board.
23 Interview on March 29, 2019.

which is based in Hainan province and involved in aviation, real estate, financial services, tourism, and logistics, entered into partnership with Thailand's CT Bright (the investment unit of Charoen Pokphand) to set up a $5 billion fund for EEC investment (contributing to a total projected cost of $43 billion) (The Nation, 2017). In addition, in April 2018, the Thai government entered into a strategic partnership with the China-based e-commerce giant, Alibaba to work on such projects in the EEC as the establishment of a "smart digital hub" to support trade with China and other markets, training small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in e-commerce skills, and developing digital tourism, among others (Tanakasempipat, 2018). Most recently, in August 2018, Thailand courted 500 Chinese companies in a gathering in Thailand to promote investments in the EEC to link the corridor to China's BRI. Seventeen resulting MOUs cover cooperation in digital economy, technology transfers and "next generation automobiles" (Phoonphongphiphat, 2018a). Reflecting Thailand's development priorities, Thai Industry Minister, Uttama Savanaya, touted these MOUs as turning the EEC into the center of "next-generation industries," allowing connections to SEZs in CLMV through the Belt and Road rail infrastructure. Indeed, Thai government officials have been clear in highlighting the potential of the EEC to connect to China's BRI in ways that will benefit both countries, especially by strengthening supply chain networks and expanding export markets (Wangkiat, 2018).

As stated, the acceleration and intensification of Chinese investments in Thailand reflect a convergence of interests among the two country governments, reflected in seemingly complementary development agendas. Such complementarity was reflected in the August 2018 Thailand-China Business forum, titled "Comprehensive Partnership through the Belt and Road Initiative and the EEC," where Thailand's Deputy Prime Minister, Somkid Jatusripitak, emphasized the strong fit between China's investment and rapid economic development and the development of logistical and transportation projects in Southeast Asia (BOI, 2018). Elsewhere, Wang Long, member of the State Council of the People's Republic of China, identified the corridor as making Thailand "an attractive investment destination in the region" due to opportunities in building high-speed railways linking three airports, new generation vehicles, smart logistics, digital infrastructure, and other projects concentrated in the EEC (Apisitniran, 2018). For Thailand, Chinese investors offer expertise in the target industries of digital and software development, electric vehicles, automation and robotics, aero-

space technologies, and other innovative ventures. As such, the BOI has set up three offices in China to date and has organized road shows to promote and facilitate investment to Thailand (BOI, 2018).

Another highly publicized infrastructure project with Chinese involvement, in the form of a "contracted project", is the Thailand-China high-speed railway, which would cut rail travel time between Bangkok and Kunming to 13-15 hours (Phoonphongphiphat, 2018a). In line with its expansive BRI ambitions, China plans to connect the Thai railway to the Malaysia rail network, which reaches South to Singapore (Ganesan, 2018). In December 2014, Thailand and China signed a railway co-operation MOU, and as negotiations on financing and implementation commenced, domestic opposition to interest rates and land rights along the track grew (Hewison, 2018:122). After stalled negotiations due to disputes over high interest rates of initial loan proposals, in 2016, Thailand's Prime Minister, General Prayuth announced that Thailand will fund the project with Chinese contractors playing an overseeing role, and in June 2017, the junta issued a decree to override legal hurdles and expedite project implementation (Hewison, 2018:122-123). In September 2017, Thailand signed two contracts, worth 5.2 billion baht (157 million USD), with Chinese state-owned enterprises to implement the project (Thepgumpanat, 2017), and construction began in December 2017. Analysts contend that the railway is part of broader state initiatives to establish Thailand as "the key strategic and logistics gateway to the ASEAN Economic Community," with the potential to improve "connectivity" with Myanmar, Laos and Vietnam (and with eventual links between China, Bangladesh, and India) via local projects related to the BRI (HKTDC, 2017). In addition to this railway project, China Railway Construction plans to join a CP-led consortium to bid on the construction of a high-speed railway connecting Thailand's airports, including the U-Tapao airport in the EEC (Phoonphongphiphat, 2018b).

As these examples show, there appears to be a symbiotic relationship between China and Thailand as they advance respective and complementary development agendas. In contrast to other examples of large-scale FDI in other countries, China is not exerting direct control over Thailand's development agenda or attempting to transform its economy to fit its broader imperatives. Instead, the economic partnership seems to be mutually beneficial, at least on the surface. As Thailand scholar, Kevin Hewison states, "This is a maturing economic relationship, but not yet a dominant or dominating relationship" (2018:125). However, as discussed further below, the

Thai government has shown a willingness to deploy authoritarian powers to advance Chinese investment projects, reflecting a tendency to prioritize the interests of Chinese capital and the Thai state over those of Thai communities. Therefore, it is important to further assess the impacts of this growing investment relationship.

