

Chapter Five

Profile of Foreign Workers in Thailand

5.1 Introduction

This chapter examines the magnitude, characteristics and geographical distribution of the foreign labour force in Thailand. The three main characteristics of foreign workers – gender composition, country of origin and economic activity – are examined. This chapter uses statistical analysis of data based primarily from officially published statistics, especially from the Department of Employment (DOE) and the Alien Occupational Control Division, and supplemented with estimates from other sources for the period between 1987 and 2004. It should, nevertheless, be remembered that there are limitations in the data as discussed in Chapter Two.

5.2 Background

History suggests that the country's economic development has directly and indirectly played, and is continuing to play, an important role in determining foreign labour movement into the country. Therefore, in order to understand how trends in and traits of foreign labour immigration have changed over the last decade or so, it is necessary to compare them in three economic phases: a period before 1990, during the 'Miracle' period, and after the 1997 Financial and Economic Crisis.

As discussed in the previous chapter, there are six possible pathways for foreign employment in Thailand. Because the nature of the data dictates it, foreign workers discussed in this chapter will be mainly grouped according to the respective pathways for foreign employment admission: Permanent work permit holder, Temporary work permit holder (including both non-immigrants and permanent residents), BOI and other law workers (workers under Special Laws), Under-Clause-12 foreign worker, and worker under the Resolution of the Cabinet. Because of the lack of reliable statistics, the study omits the *direct* examination of illegal migrants. It is inarguable that illegal migratory stocks and flows are – naturally and

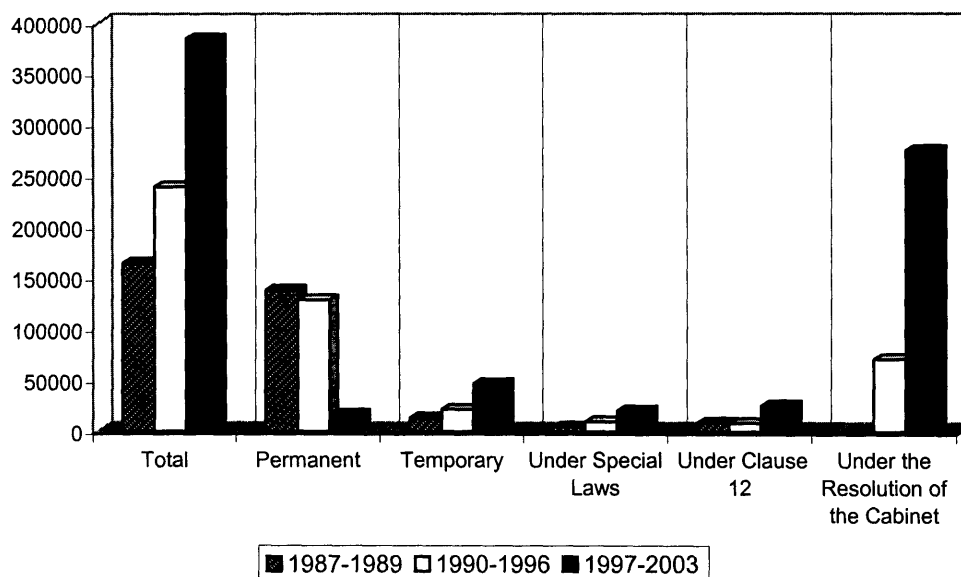
theoretically – difficult, if not impossible, to quantify. Nonetheless, examination of ‘Under-Clause-12 foreign workers’ and ‘workers under the Resolution of the Cabinet’, who by nature are illegal migrants, will give a general picture of illegal migrant workers in the country. In fact, it is usual to estimate and appraise both illegal migrants and illegal migrant workers in Thailand founded on these two groups of workers (Asia Migration Atlas 2004: online; Manning 2002: 365).

It is, also, important to note from the outset that, even though the 2004 Illegal Migrant Worker Registration closed on 31 July of that year, the registration process was not finished until 15 November. At the time of writing, the official data is not yet publicly available. For this reason, the study leaves out this registration from the examination. Nevertheless, unpublished and incomplete statistics of the registration obtained from the Alien Occupational Control Division can be found in Appendix L.

5.3 Magnitude of labour immigration: stocks, flows and proportions

The stocks of authorised foreign workers in Thailand have been increasing since the late 1980s and are shown in Figure 5.1. Over the past seventeen years, besides permanent work permit holders, all other categories of foreign workers have increased, especially following the period after the Crisis. The total number of foreign workers increased from 164,356 per year in the period before 1990 to 239,148 during the country’s economic success, and to an annual average of about 384,226 in the period 1997 to 2003. The current annual number of temporary work permit holders on average (between 1997 and 2003) was 46,726, which increased from 13,227 and from 21,596 in the period 1987-1989 and 1990-1996 respectively. The number of foreign workers entering under special laws rose to about 20,328 a year in 1997-2003, more than five times the equivalent figure from 1987-1989 and double from 1990-1996. Under-Clause-12 foreign workers proliferated from averaging 8,650 and 8,354 a year in 1987-1989 and in 1990-1996 respectively, to 25,538 in 1997-2003. The average number of foreign workers entering under the Resolution of the Cabinet quadrupled from 70,791 in 1990-1996 to 275,028 in 1997-2003.

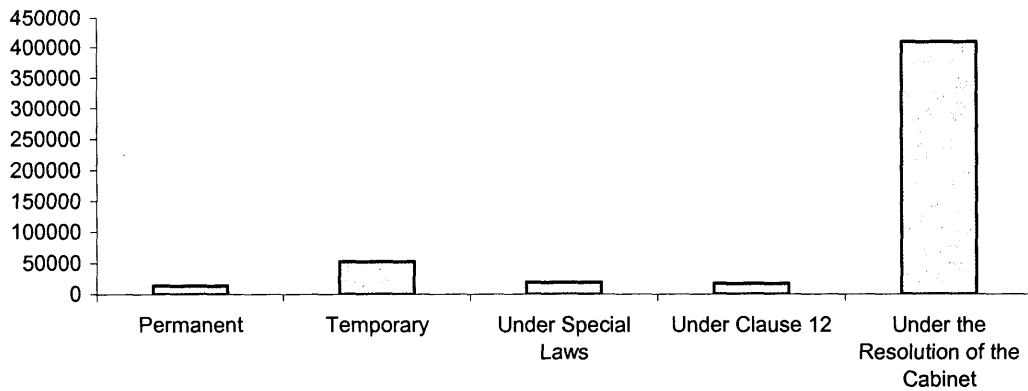
Figure 5.1 Average Annual Number of Authorised Foreign Workers in Thailand by Type of Permission, 1987-2003



Sources: Permanent and temporary work permit holders, and workers under Special Laws and Under-Clause-12 workers data from 1987 to 1992: Department of Labour (1987-1992) *Year Book of Labour Statistics* (various tables); data from 1993 to 1996: Department of Labour Protection and Welfare (1993-1996) *Year Book of Labour Statistics* (various tables); data from 1997 to 2001: Department of Employment (1997-2001) *Year Book of Employment Statistics* (various tables); and data from 2002 to 2003: Department of Employment (2004a), online.
Foreign workers under the Resolution of the Cabinet data for 1992, and from 1996 to 2000: Alien Occupational Control Division (2000), p. 53; an approximation for 1994-1995: Chaintayananda, Sudthichitt, Gary Risser, and Supang Chantavanich (1997), p. 2; data from 2001 to 2002: Alien Occupational Control Division (2002), p. 93; and data for 2003: Vatanathon, Porntip (2003), p. 62.

Currently, official statistics indicated that the stock of authorised foreign workers was at 513,736 nationwide. As can be seen in Figure 5.2, out of just over half a million foreign workers who possessed work permits (legal foreign workers) in the country, as of February 2004, 14,423 were permanent work permit holders, 17,341 were Under-Clause-12 workers, 19,480 were workers under Special Laws, and 53,153 were holders of a temporary Work Permit. Approximately 409,339 of the total authorised foreign workforces were ‘illegal migrants’ – namely Burmese, Laotians and Cambodians – who have been legitimised to work under the Resolution of the Cabinet (so-called ‘Illegal Migrant Worker Registration’). It is worthy of note here that, as shown in Appendix L, by the end of the 2004 Illegal Migrant Worker Registration, there were 1,284,920 registered illegal immigrants. Interestingly enough, however, almost 12 per cent of these registered illegal immigrants were still working without authorisation. This reflects not only the widespread incidence of illegal foreign employment, but also the complexity of the labour immigration system in Thailand.

Figure 5.2 Number of Migrant Workers in Thailand Who Possess Work Permits by Type of Permission, as of February 2004



Note: Since the officially published statistics of late-2003 re-registration are not available, and because it was a re-registration (extension) opened exclusively for previously registered workers, the number of registered foreign workers in 2004 is estimated to be about the same as that from previous registrations (2002-2003).

Sources: Permanent and temporary work permit holders and foreign workers under Special Laws and Under-Clause-12 worker: Department of Employment (2004b), online.