CURRENT AND POTENTIAL IMPACTS OF CHINESE FDI ON THAI COMMUNITIES AND LABOUR

The current phase of Chinese investment in Thailand, described above, is in the early stages, with companies bidding and presenting proposals or just starting early implementation of railway and EEC production and technology projects. Thus, concrete details and the full scope of its impacts on the environment, local communities, and labor are not yet clear. However, we can look at previous examples of Thai government and Chinese industry practices to forecast potential impacts that should be monitored closely as investments and developments unfold.

Thai state behaviour vis-a-vis Chinese capital

For one, Thai government practices in relation to Chinese capital and the domestic population raise concerns. Thailand's military government has shown a propensity to use its authoritarian powers to expedite Chinese invested projects, disregarding established protocols despite opposition from societal groups. In particular, the government has used Section 44 of the interim charter, which gives it absolute authority in policymaking for the sake of reforms in any field, to fast-track development and investment projects. For example, the government used Section 44 to exempt the Thailand-China rail project from state procurement laws and environmental regulations covering forest reserves that the line's construction will go through. Chinese engineers were also made exempt from licensing requirements to work in the country, much to the dismay of Thai engineers who could benefit from working on the project. Organisations of Thai engineers and architects expressed disagreement with the use of broad administrative powers to override existing laws that prohibit Chinese engineers from working in Thailand without going through proper certification channels (Corben, 2017). In addition, the government allowed the rail project's feasibility study to be done by the Chinese, with limited transparency. As Thai

newspapers reported, rising opposition to the junta's use of the decree resulted in threats and arrests of critics (Hewison, 2018:124). In May 2017, the government also used Section 44 to expedite development of the EEC, cutting the environmental impact assessment process down from two to one year and cutting the public-private partnership process from 15-20 months to 8-10 months (Songwanich, 2017).

The Thai government has also used special powers to fast-track Chinese-invested extractive industries projects. For example, in January 2016, the government used Section 44 to expedite construction of an 870-megawatt coal-fired plant in Krabi, to be built by the Power Construction Corporation of China in partnership with the domestic Italian-Thai Development company. In particular, it ordered an exemption to the city plan law for power plants, gas plants, water treatment facilities, garbage incinerators, landfills and recycling plants that had previously been restricted to zoned areas (Rujivanarom, 2016). Civic groups, particularly the Protect Andaman from Coal Network, protested this order and urged the Natural Resources and Environment Ministry to renew the Krabi Environmental Protection Zone and prevent the building of a coal-fired plant. After continued opposition and some delays, the government is attempting to move ahead with the plan (Greenpeace, 2014; Reuters, 2017; Villadiego, 2017). In another example, in 2015, the local government in Sakon Nakhon granted the Chinese state-owned China Ming Ta Potash Corporation an exploration permit to survey the area for potash reserves. Locals expressed concerns about toxic contamination of farm lands and water sources, as well as a lack of transparency in the project plans (Saisom, 2017). Importantly, the Sakon Nakhon case reflects a new legal framework for mining that decentralises decision-making and expedites the approval of mining concession. Activists say this legislation ignores environmental and health impacts of mining and suppresses community opposition to mining projects (ibid). In response, locals organized a network of environmental and health protection groups against the project (Chuenta, 2017), and with increasing resistance to the project, authorities stepped up surveillance of anti-mining activists, creating a risky environment for protest (Isaan Record, 2017; Macan-Markar, 2018).

The government's demonstrated readiness to override existing laws and regulations to push through development projects is of particular concern, as it weakens mechanisms for project assessment and negotiation that were established in the interest of the environment and local communities. More generally, Section 44 precludes meaningful opposition to potentially

harmful government actions, as it allows for unchecked government authority to implement policies and practices in a broad range of areas, including economic development and promotion of FDI. By using Section 44 to fast-track investment projects, the government is thus marginalising the needs and preferences of Thai communities and labor in favour of those of Chinese capital and the Thai state. The above examples also show a lack of transparency in planning and implementation processes as well as worrisome intimidation tactics against activists.

Behaviour of Chinese capital in Thailand

Characteristic of Chinese capital in Thailand is a high level of Chinese state involvement in the investment projects of Chinese enterprises, whether state-owned or private, particularly in the Thai-Chinese Rayong Industrial Zone. While enterprises from other countries, including Japanese automobile firms, have concentrated production in Thailand's government-established industrial estates, taking advantage of the ready infrastructure and tax incentives (Lecler, 2002), direct Japanese state involvement in such activities is not common. As detailed above, China's "jointly going out" policies encouraged state-owned and private companies to invest in economic zones in foreign countries such as Thailand. While Holley group, the Chinese enterprise that developed the Thai-Chinese Rayong Industrial zone, is a privately-owned enterprise from Hangzhou, Zhejiang province, the Chinese government was closely involved in promoting the project as one of the first such zones (Kosaikanont, 2019:171). Furthermore, Zhejiang provincial government officials helped to guide the implementation of the zone, reflecting a trend of local Chinese government involvement in constructing overseas industrial parks (Song et al., 2018:1299). The Chinese government also provides allowances to Chinese enterprises investing in such parks (ibid, 1302), including advisory and operation services, asset management, emergency support, state and local government subsidies for feasibility studies, site visits, negotiations with host government officials, and legal fees and insurance (Kosaikanont, 2019:176). Reflecting a continued interest in controlling Chinese investment in Thailand, Chinese government representatives and investors recently expressed interest to the Industrial Estate Authority of Thailand (IEAT) in buying 10,000 rai (approximately 3,954 acres) of industrial estate land in the EEC to "create its own community…to serve investors and supply chains from China to ASEAN" (Apisitniran, 2019). Somchint Pilouk, the IEAT governor, has remarked that

she expects the Chinese *government* to bring more than 500 Chinese businesses to invest in the EEC (ibid).

In addition, labor practices in major Chinese firms already operating in Thailand's eastern seaboard raise concerns as more companies are expected to set up shop in the EEC. For one, worker accounts indicate the common use of flexible and subcontracted labor. While Art,[24] a 25-year-old production line operator at the Zhongce rubber tire company,[25] has a permanent employment contract, he tells us that most of his coworkers are employed by subcontractors on a temporary basis.[26] Somsak, a 32-year-old warehouse worker who has spent four years at the factory, also told us that the majority of his co-workers are hired on temporary subcontracts, which do not afford health and social security benefits.[27] Aroon, a 32-year-old production line worker who has been at the company for two years, has been employed on a series of short-term contracts, starting as a daily worker for six months and then moving to an eight-month contract and subsequent short-term contracts after performance evaluations. The company, he says, has a quota for how many permanent workers it will hire, so it is difficult to get those positions.[28] The Huawei battery factory also hires a subcontracting company, though in this case the company supplies Huawei with migrant workers from Myanmar. According to Naing, a migrant worker from Myanmar's Bago region, the factory employs about 700 migrants, recruited by the subcontracting company though Thailand's guestworker system.[29] Interestingly, while the Thai workers on short-term contracts do not receive benefits, migrant workers have two-year contracts that ensure health insurance and social security. While labor flexibility trends are common in Chinese firms operating in Thailand, according to workers and labor leaders we talked to in Chonburi, it is important to note that they reflect characteristics of work arrangements throughout Thailand's economy (Hewison and Tularak, 2013), not just in Chinese companies.

Furthermore, Chinese companies in the eastern seaboard (and presumably elsewhere) are non-unionized. Krit, a labor leader who provides legal assistance to workers on the eastern seaboard, says that many factories in the area have labor unions, but to his knowledge there are no unions

24 All names of interview respondents are pseudonyms.
25 Zhongce is a Chinese state-owned enterprise from Hangzhou that has operated in Thailand since 2014; See Kosaikanont, 2019 for a profile of the company.
26 Interview on May 19, 2019
27 Interview on November 15, 2018
28 Interview on May 19, 2019
29 Interview on May 19, 2019

in Chinese-owned factories. In the past, he assisted in ad hoc attempts to organize workers in such factories, but those involved were quickly fired. [30]Likewise, Art says that he heard rumors of an attempt to organize Zhongce workers before he arrived, but organizers were forced to leave the company. In a case study of the Zhongce factory, Kosaikanont (2019) found that human resources staff asked prospective hires if they had ever been part of a union and informed them that those caught organizing in the company would be fired (188). Reflecting a general intolerance of labor resistance in the Huawei battery factory, Chaiwat, a former quality control worker (and one of the few Thai employees there), told us that human resources officers transferred him from his quality control station to a general maintenance position after he began advocating for better health and safety conditions in the factory. After he refused the reassignment, the company gave him the option to leave voluntarily with a compensation package or be fired. He refused to leave and was fired.[31] Krit tells us that he tried to organize unions in two newly-established small factories in the Thai-Chinese zone in the past, and these enterprises responded by quickly closing down shop and re-opening again later. He says that rather than allowing labor organizing, Chinese companies prefer to rely on legal procedures for addressing workplace grievances, using lawyers to tie cases up in lengthy legal processes that can last years.