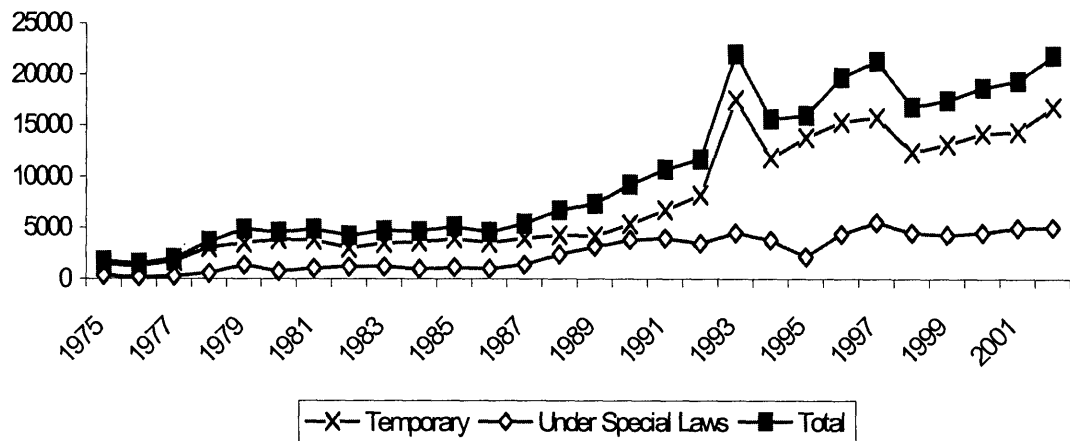
Foreign workers under the Resolution of the Cabinet: Vatanathon, Porntip (2003), p. 62.

To illustrate the characteristics of flows of foreign labour into Thailand over time, Figure 5.3 uses aggregate statistics for the twenty six years between 1975 and 2001 to demonstrate trends in the annual numbers of expatriates who legally travel with an initial intention to work and who have received permission to work (that is temporary work permit holders and workers under special laws). According to Figure 5.3, the influx of authorised foreign workers started to increase in 1978 in the year after the enactment of the Alien Employment Act. The obvious explanation for the rise, therefore, would be the fact that the Act outlined clearer procedures for procurement and maintenance of a work permit. Moreover, the government began to promote exports at the same time. The number of foreign workers who received work permits began to escalate from the beginning of the 1990s when the economy was booming, peaked in 1993, but dropped and oscillated when the economy was deteriorating between 1994 and 1999. Nonetheless, after the economy went on a recovery phase, the annual number of expatriates given work permits rose continuously after 1999.

However, as can be clearly seen in Figure 5.4, this trend was by no means uniform throughout the entire foreign workforce and, as can be seen in Figure 5.3, there was a discrepancy even in the trends between the two congruent groups of foreign workers – Temporary work permit holders and those under special laws. Thus, in order to comprehend the characteristics of flows

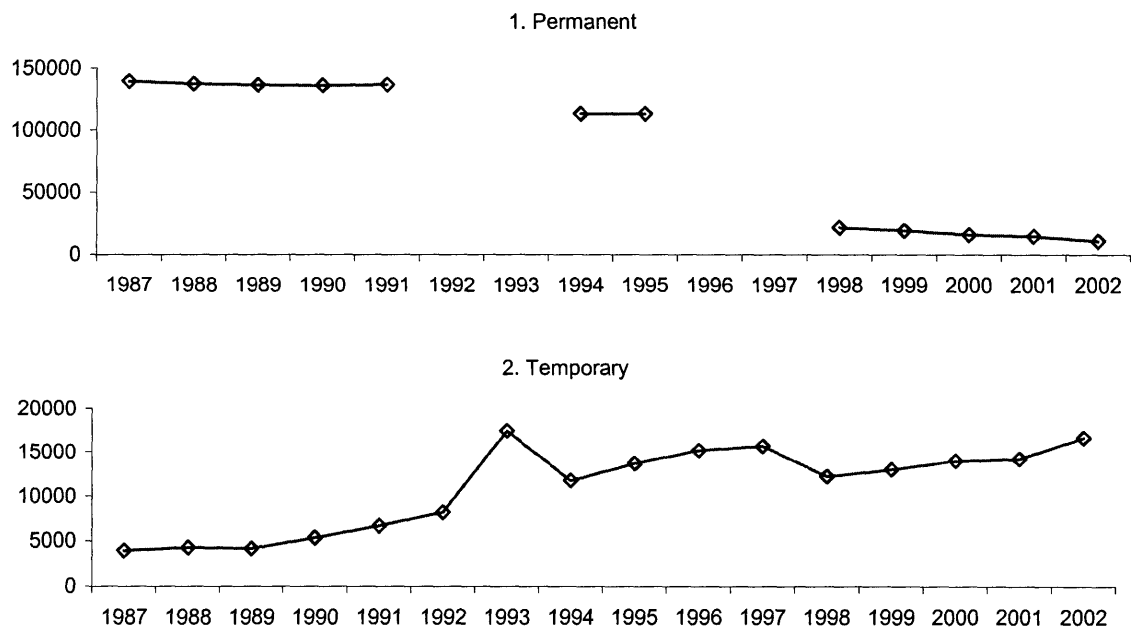
of foreign workers for the entire of Thailand's foreign workforce, it is necessary to examine the flows of each group of foreign workers and make a comparison.

Figure 5.3 Number of Foreigners in Thailand Granted Work Permit Each Year (Temporary and Under Special Laws), 1975-2002

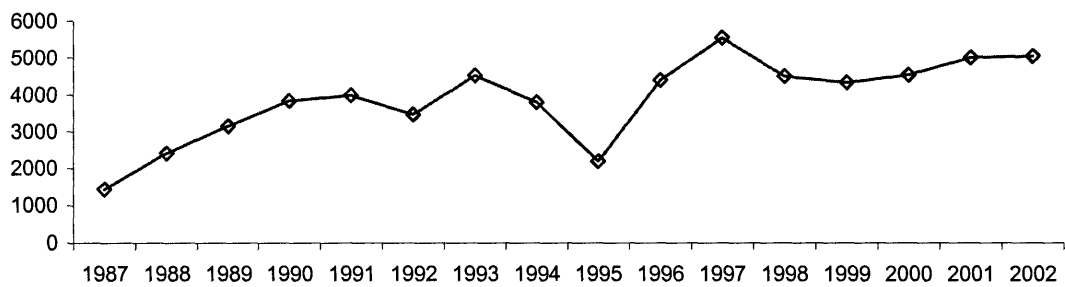


Sources: From 1975 to 1986: Poapongsakorn, Nipon and Amomthip Taethiengtam (1992), p. 23.
 From 1987 to 1992: Department of Labour (1987-1992) *Year Book of Labour Statistics* (various tables).
 From 1993 to 1996: Department of Labour Protection and Welfare (1993-1996) *Year Book of Labour statistics* (various tables).
 From 1997 to 2002: Department of Employment (1997-2002) *Year Book of Employment Statistics* (various tables).

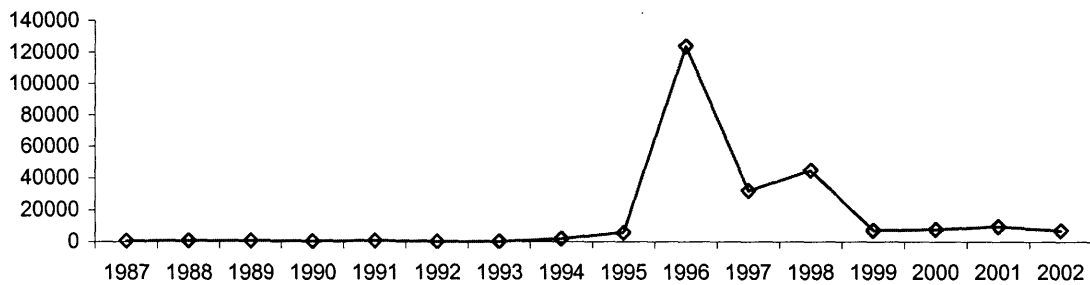
Figure 5.4 Change in Inflows of Labour Migrant in Thailand by Type of Permission



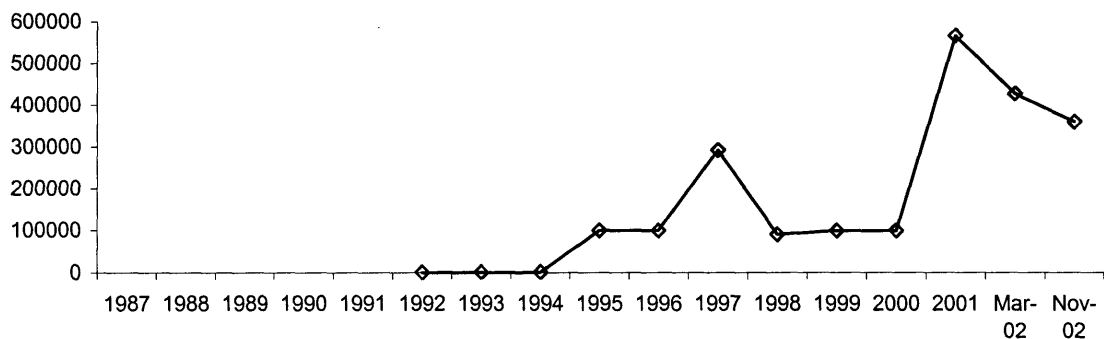
3. Under Special Laws



4. Under Clause 12



5. Under the Resolution of the Cabinet



Note: In Figure 5.4.1, data are not available between 1992 and 1993, and between 1995 and 1997.

Source: Permanent and temporary work permit holders, and workers under Special Laws and Under-Clause-12 workers data from 1987 to 1992: Department of Labour (1987-1992) *Year Book of Labour Statistics* (various tables); data from 1993 to 1996: Department of Labour Protection and Welfare (1993-1996) *Year Book of Labour Statistics* (various tables); and data from 1997 to 2002: Department of Employment (1997-2002) *Year Book of Employment Statistics* (various tables).