Another prominent labor issue is the practice of Chinese companies bringing in Chinese nationals to work on their investment projects. According to a Thai academic with expertise on Thai political economy and migration, this practice is particularly common in the construction industry, where those working in positions above general laborers are most often Chinese.[32] Other studies have also identified this practice, revealing that most management positions go to Chinese nationals, while Thais are hired on the production line or in junior management positions (Kosaikanont, 2019:186). This trend is less prevalent, according to Krit, in non-Chinese owned factories. Aroon estimates that there are about 500 Chinese nationals working in high-level management positions at the Zhonce factory. Workers also told us that such a hierarchy within the company negatively impacts the labor process, as it is difficult for Thai workers to communicate with Chinese management. In most cases, they must use a translator to talk to managers, though raising workplace issues, discussing grievances, and

30 Interview on May 19, 2019
31 Interview on May 19, 2019
32 Interview on October 1, 2018

negotiating various aspects of work are still difficult endeavors. This difficulty is compounded by the fact that it is difficult for the workers to interact with the company's human resources department and have no reliable mechanisms to raise grievances. There thus seems to be a workplace hierarchy within the company that obstructs lines of communication between Thai workers and Chinese management, precluding possibilities for the former to assert its needs.

Furthermore, according to our interviews as well as secondary sources, the management style in Chinese-owned factories is often arbitrary and not standardized within the workplace. When workers raise issues with their supervisor, says Aroon, outcomes often depend on which supervisor they are dealing with, and it is often a hassle to follow up on issues that get ignored. Naing, from the Huawei battery factory, says that the two Huawei factories in the area have completely different policies. For example, one will give paid sick leave while the other will not, and conditions often depend on the manager of each unit. Comparing the Zhongce workplace to those in Japanese companies, Kosaikanont finds that while the latter give clear career path information, grade and test skills with standard measures, and consider education when negotiating salaries, the former does not (2019:188). In addition, Japanese companies spell out policies, plans, work flows, and performance indicators, making them accessible to employees, while Zhongce has low transparency in its decision-making (ibid).

As discussed with workers as well as with a Thai scholar familiar with Chinese investment in Thailand, Chinese companies adhere less strictly to Thai laws than other companies, reflected in the use of loopholes and arbitrary rules. Krit tells us that in cases he helps with, there are common wage issues, e.g., workers being denied minimum wage or receiving late payments. There are also non-transparent and arbitrary wage systems, wherein the firm agrees to pay workers for reaching certain production targets but then finds reasons to cut wages so that they only provide the base fare. According to workers at the Zhongce factory, arbitrary dismissal and harsh punishments for workplace mistakes are common. It is also difficult for workers to gain permission for sick leave and days off for legal holidays, which are afforded by Thai labor laws. One of the most common problems in the factory is that of wage theft from overtime work. As Somsak reported, he and his coworkers usually only receive 1.5 times the regular wage for hours of work past eight PM as opposed to the required three times pay. In addition, while the law stipulates a one hour per day break, Art reports that

he only gets a 30-minute lunch break, and there are no break rooms or rest areas. Likewise, at Huawei, workers take their breaks outside, on the road. In contrast, a man we talked to who works in a Japanese rubber factory says that he has clear break times and break areas (though he is quick to point out different problems they have in the factory).[33] Chinese construction companies are also known to work around regulations regarding importing or hiring local labor, depending on skill category. As one scholar told us, these companies can be tricky in the way that they designate skilled categories in need of foreign expertise that are in fact low-skilled labor roles.[34]

Lastly, substandard safety practices in Chinese-owned factories came up frequently in our worker interviews. The man who works in the Japanese rubber factory says that it is a common perception among workers in the eastern seaboard that Chinese factories have many safety issues, and many do not want to work in these places if they can avoid it. In Krit's experience as a labor organizer, machines in Chinese factories are often below safety standards, and some factories do not supply their workers with personal safety equipment, requiring them to purchase them themselves. He says that when he hears of fatal workplace accidents, it is often from Chinese factories.[35] While Art says his employer did provide him with a helmet, they do not carry out regular inspections of factory machinery. Aroon, makes a comparison between Zhongce and the Japanese rubber (for electric cables) factory, where he worked for four years prior: at the former, if there is something wrong with a machine they do not fix it as long as it is still running. They focus on production rather than safety, and he says he feels less safe at this job than in his previous one. In addition, the Japanese company would take responsibility for accidents, whereas his current factory will punish workers for making a mistake resulting in an injury. In one incident, management fired two workers who they caught taking photographs of their fingers after an accident. Workers in Kosaikanont's study reported similar company priorities of productivity over quality, resulting in questionable safety standards (Kosaikanont, 2019:188). Workplace health issues are also a concern. A recent environmental health impact assessment report that Bun was involved with revealed that 22 workers tested in the Huawei factory were found to have unhealthy levels of lead in their system. According to three workers we talked to from this factory, their bosses forced them

33 Interview on May 19, 2019
34 Interview on October 1, 2018
35 On the day we interviewed him, a Zhongce worker was reporting to him a fatal accident that recently occurred in the factory.

to ingest vials of Chinese medicine, which they had no information about, before all three of the lead tests in an attempt to flush their systems.

CONCLUSION

After three decades of growing and diversifying Chinese investment in Thailand, particularly in export-oriented manufacturing, the economic relationship between the two countries is entering a new phase characterized by a close confluence of economic development agendas. Current and proposed investments in Thailand's transportation infrastructure and emergent innovative technology industries fulfill objectives of China's Belt and Road Initiative, Thailand's 20-year strategy and "Thailand 4.0" development model, and Southeast Asian economic integration agendas being pushed forward by the ADB and ASEAN member states. Chinese investments in the Eastern Economic Corridor and Thailand's railway projects are the most pronounced examples of this confluence of interests.

Our research on Chinese investment in Thailand raises important issues for Thai communities and labor that we should continue to monitor as the relationship progresses. First, the Thai government's use of authoritarian powers under Section 44 to overwrite existing development project protocols and expedite projects to attract Chinese investment is in need of continued observation. By using these powers to fast-track the EEC, railway projects, and extractive industries projects, the Thai government has shown a willingness to bypass local community concerns and established planning and implementation procedures to facilitate Chinese capital and Thai state agendas. More broadly, the political context maintains a difficult climate for resistance, and local activists campaigning against some projects have faced intimidation. To be sure, these issues are not necessarily specific to Chinese companies and Chinese investment projects in Thailand but reflect broader trends in the country. Nevertheless, the examples in this chapter show that they have been prominent in Chinese FDI cases and are thus worth continued attention.

In addition, while it is difficult to generalise based on our small sample of worker interviews in two Chinese-owned factories, worker accounts of labor practices in these workplaces raise concerns for Thai workers, especially with the expected expansion of Chinese capital in the EEC. As discussed above, workers in two major Chinese-owned factories in the eastern

seaboard identified the common use of flexible, non-unionised labor, lax adherence to labor laws, arbitrary management styles, communication barriers between Thai (and migrant) workers and Chinese management, and a frightening neglect of safety protocols. In the context of an expanding investment partnership between China and Thailand, an increase in Chinese investment in the country, and in the EEC in particular, raises concerns about an expansion of these practices. Furthermore, if Chinese enterprises begin to take the lead in developing new industries in the EEC, as government officials and analysts expect, there is a risk that such practices, if continued by these firms, can become normalised in a booming sector of the Thai economy. In addition to monitoring labor practices of these companies and industries, it is important to continue to assess what is unique about such practices in Chinese as opposed to other (Thai and foreign) companies in Thailand. Relatedly, there should be more research on the differences in labor practices of Chinese state-owned and private companies, as well as differences in the Thai state's relationship to them.