Foreign workers under the Resolution of the Cabinet data for 1992, and from 1996-2000: Alien Occupational Control Division (2000), p. 53; an approximation for 1994-1995: Chaintayananda, Sudthichitt, Gary Risser, and Supang Chantavanich (1997), p. 2; and data from 2001-2002: Alien Occupational Control Division (2002), p. 93.

As shown in Figures 5.3, 5.4.2 and 5.4.3, even though the trends in expatriates granted work permits through a Temporary visa and ones under Special Laws appear to be aligned, they moved at proportionally different rates. The annual incidence of foreigners granted temporary work permits accelerated faster after 1990, reflecting the demand for the broader range of

skills of foreign workers. For instance, the number of foreign workers granted temporary work permits was 5,377 in 1990, rose to 17,445 in the peak year, and dropped to 12,273 in 1998; whereas, in the same years, the number of expatriate workers granted work permits under special laws rose from 3,837 in 1990 to 4,511 in 1993 and increased to 4,484 in 1998. In 2002, the number of foreign workers granted temporary work permits increased to 16,722, which implies a rate of increase of 211 per cent from 1990. Thus, the number of foreign workers granted work permits under special laws stood at 5,030 and there was a 31 per cent increase rate for the past twelve years. Nonetheless, both trends overall tended to move upward through the three economic phases over the past 15 years and, in light of the current economic trends, appear to continue ascending.

On the other hand, Figure 5.4.1 presents an almost diametrically opposite trend. The number of foreign workers obtaining permanent work permits has been declining for the last 15 years. There were 139,712 permanent work permit holders in 1987, 112,828 in 1994 and, recently, just 10,935 in 2002. The root cause for such a decline is the fact that this type of work permit is no longer issued. Permanent work permits were granted in large numbers only between late 1962 and early 1963, mostly to the Chinese who migrated into the country before that time. Understandably, the number of permanent work permit holders has been constantly dropping because of the demise of the permit holder, change in the holder's residential status or job, and emigration.

The next groups of foreign workers worth examining together are Under-Clause-12 workers and workers under the Resolution of the Cabinet. These workers are either *personae non-gratae* or illegal migrants. Unlike the flows of temporary work permit holders and workers under special laws, and of permanent work permits holders, over the course of fifteen years the influx of these two groups of foreign workers into the country each year seemed to oscillate erratically. However the annual number of work permits given to these groups of foreign workers intensified, particularly during the last five to eight years. This is because after 1994, and especially after the Financial and Economic Crisis, the government imposed a tough conduct policy with enforcement on illegal migrant workers. As can be seen in Figures 5.4.4 and 5.4.5, the number of foreigners granted work permits under Clause 12 was relatively

low prior to 1993, ranging between 798 to 145 people and there were only 944 foreign workers (illegal migrants) registered under the Resolution of Cabinet in 1992.

However, Figures 5.4.4 and 5.4.5 show that the trends changed dramatically after 1994. The number of Under-Clause-12 workers granted work permits, by comparison, was 1,997 in 1994, and rose to 5,866 in 1995 before rising to 123,368 in 1996. Even though there were just over 7,000 Under-Clause-12 workers granted work permits in 2002, the number of work permits granted to this group of workers in this year was still considerably high compared to those before 1994, approximately 10 to 70 times higher. Between 1994 and 2002, the number of illegal migrants who registered under the Resolution of the Cabinet was between 90,900 and 568,249 (Figure 5.4.5). Nevertheless, because foreign workers under the Resolution of the Cabinet could obtain work permits only through a so-called 'Illegal Migrant Worker Registration', which was only promulgated intermittently, and the work permits issued are normally valid for only one year or less, it is best to examine the characteristics of the flows of this group of foreign workers by ascertaining the quantity of foreigners registered in each and every registration and re-registration (details on regulations and procedure of each registration are presented in Appendix G).

In 1994, because there was a shortage of workers especially along the border areas between Thailand and Myanmar, the government – with the approval of the Cabinet – announced an unprecedented amnesty and registration for which Thai employers had been clamouring. However, the registration exercise was a failure. As shown in Figure 5.4.5, after the end of the 1992 Illegal Migrant Worker Registration, on 12 October 1993, only 944 workers (Burmese) registered. This was mainly because of the exorbitant bond of 50,000 baht per worker charged that employers had to deposit with Thai authorities as refundable guarantee money. When the prohibitive bond money was reduced to 5,000 baht per head in 1994, an estimated 100,000 Burmese illegal migrants were registered and granted work permits (Chaintayananda, Risser, and Chantavanich 1997: 2).

Again in 1996, in order to restrict the increasing number of illegal workers and, to bring them under some form of control, the government announced another registration exercise, this time, allowing workers from not only Myanmar but also from the other two main sources –

Lao PDR and Cambodia – to register and apply for work permits. There were nearly 300,000 workers registered and granted work permits by the end of the registration period, on 28 February 1997 (Figure 5.4.5). Even though the 1996 registration was supposed to be the last one after the 1997 Financial and Economic Crisis – as a result of the government’s emergency employment scheme to create jobs for Thai people – the government announced the deportation of illegal immigrant workers and a ban on the work permit extensions for workers previously registered in 1996 and 1997. Inevitably, the government was forced to implement another programme of registration in 1998 as a result of the unwillingness of Thai workers to take up certain jobs and the critical demand for workers in jobs previously occupied by foreign workers. However, this time, there was only around one third the number of registrations of foreign workers (Burmese, Laotian, and Cambodian) as compared with 1996-1997 registrations, which included those renewing their work permits for a second year.

In August 1999, the government again announced another registration and, in the following year, on 29 August 2000, Cabinet sanctioned the government’s proposal to give another-one-year extension for workers registered in 1999. There were 106,684 workers registered in 1999, but only 99,974 work permits were issued (Alien Occupational Control Division 2000: 57). Since the government had not been quite successful in curtailing illegal immigration (the ratio of non-registered to registered foreign workers rose from 70:30 in 1998 to 86:14 in 1999), the government, in 2001, was determined to deplete the large stock of illegal migrant workers in the country, especially those from Myanmar, Laos, and Cambodia (Chalamwong 2001: 12). Together with the government’s ultimatum of intensified enforcement after the end of the registration, the government announced a new registration in August 2001. This time, as can be seen in Figure 5.4.5, the government managed to register over half a million foreign workers. However, when it announced a re-registration in order for previously registered foreign workers nationwide to extend their work permits for another six months, the number of re-registered workers dropped slightly to 430,074 in March 2002 and to 363,100 in November 2002, conceivably as a result of unawareness or resignation of workers, returning home, and completion of work projects (Figure 5.4.5). Additionally, at the end of 2002, the government sanctioned two incidental re-registrations, exclusively in Tak province where the demand for and the number of illegal migrants was high, and these registrations ended on January 2003, adding 46,239 additional workers into this type of migrant workforce

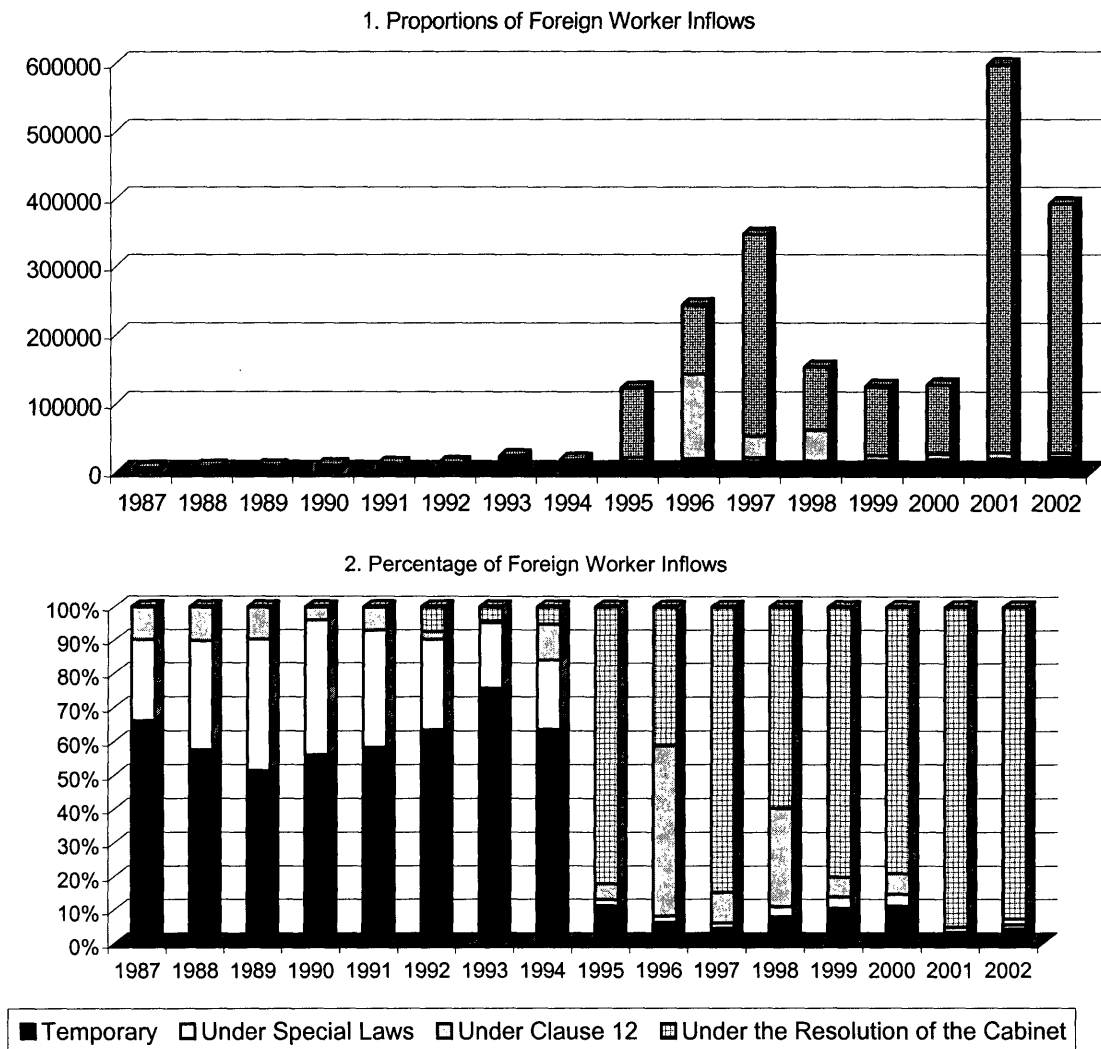
(Vatanathon 2003: 62). Thus, by the end of these re-registrations, there were in total 476,313 registered foreign workers under the Resolution of the Cabinet in Thailand.