New industries in the EEC, which Chinese enterprises are taking a leading role in developing, may also give rise to new labor issues that we should follow closely. The so-called "4th industrial revolution" that Thailand seeks to lead in Asia will purportedly rely on digitisation and "integration between cyber and physical dimensions" (Petrillo, et al. 2018). With such changes, we can expect changes in the labor market and labor process that could impact Thai workers. Once concern is the contraction of the Thai labor force due to automation. The disappearance of factory jobs is a trend identified in China (Ford 2015), and in Thailand, 44% of automobile and auto parts industry workers are at a high risk of unemployment (Maneechai, 2018). In 2016, according to data from a Welfare and Labor Protection Statistical Report of the Ministry of Labor, there were layoffs of 2,778 workers in 41 companies caused by "technological change and downsizing" (ibid). Other, more optimistic, forecasts see job transformation rather than job displacement as the main labor impact of these new industries (BKK Post, 2017; Segal, 2018). These changes would come with their own challenges, as a reimagining of work tasks could privilege higher skilled workers over those currently employed in the industrial hubs of Thailand. According to a Bank of Thailand study, new entrants into the labor market may have trouble finding jobs in factories using fully automated systems, and other workers could find it difficult to adapt to the new required skills (Maneechai, 2018). In addition, a transformation of jobs would also mean

a transformation of labor processes, which would yield new labor issues and challenges. Leaders from the Federation of Thailand Automobile Workers Unions say that working alongside robots could put added pressure on workers to manage the work in front of them, which could be dangerous. According to them, changes in the labor process have also indicated changes in labor resistance: after the introduction of robots in a Thai Suzuki plant, the tactic of production line slowdowns was difficult to put into practice (ibid).

Lastly, and more broadly, as developments unfold, we must better assess the long-term interests of China and Chinese companies in Thailand and Southeast Asia from a labor perspective. Academics have characterized China as advancing a type of "patient capital" around the world, in which a stakeholder invests in a country's development more broadly (Wang, 2018). Chinese state-owned capital in Africa has demonstrated more concern for long-term development in extractive industries than private companies that prioritize short-term yields in the interest of shareholders, allowing for more opportunities for national governments to assert their interests vis-à-vis the former than the latter (Lee, 2017). China's ambitions to expand its Belt and Road Initiative throughout Southeast Asia suggest long term interest in controlling supply chains and tapping into consumer markets, with Thailand serving as a strategic point to do so. In this developing context, we must continue to follow the existing and emergent impacts on Thai labor as well as identify what opportunities may exist for Thai labor to assert its interests vis-a-vis Chinese capital and the Thai state.

References

Anuchitworawong, Chaiyasit. (2011). "The Impact of Foreign Direct Investment on Productivity, Employment and Export Performance in Thai Firms." In Foreign Direct Investments in Asia, edited by Chalongphob Sassangkarn, Yung Chul Park, and Sung Jin Kang. New York: Routledge.

Apisitniran, Lamonphet. (2018). "Thai-China Dealings Targeted to Double." Bangkok Post, August 25, 2018.

Apisitniran, Lamonphet. (2019). "China Wants EEC Estate Land." Bangkok Post, March 15, 2019.

Asian Development Bank (ADB). (2012). "Overview: Greater Mekong Subre-

gion Economic Cooperation Program." Asian Development Bank.
Asian Development Bank (ADB). (2018). "Assessment of Greater Mekong Subregion Economic Corridors, Integrative Report." GMS Secretariat, Asian Development Bank.
Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). (2008). "ASEAN Economic Community Blueprint." ASEAN Secretariat.
Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). (2012). "ASEAN Vision 2020." ASEAN Secretariat.
Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). (2016). "Master Plan on Asean Connectivity 2025." ASEAN Secretariat.
Baker, Christopher John, and Pasuk Phongpaichit. (2017). A History of Ayutthaya: Siam in the Early Modern World. Cambridge, United Kingdom ; New York, NY, USA: Cambridge University Press.
Bangkok Post. (2017). "Labour Risks Going under amid AI Wave." Bangkok Post, November 27, 2017.
Bank of Thailand (BOT). (2017). "เส้นทางการลงทุนจากแดนมังกร ชลิดา แท่งเพ็ชร และ วรินี วงศ์อุไร." Bank of Thailand.
Board of Investment (BOI). (2016). "Why Thailand?" Thailand Board of Investment.
Board of Investment (BOI). (2017). "Opportunity Thailand: Innovation-Driven Economy." Thailand Board of Investment.
Board of Investment (BOI). (2018). "Press Release: Belt and Road Initiative and EEC Connectivity Boosts Investment Opportunities in ASEAN, Thailand Tells Chinese Business Delegates." Thailand Board of Investment.
Board of Investment (BOI). (2019). "Foreign Direct Investment Summary 2018." Thailand Board of Investment.
Brautigam, D., Thomas Farole, and Tang Xiaoyang. (2010). China's Investment in Africa Special Economic Zones: Prospects, Challenges, and Opportunities. Economic Premise, no. 5. Washington, D.C.: World Bank.
Chaitrong, Wichit. (2017). "Japan, China Compete for Influence in Thailand." The Nation, September 25, 2017.
Chinwanno, Chulacheeb. (2009). "Rising China and Thailan'd Policy of Strategic Engagement." In The Rise of China: Responses from Southeast Asia and Japan, edited by Jun Tsunekawa. NIDS Joint Research Series 4. Tokyo: The National Institute for Defense Studies, Japan.
Chuenta, Satanon. (2017). "Anti-Mining Activists Condemn 'Propaganda.'" The Isaan Record, October 17, 2017.
Corben, Ron. (2017). "Thailand, China to Sign $5 Billion Rail Infrastructure

Agreement." Voice of America, June 30, 2017.
Fifield, Anna. (2018). "Will Thailand's General-Prime Minister Make Good on His Latest Promise to Hold Elections?" Washington Post, April 15, 2018.
Ford, Martin. (2015). "China's Troubling Robot Revolution." New York Times, June 10, 2015.
Ganesan, Narayanan. (2018). "Chinese Infrastructure Investments in Southeast Asia and Their Implications for the Region." Blickwechsel.
Glassman, Jim. (2010). Bounding the Mekong: The Asian Development Bank, China, and Thailand. Honolulu: University of Hawai◎i Press.
Greenpeace Thailand. (2014). "Frequently Asked Question on Krabi Coal Fired Power Plant Project." Greenpeace Thailand.
Hewison, Kevin. (1989). Bankers and Bureaucrats: Capital and the Role of the State in Thailand. Monograph Series / Yale University Southeast Asia Studies, Yale Center for International and Area Studies 34. New Haven, Conn: Yale University Southeast Asia Studies, Yale Center for International and Area Studies.
Hewison, Kevin. (2018). "Thailand: An Old Relationship Renewed." The Pacific Review 31 (1): 116–30.
Hewison, Kevin, and Woradul Tularak. (2013). "Thailand and Precarious Work: An Assessment." American Behavioral Scientist 57 (4): 444–67.
Hongfang, Shen. (2013). "The Economic Relations between China and Thailand under the Context of CAFTA: An Assessment." Chinese Studies 02 (February): 52.
Hong Kong Trade Development Council (HKTDC). (2017). "Thai-China Belt and Road Link on Track." Hong Kong Trade Development Council (HKTDC), April 25, 2017.
Johnston, Lauren A. (2018). "The Belt and Road Initiative: What Is in It for China?" Asia & the Pacific Policy Studies 0 (0).
Kosaikanont, Romyen. (2019). "Chinese Capital Going Global: Thai-Chinese Industrial Zone and Labor Conditions in Thailand." In The Sociology of Chinese Capitalism in Southeast Asia: Challenges and Prospects, edited by Yos Santasombat. Singapore: Palgrave Macmillan.
Lee, Ching Kwan. (2017). The Specter of Global China. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
Li, Mengying, Athapol Ruangkanjanases, and Chenin Chen. 2014. "China's Foreign Direct Investment in Thailand -- Current Status and Future Prospects." International Journal of Trade, Economics and Finance 5 (4): 296–304.

Liu Ying and Kankesu Jayanthakumaran. (2016). "People's Republic of China (PRC): Thailand Economic Relationship After Signing of Free Trade Agreement in 2005." In Chinese Global Production Networks in ASEAN. Kim, Young-Chan, ed. Cham: Springer. 77-96.

Liu, Weidong, and Michael Dunford. (2016). "Inclusive Globalization: Unpacking China's Belt and Road Initiative." Area Development and Policy 1 (3): 323–40.

Macan-Markar, Marwaan. (2018). "Greens Take on China's Infrastructure Projects in Southeast Asia." Nikkei Asian Review, March 26, 2018.

Manarungsan, Sompop. (2009). "Thailand-China Cooperation in Trade, Investment and Official Development Assistance." In A China-Japan Comparison of Economic Relationships with the Mekong River Basin Countries, edited by Mitsuhiro Kagami, 290–367. Chiba: Institute of Developing Economies Japan External Trade Organization.

Maneechai, Tewarit. (2018). "Robots vs Labour: The State of the Car Industry in Thailand – the Politics of the Robot Wave." Prachatai English, October 11, 2018.