The last decade of the twentieth century thus witnessed a constant flow of foreign workers into the country. Beside the permanent work permit holders, the number of foreign workers granted work permits under all other types of permission has been increasing constantly over the fifteen-year period, and especially during the last eight years, as evident from Figures 5.1, 5.3, and 5.4. The number of permanent work permit holders declined since this type of permit was no longer issued. The overall trend in annual flows of both temporary work permit workers and foreign workers under special laws over the decade and a half has been ascending, and the flows of workers under Clause 12 and registered workers under the Resolution of the Cabinet intensified, especially during the last decade. Even though the number in each category of foreign workers granted work permits at different points in time differed, the overall trend in foreigners granted work permits annually has generally seen an increase. Thus, the trends in the flows of foreign workers as a whole into the country reflected a shortage of labour, increasing labour demand in the economy and, above all, relaxation of the government's previous policy on immigration. There is thus evidence of a new age of immigration, especially labour-related immigration.

In order to understand the characteristics of the volume and flows of foreign labour, the share of each type of foreign workers as a proportion of total inflows and as a proportion of the foreign workforce should also be analysed. This will illustrate the changing nature of the country's immigrant workforce. Permanent work permit holders are omitted in the examination because their flows ceased decades ago and their number has been constantly and predictably declining over time.

As can be clearly seen in Figures 5.5.1 and 5.5.2, the proportion of foreign workers receiving work permits from each group changed each year. More significantly, however, the evidence from Figure 5.5.2 suggests that a profound change in the proportions of the flows was evident in 1995. This is because of the promulgation of 'Illegal Migrant Worker Registration' and the government's tough policy in regard to illegal immigration.

Figure 5.5 Foreign Worker Inflows by Type of Permission (except permanent work permit holders), 1987-2002



Source: Based on data in Figures 5.4.2 to 5.4.5.

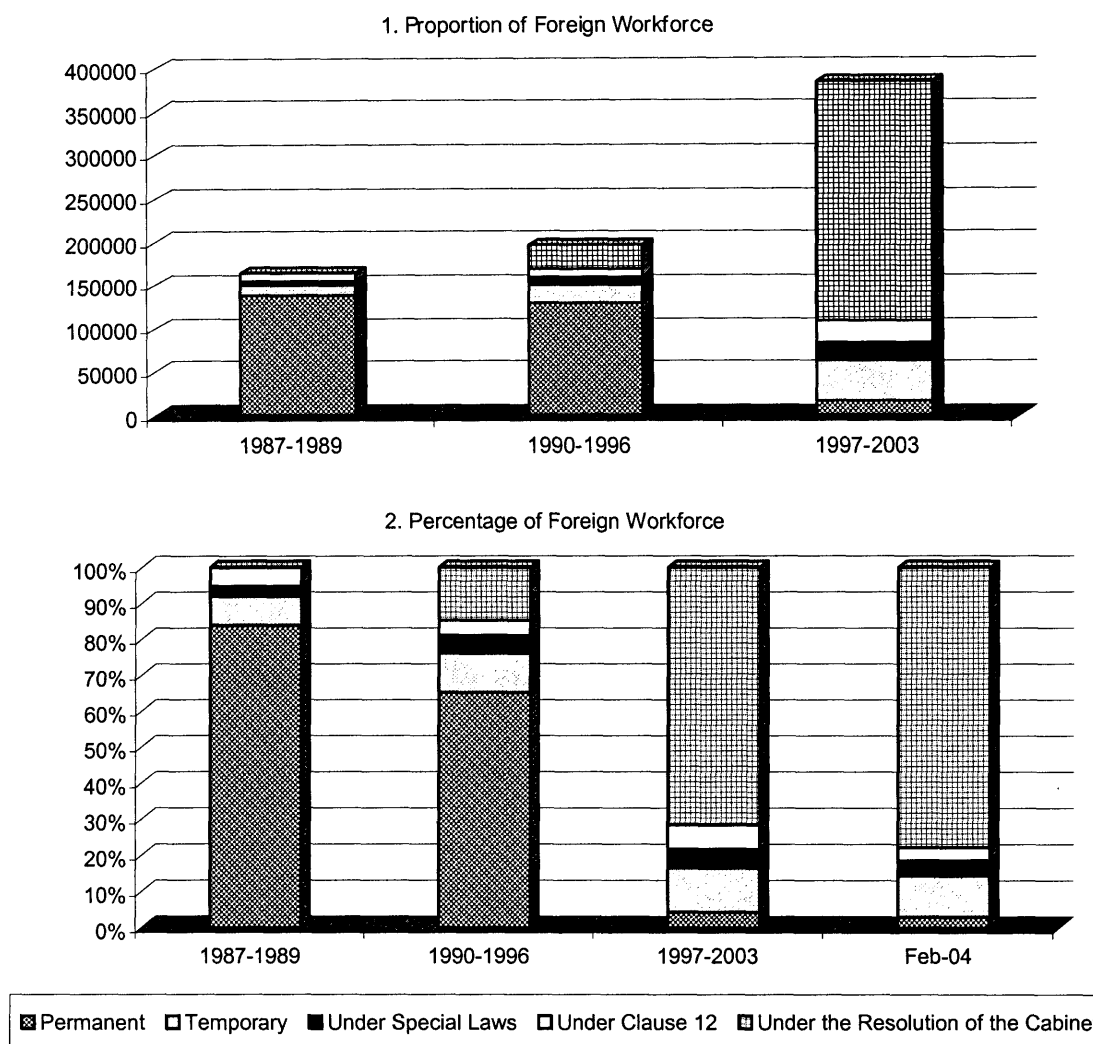
As shown in Figure 5.5.2, prior to 1995, temporary work permit holders and workers under special laws coalesced into a major group of foreign workers who received work permits each year, accounting for between 80 and 90 per cent of the total flows since 1987; however, after 1995, they accounted for less than 20 per cent of the total number of foreign workers granted work permits annually, which represented about a 75 per cent fall in their share of the total. Conversely, the shares of ‘Under-Clause-12 workers’ and registered workers under the Resolution of the Cabinet programme grew dramatically from between 10 and 20 per cent since 1987 to 87 per cent in 1995 and thenceforth remained at around 80 to over 90 per cent. Interestingly, in 1996, Under-Clause-12 workers grew significantly from an average of 1,290 a

year prior to 1996 to 123,368 in 1996, accounting for over 50 per cent of the total inflows. Again, in the year after the Crisis, in 1998, the number of Under-Clause-12 workers was inordinately high and accounted for almost 40 per cent of the total foreign workers granted work permits in that year. This is – perhaps – a result of the government’s tough policy on undocumented foreign workers in the years before and after the Crisis. More interestingly, even though over the course of fifteen years the annual flows of both workers with temporary work permits and those under special laws rose constantly, their share as a proportion of total annual foreign workers granted work permits shrank dramatically after 1994, even as foreign workers under the Resolution of the Cabinet, together with Under-Clause-12 workers (especially between 1996 and 1998) encroached on the total flows of foreign workers into Thailand. Therefore, the reversal of the dominant groups in the inflows of foreign workers granted work permits suggests the vast scale of on-going problems of illegal immigration in Thailand.

There has also been debate on the ‘moral hazard’ effects of the ‘Illegal Migrant Worker Registration’ scheme. The problem of illegal immigration has, arguably, been exacerbated by such schemes as the legalisation exercise raised expectations of further amnesty. Then again, the government’s decision to register illegal immigration did not exactly reverse any flows. All it did was to put some statistical magnitude on a problem that was already in existence. The flows of illegal immigrants proved to be of an order of magnitude higher than legal flows (hundreds of thousands rather than tens of thousands). In fact, as discussed in previous chapters, the rapid economic growth and imbalances in the labour market are the root cause of labour immigration into Thailand (Chapter Three), and the absence of proper channels for unskilled foreign employment is responsible for illegal immigration (Chapter Four).

During the period between 1987 and 1989, as can be seen in Figure 5.6, out of approximately 164,356 foreign workers a year, about 84 per cent were permanent work permit holders, 8 per cent were temporary work permit holders, 5.2 per cent were Under-Clause-12 workers, and 2.8 per cent were workers under special laws. However, when the buoyancy of the economy of the country increased after 1990, not only did the number of foreign workers increase enormously, but also the proportions of the foreign workforce started to change (Figure 5.6).

Figure 5.6 Foreign Workforce in Thailand, on Average, by Type of Permission, 1987-2003



Sources: Based on data in Figures 5.5.1 and 5.5.2

The nature of the foreign workforce changed greatly in the period after the Economic Crisis; foreign workers under the Resolution of the Cabinet became the predominate group. From the period between 1987 and 1989 to the period between 1990 and 1996, and from the period between 1990 and 1996 to the period between 1997 and 2003 the size of the foreign workforce expanded around 20 per cent and 91 per cent respectively (Figure 5.6.1). In the period between 1990 and 1996, the foreign workforce of an average 197,332 foreign workers a year comprised 65.1 per cent permanent work permit holders, 14.7 per cent foreign workers under the Resolution of the Cabinet, 11 per cent temporary work permit holders, 5 per cent workers under special laws, and 4.2 per cent Under-Clause-12 workers. In the period between 1997 and 2003, there were altogether about 384,725 authorised foreign workers a year in Thailand,

out of which 71.6 per cent were workers hired under the Resolution of the Cabinet, 12.2 per cent were temporary work permit holders, 6.6 per cent were Under-Clause-12 workers, 5.3 per cent were workers under Special Laws and 4.3 per cent were permanent work permit holders (Figure 5.6). Therefore, the proportion of each type of foreign worker in the foreign workforce, except of permanent work permit holders (which had been declining) over the three periods had been expanding. In February 2004, the current stock of authorised foreign workers in Thailand amounted to just above half a million, of whom almost four fifths were registered foreign workers under the Resolution of the Cabinet programme. Temporary work permit holders constituted about 11 per cent of the total, and permanent work permit holders, Under-Clause-12 workers and workers under special laws made up another three to four per cent each (Figure 5.6.2).

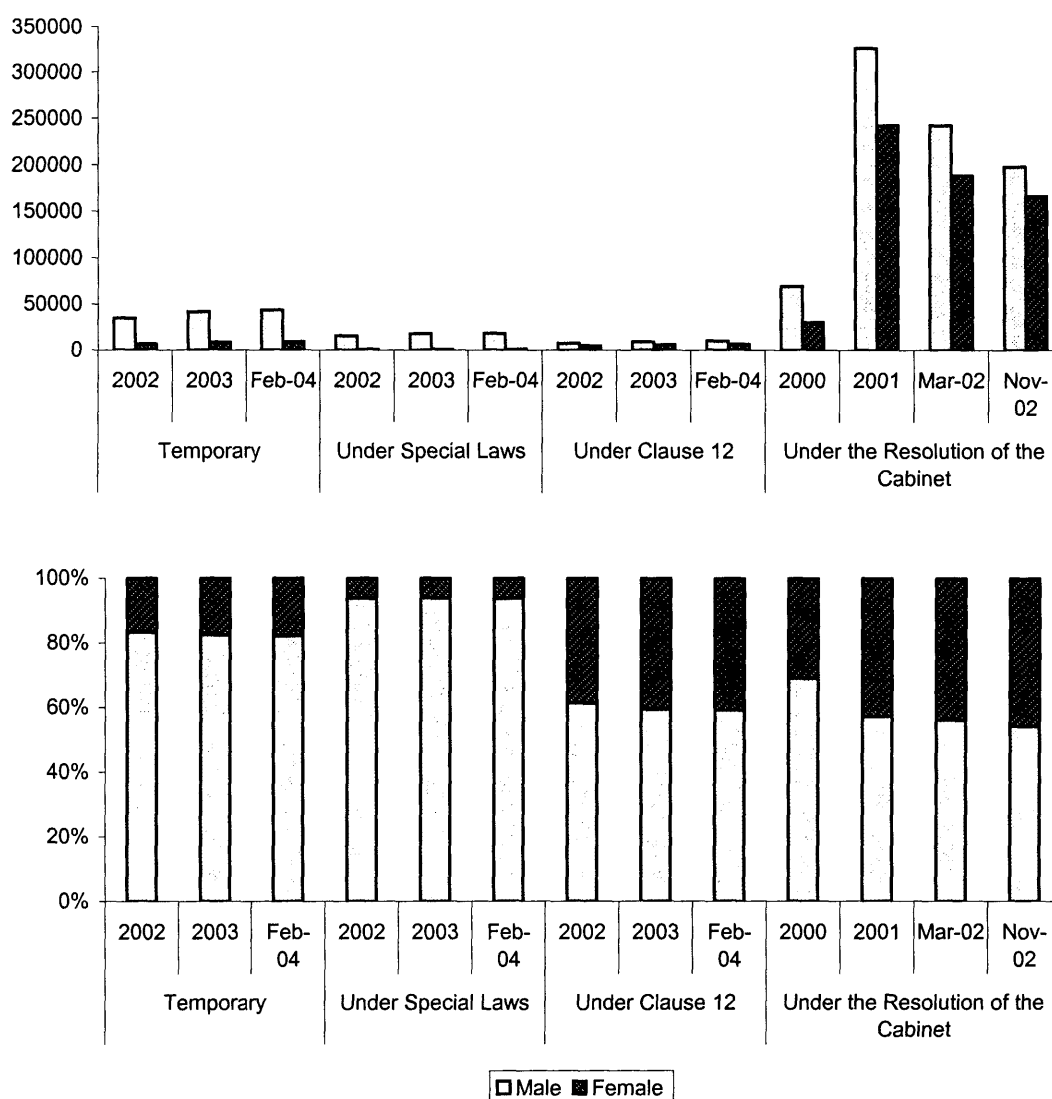
5.4 Characteristics of foreign workers

As Thailand's foreign labour market expanded, the characteristics of these foreign workers changed over time and have, in particular, changed in comparison to the previous periods of immigration. It should be noted, however, that because the issuance of permanent work permits ceased in 1963, there are inadequate published official statistics pertaining to workers hired on such permits. Since this study is predominantly about labour migration to Thailand since the 1990s, emphasis is placed on other types of foreign workers, including temporary work permit holders, foreign workers under special laws, Under-Clause-12 workers, and foreign workers under the Resolution of the Cabinet. Also, because statistics on flows of foreign workers (the annual influx of foreign worker or the number of foreign workers receiving work permits each year) are scarce and far too fragmented, only statistics related to foreign workers remaining in Thailand are examined here.

Characteristics of foreign workers by gender

Until recently, there have been no publicly available statistics showing the proportion of male and female workers in the migrant labour force in Thailand. Presumably, however, male foreign workers have dominated the workforce. Figure 5.7 seems to confirm this assumption.

Figure 5.7 Number and Percentage of Foreign Workers in Thailand by Type of Permission and Gender



Sources: Temporary work permit holders, Workers under Special Laws, and Under-Clause-12 workers data for 2002: Department of Employment (2003a), online; data for 2003: Department of Employment (2004a), online; and data for February 2004: Department of Employment (2004b), online.

Workers under the Resolution of the Cabinet data for 2000: Alien Occupational Control Division (2000), p. 61-71; data from 2001 to March 2002: Vatanathon, Porntip (2003), p 52 and 57; and data for November 2002: Alien Occupational Control (2002), p. 93.

The statistics show that, since 2002, among temporary work permit holders and workers under special laws, male workers represented between 82.4 and 93.9 per cent (Figure 5.7). By February 2004, out of a total of 72,633 temporary work permit holders and workers under special laws, 62,077 workers were male. Similarly, male workers have also been dominant among Under-Clause-12 workers and workers under the Resolution of the Cabinet programme. But what is rather interesting in the latter groups is that, even though the bulk of them have