McCargo, Duncan, and Ukrist Pathamanand. (2005). The Thaksinization of Thailand. Copenhagen: Nias Press.

Mellor, William. (2018). "The Selling of 'Thailand 4.0.'" Nikkei Asian Review, August 8, 2018.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA). 2006. "Collected Speech of Minister of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs." Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Thailand.

National Economic and Social Development Board (NESDB). (2016). "The Twelfth National Economic and Social Development Plan (2017-2021)." National Economic and Social Development Board.

Petrillo, Antonella, Fabio De Felice, Raffaele Cioffi, and Federico Zomparelli. (2018). "Fourth Industrial Revolution: Current Practices, Challenges, and Opportunities." IntechOpen.

Phoonphongphiphat, Apornrath. (2018a). "Thailand Rolls out Red Carpet for 500 Chinese Companies." Nikkei Asian Review, August 24, 2018.

Phoonphongphiphat, Apornrath. (2018b). "China Railway Joins CP Group to Bid for Thai High-Speed Rail." Nikkei Asian Review, November 13, 2018.

Porphant, Ouyyanont, and Tsubouchi Yoshihiro. (2001). "Aspects of the Place and Role of the Chinese in Late Nineteenth Century Bangkok." Southeast Asian Studies 39 (3): 384–97.

Reuters. (2017). "Thailand to Build Coal-Fied Power Plant despite Opposition." Reuters, February 17, 2017.

Rujivanarom, Pratch. (2016). "Anti-Coal Groups Protest against Latest NCPO Order." The Nation, January 27, 2016.

Rujivanarom, Pratch. (2018). "Opponents to Boycot New Krabi Power Plant Hearing." The Nation, January 28, 2018.

Saisom, Jirasuda. (2017). "New Push for Potash Minint Hits Opposition." The Isaan Record, November 14, 2017.

Segal, Michael. (2018). "How Automation Is Changing Work." Nature, November 28, 2018.

Song, Tao, Weidong Liu, Zhigao Liu, and Yeerken Wuzhati. (2018). "Chinese Overseas Industrial Parks in Southeast Asia: An Examination of Policy Mobility from the Perspective of Embeddedness." Journal of Geographical Sciences 28 (9): 1288–1306.

Songwanich, Suwatchai. (2017). "EEC -- Thailand's Magnet to Woo Chinese Investors." The Nation, May 29, 2017.

Songwanich, Suwatchai. (2018). "New Direction for Chinese Investment." The Nation, January 29, 2018.

South China Morning Post. (2015). "Outcry Grows over Plans to Build Coal Plant near Thailand's Most Popular Beaches." South China Morning Post, July 21, 2015.

Srimalee, Somluck. (2018). "Bangkok Property Allure Rises for Chinese." The Nation, April 20, 2018.

Suvakunta, Pittaya. (2007). "China's Go-Out Strategy: Chinese Foreign Direct Investment in Thailand." Thammasat Review 12 (1): 116–46.

Tanakasempipat, Patpicha. (2018). "Alibaba to Invest $320 Million in Thailand, as Rivals Boost Presence." Reuters, April 19, 2018.

The Isaan Record. (2018). "Sakon Nakhon Anti-Mining Activist Files Police Complaint over Intimidation." The Isaan Record, February 22, 2018.

The Nation. (2017). "Chinese Link with CP on EEC Fund." The Nation, December 7, 2017.

Thepgumpanat, Panarat. (2017). "Thailand Signs Deal with Chinese State Firms for High-Speed Railway." Reuters, September 6, 2017.

Villadiego, Laura. (2017). "Thailand Chases Chinese Money, but at What Cost?" South China Morning Post, July 23, 2017.

Wang, Y. (2018). China's development cooperation and patient capital at work. Presentation to School of Public Health, Harvard University, April 6. Available here: https://cdn2.sph.harvard.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/136/2018/03/China-dev-cooperation-and-patient-capital-at-work.pdf.

Wangkiat, Paritta. (2016). "New Wave of Chinese Coming to Live in Thai-

land." Bangkok Post, September 23, 2016.
Wangkiat, Paritta. (2018). "Thailand Woos Chinese Investment for Major Industrial Revamp." China Dialogue, December 21, 2018.
Zawacki, Benjamin. (2017). Thailand: Shifting Ground between the US and a Rising China. Asian Arguments. London: Zed Books Ltd.