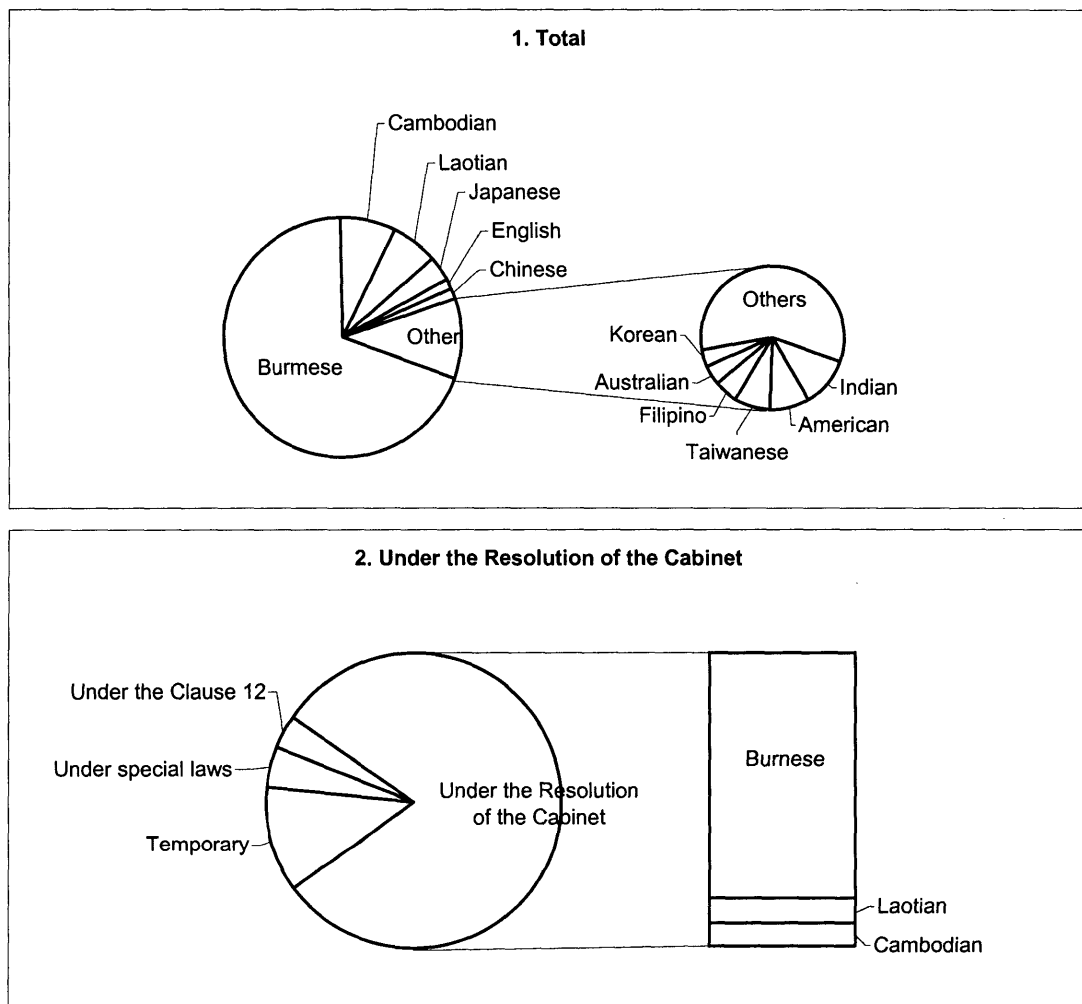
been predominantly male, the absolute and relative numbers of female Under-Clause-12 workers and female workers under the Resolution of the Cabinet have been somewhat larger and are increasing, according to Figure 5.7. The number of female Under-Clause-12 workers increased from 4,847 in 2002, to 6,373 in 2003, and to 7,040 by February 2004, constituting 38.6, 40.4, and 40.6 per cent of the total Under-Clause-12 workers respectively. The registered female workers under the Resolution of the Cabinet, after the registrations ended, proliferated from 30,740 people in 2000 to 241,908 people in 2003, comprising 30.7 per cent and 42.6 per cent respectively of the registered population. By the end of the latest nationwide re-registration (November 2002), out of the total of 363,100 registered workers, 45.6 per cent were female. This, therefore, indicates the growing 'feminisation of migration' of these groups of foreign workers.

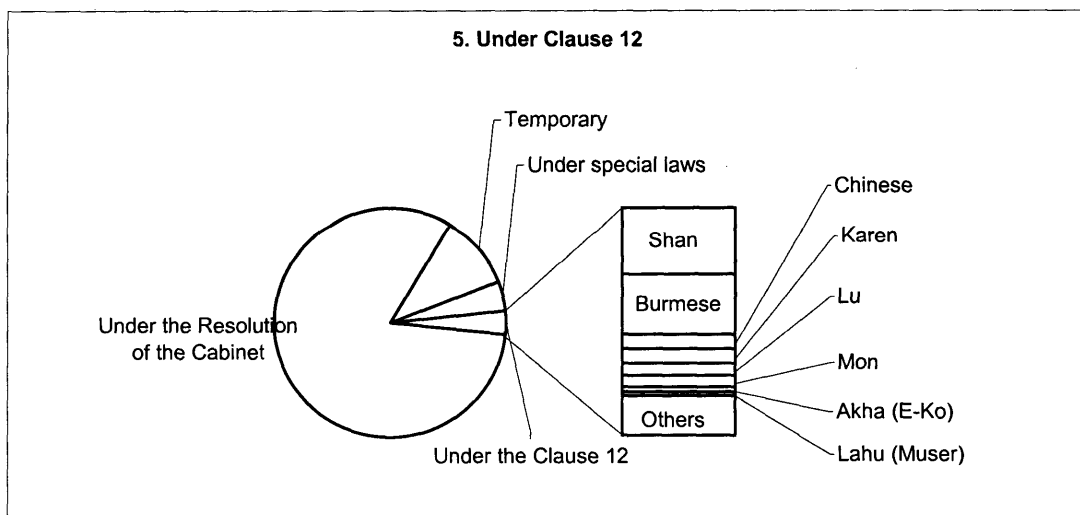
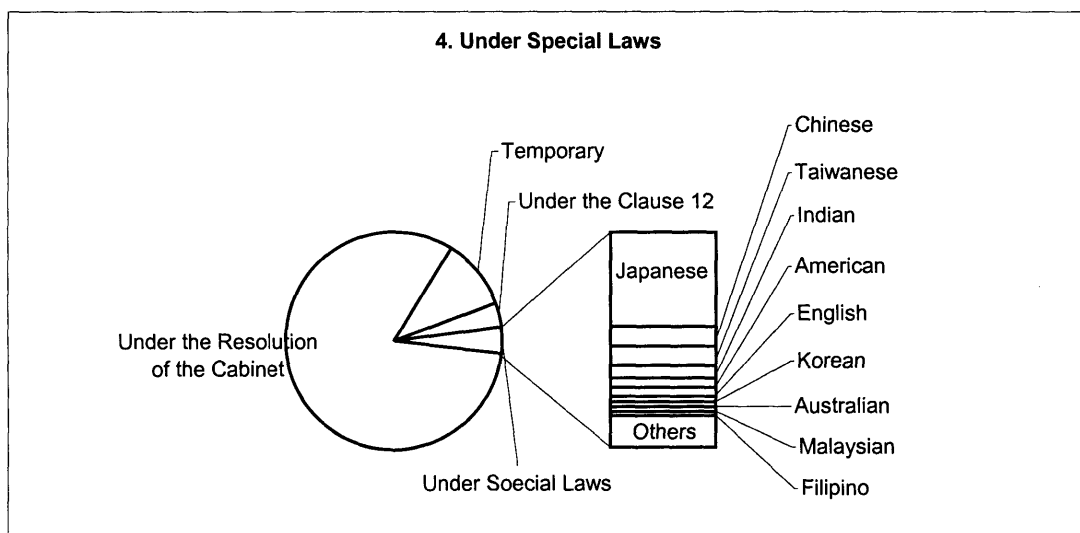
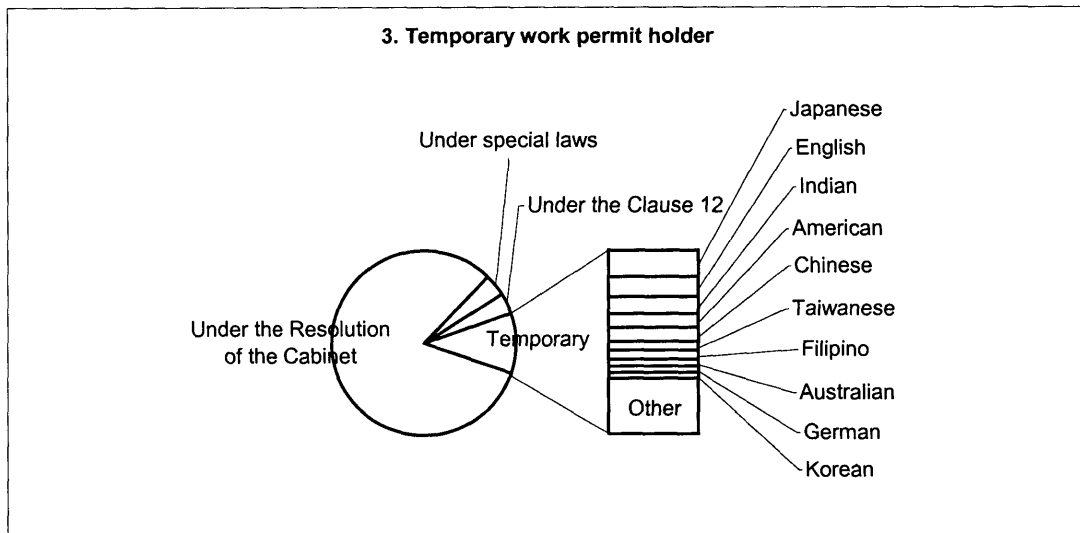
Characteristics of foreign workers by country of origin

In February 2004, Thailand had a total migrant worker stock of about 513,736 authorised immigrant workers, 14,423 of whom were permanent work permit holders, 89,974 were temporary work permit holders, workers under special laws and Under-Clause-12 foreign workers, and the remainder of 409,339 were illegal migrants to whom work permits had been granted under the government's special permission through a so-called 'Illegal Migrant Worker Registration' exercise. As shown in Figure 5.8.1, of the total of 499,313 of authorised migrant workers (excluding permanent work permit holders), Burmese (69.2 per cent), Cambodian (7.4 per cent), and Laotians (6.5 per cent) constituted the three largest groups of Thailand's foreign labour force, followed by Japanese (3.4 per cent), English (1.3 per cent), Chinese (1.2 per cent) and other nationalities. The bulk of the Burmese, Laotian and Cambodian workers were registered workers under the Resolution of the Cabinet, among whom Burmese workers were most numerous (Figure 5.8.2). Even though Japanese workers – the fourth-largest group of foreign workers in Thailand – accounted for merely 3.4 per cent of the whole 2004 foreign workforce, they constituted more than 15 per cent of temporary work permit holders, and 45 per cent of workers under special laws, implying their predominance in 'legal' labour-related immigration in Thailand (Figures 5.8.3 and 5.8.4). As shown in Figure 5.8.3, among the temporary work permit holders, Japanese (15.6 per cent), English (10.7 per cent), Indian (9.1 per cent), American (7.7 per cent) and Chinese (7.6 per cent) represent the

five largest groups, followed by Taiwanese (4.8 per cent), Filipino (4.7 per cent), Australian (3.7 per cent), German (3.5 per cent), South Korean (3.2 per cent) and other nationalities. Following the Japanese who dominated the group of foreign workers under special laws in the year 2004, the other first ten largest groups were Chinese (9 per cent), Taiwanese (8.9 per cent), Indian (6 per cent), American (4.4 per cent), English (4.1 per cent), South Korean (2.5 per cent) Australian (2.3 per cent), Malaysian (2.2 per cent), Filipino (2 per cent) and others (Figure 5.8.4).

Figure 5.8 Origins of Foreign Worker in Thailand by Type of Permission, as of February 2004





Sources: Temporary work permit holders, workers under Special Laws, and Under-clause-12 workers: Department of Employment (2004b), online.
 Workers under the Resolution of the Cabinet: Vatanathon, Porntip (2003), p. 62.

The predominant groups of Under-Clause-12 foreign workers in February 2004 – perhaps not surprisingly – were Burmese, Chinese, and minorities and stateless persons (Shan, Karen, Lu, Mon, Akha, and Lahu). By that date too, Shan and other minorities and stateless persons made up 50.6 per cent of foreign workers granted work permits under Clause 12, while the remainder of 49.4 per cent is represented by Burmese (26.7 per cent), Chinese (6.3 per cent), and others (Figure 5.8.5). Because of the limited nature of officially published statistics relating to this group of workers prior to 2000, the examination of trends in workers under this type of permit, if not impossible, is extremely difficult to obtain.

Nonetheless, as reviewed in the proceeding section, even though the inflows of this group of workers increased for a period of time, their share in the country's foreign labour force has always been small, accounting for only 5.2 per cent in the period between 1987 and 1989, 4.2 per cent in 1990 to 1996, and 6.7 per cent in the period after the Economic Crisis. Currently, as at February 2004, Under-Clause-12 foreign workers constituted merely 3.7 per cent of the total country's foreign workforce. They were the second smallest group of foreign workers, following the diminishing number of permanent work permit holders. Because their size is small, coupled with the fact that the composition of their stock is contingent on the Thai government's strict immigration policy, in a generalised picture it is reasonable to expect similar patterning of characteristics of this type of foreign worker in terms of their origins, as well as their economic activities, at least, over the last decade. The fragmentary but quite credible statistics extracted from Annual Reports of Alien Occupational Control Division, presented in Table 5.1, suggest that, over the last half a decade, the bulk of Under-Clause-12 foreign workers were nationals from the lower economic development scale neighbouring countries, minorities, and stateless persons.

Among Under-Clause-12 foreign workers, Burmese and Shan were, often, the largest groups, especially in 2002 and 2003 – constituting over half the workforce of Under-Clause-12 workers. The statistics show that there were 5,351 and 4,067 Under-Clause-12 Burmese workers and 4,165 and 4,780 Under-Clause-12 Shan workers in 2002 and 2003 respectively. Their preponderance persisted into 2004, as reviewed above. Only in 2000 – for unclear reasons – were Vietnamese predominant, making up nearly 42 per cent of this category of workers. After 2001, Chinese (including registered Aliens or permanent residents) accounted

for quite a considerable number, increasing from 250 in 2000, to 907 in 2001, to 810 in 2002 and then to 1029 in 2003 (Table 5.1). As discussed in the previous chapter, these Chinese registered Aliens can become illegal foreigners if they violate the conditions of residence and/or employment. All in all, it seems quite clear that this category of foreign workers is, if not always, dominated by the Burmese, Shan, stateless persons, other minorities, some nationalities of adjacent less opulent countries, and Chinese.

Table 5.1 Number and Proportion of Under-Clause-12 Foreign Workers in Thailand by Countries of Origin and Ethnicity, 2000-2003

	September 2000		September 2001		September 2002		December 2003	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Burmese	657	6.5	1732	21.6	5351	29.3	4067	25.8
Vietnamese	4198	41.7	595	7.5	259	1.4	257	1.6
Laotian	130	1.3	82	1	452	2.5	0	0
Chinese	250	2.5	907	11.3	810	4.4	1029	6.5
Shan	518	5.1	958	11.9	4165	22.8	4780	30.3
Karen	420	4.2	493	6.1	1223	6.7	978	6.2
Mon	176	1.8	351	4.4	872	4.8	732	4.6
Lu	60	0.6	72	0.9	585	3.2	871	5.5
Akha	115	1.1	116	1.5	337	1.9	357	2.3
Lahu	145	1.4	89	1.1	0	0	0	0
Other	3402	33.8	2624	32.7	4207	23	2711	17.2
Total	10071	100	8019	100	18261	100	15782	100

Sources: For 2000: Alien Occupational Control Division (2000), p. 44.

For 2001: Alien Occupational Control Division (2001), p. 66.

For 2002: Alien Occupational Control Division (2002), p. 74.

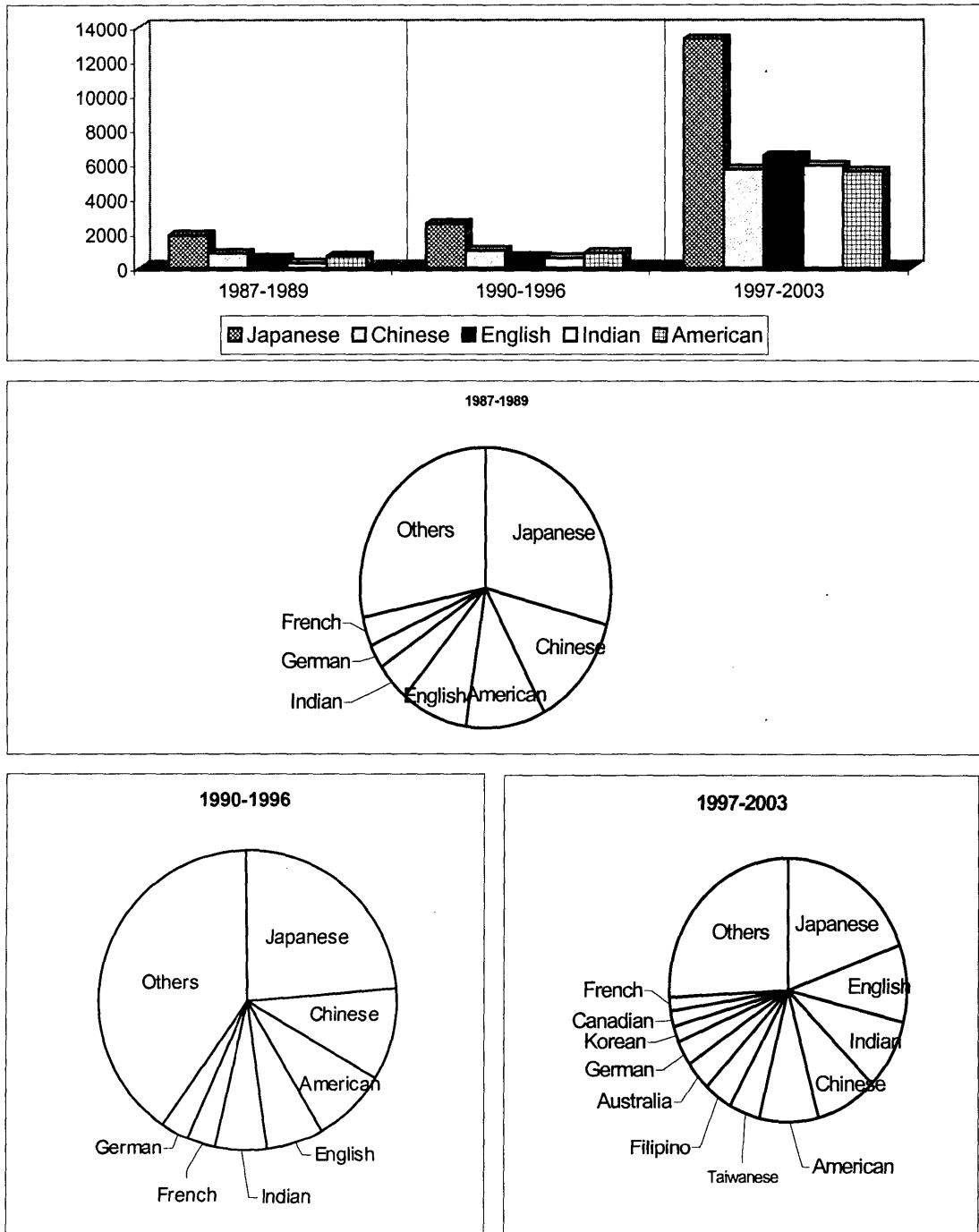
For 2003: Department of Employment (2004a), online.

Since temporary work permit holders and workers under Special Laws are congruent in terms of their procurement of work permits, official statistics – especially of the DOE – often place them together in aggregate. Parallel to workers examined earlier, the Japanese, Chinese, English, Indian and Americans have constantly dominated the category since the late 1980s (Figure 5.9). The Japanese has always been – and seem likely to continue to be – the largest group of these types of foreign workers because of Japanese investment in the country. Of the total foreign workers under temporary permission and under Special Laws, the Japanese constituted around 29 per cent in the period between 1987 and 1989, 24 per cent during the economic boom period, and 19 per cent in the period after the Asian Financial and Economic

Crisis. In terms of gross numbers, the Japanese increased from an average of 1,887 a year in 1987-1989, to 2,545 in 1990-1996, and to 13,301 in 1997-2003 (Figure 5.9). In the same time periods of the other five largest groups, the number of Chinese workers grew from 847, to 1008, and to 5,691; of English workers from 560, to 647, and to 6,457; of Indian workers from 280, to 574, and to 5,908; and of American workers from 678, to 876, and to 5,576 in 1987-1989, 1990-1996, and 1997-2003 respectively (Figure 5.9).

Among the five nationalities most in possession of work permits under temporary permission and Special Laws in Thailand between 1987 and 1989, and in the period between 1990 and 1996, Chinese made up the second largest group, followed – in descending order – by Americans, English, and Indians (Figure 5.9). However, as shown in Figure 5.9, after 1997 – among the whole foreign workers possess work permits under these types of permission – English became the second largest, accounting for 9.4 per cent, followed by Indians (8.6 per cent), Chinese (8.2 per cent), Americans (8.1 per cent), Taiwanese (4.1 per cent), Filipinos (4.1 per cent), Australians (3.4 per cent), Germans (3 per cent), South Koreans (2.2 per cent), Canadians (1.8 per cent), French (1.5 per cent) and other nationalities (less than 1.5 per cent each). Nevertheless, it is interesting to note that, even as the gross number of the five largest groups of these types of foreign workers increased substantially over the three periods, their overall share of the workforce has constantly declined. This signifies an increasing diversity of expatriate workers; that is, a growing complexity in Thailand's foreign workforce in this new immigration phase. Of late, because of their capital and/or special skills, Taiwanese, Filipino, Australian, and South Korean workers, for instance, have become and are becoming more prevalent and more essential to the country's foreign labour market than ever before (Figure 5.9).

Figure 5.9 Average Number and Percentage of Foreign Workers Who Possess Work Permits Under Temporary Permission and Special Laws, 1987-2003



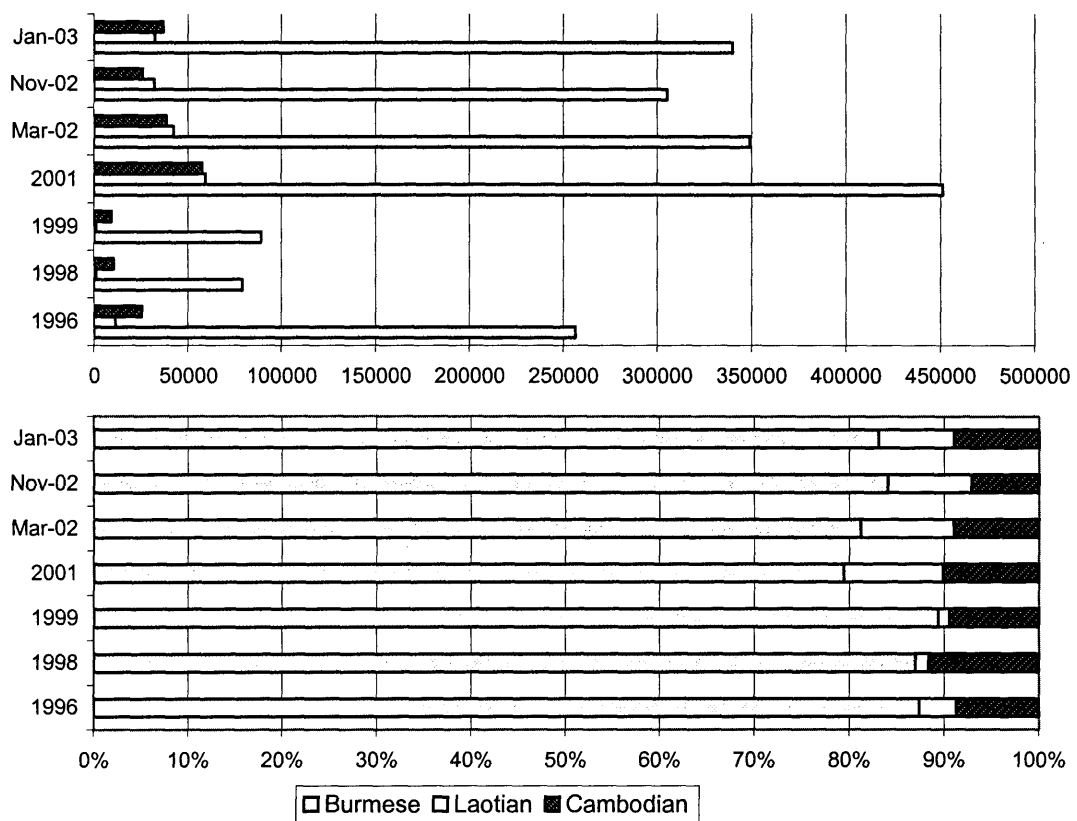
Sources: From 1987 to 1992: Department of Labour (1987-1992) *Year Book of Labour Statistics* (various tables).
 From 1997 to 2002: Department of Employment (1997-2002) *Year Book of Employment Statistics* (various tables).
 For 2003: Department of Employment (2004a), online.

As mentioned earlier, 'Illegal Migrant Worker Registration' exercises are intermittent and rather atypical, and the government normally imposes special conditions and different regulations for each registration. It is, thus, important to examine this group of foreign workers in every period of registration and re-registration separately. Nonetheless, as far as the origins of these workers are concerned, due to the government's confined regulations, only workers from the three main origins of illegal migrants – Myanmar, Cambodia and Laos – are allowed to register and apply for work permits. However, the first registration in 1992 and registrations between 1994 and 1995 permitted only Burmese workers to participate. As reviewed in the previous section, there were merely 944 Burmese workers registered in 1992 but this increased swiftly upwards to 100,000 between 1994 and 1995 after the required bond money was lowered. It is after the 1996 registration that foreign workers from Laos and Cambodia were permitted to register as well. Statistics show that, in 1996, there were 323,123 illegal migrants from Myanmar, Laos and Cambodia registered with Thai authorities. However, only 293,652 of them were granted work permits on the basis of passing the required health check (Alien Occupational Control Division 2000: 53). As can be seen in Figure 5.10, of the total foreign workers granted work permits by way of the 1996 registration, 256,492 were Burmese, 52,599 were Cambodian and 11,594 were Laotian workers. The number of foreign workers who registered and received work permits from all three countries, however, dropped substantially in the 1998 and 1999 registration programmes. Out of 90,911 foreign workers who registered and were granted work permits in 1998, 79,057 were Burmese, 10,593 were Cambodians and 1,261 were Laotians. In 1999, out of 106,684 illegal migrants registered, only 99,974 were granted work permits (Alien Occupational Control Division 2000: 54-57). And, of 99,974 of the workers granted work permits via the 1999 registration, 89,318 were workers from Myanmar, 9,492 were from Cambodia and 1,164 were from Laos (Figure 5.10).

In 2001, Thailand had the highest record of workers registered and granted work permits under this type of permission, in total, at 568,249 workers. (Note that this does not include the 2004 registration.) Nevertheless, what is interesting in the outcome of the 2001 registration is, not only that the total number of illegal migrants who registered and received permission to work was high, but also that the number of illegal migrants registered from Laos was unprecedentedly large, accounting for 59,359 people or over 10 per cent of the total workforce of this type of workers (Figure 5.10). This could possibly indicate the genesis of the influx of

Laotian workers into the country. However, due to the strong traditional tight relationships – through kith, kin and culture – among Thai people, especially in the North-eastern part of the country, and Laotians; the influx of Laotian workers should have started long before that. It is either because of their ignorance or relatively small actual size or both, before the 2001 registration, that Laotian workers represented only between 1 and 4 per cent of the workers under the Resolution of Cabinet, accounting for 11,594 people in 1996, 1,261 people in 1998, and 1,164 people in 1999 (Figure 5.10).

Figure 5.10 Number and Proportion of Foreign Workers Under the Resolution of the Cabinet by Countries of Origins, 1996-2003



Sources: From 1996 to 1999: Alien Occupational Control Division (2000), p. 53.
 For 2001, March 2002, and January 2003: Vatanathon, Pornpip (2003), p. 52 and 62.
 For November 2002: Alien Occupational Control Division (2002), p. 93.

For the reasons outlined earlier, the number of workers under the Resolution of the Cabinet from all three countries was declining when the government announced re-registrations in the following year. However, perhaps unexpectedly to many, while there were no new registrations, the total number of registered foreign workers from all three countries rose in

2003 as can be seen in Figure 5.10. This is because of the special incidental re-registrations in Tak province. Thus, there are currently about 430,029 Burmese workers, 36,818 Cambodian workers, and 32,492 Laotian workers registered under the Resolution of the Cabinet programme in Thailand (Figure 5.10). Even though the registration did not discriminate between workers from these three countries in terms of number of admissions, the statistics clearly show differential proportions between them. This can be explained, in part, by the differences in the socio-political and economic situation between countries as examined in Chapter Three.

Characteristics of foreign workers by economic activity

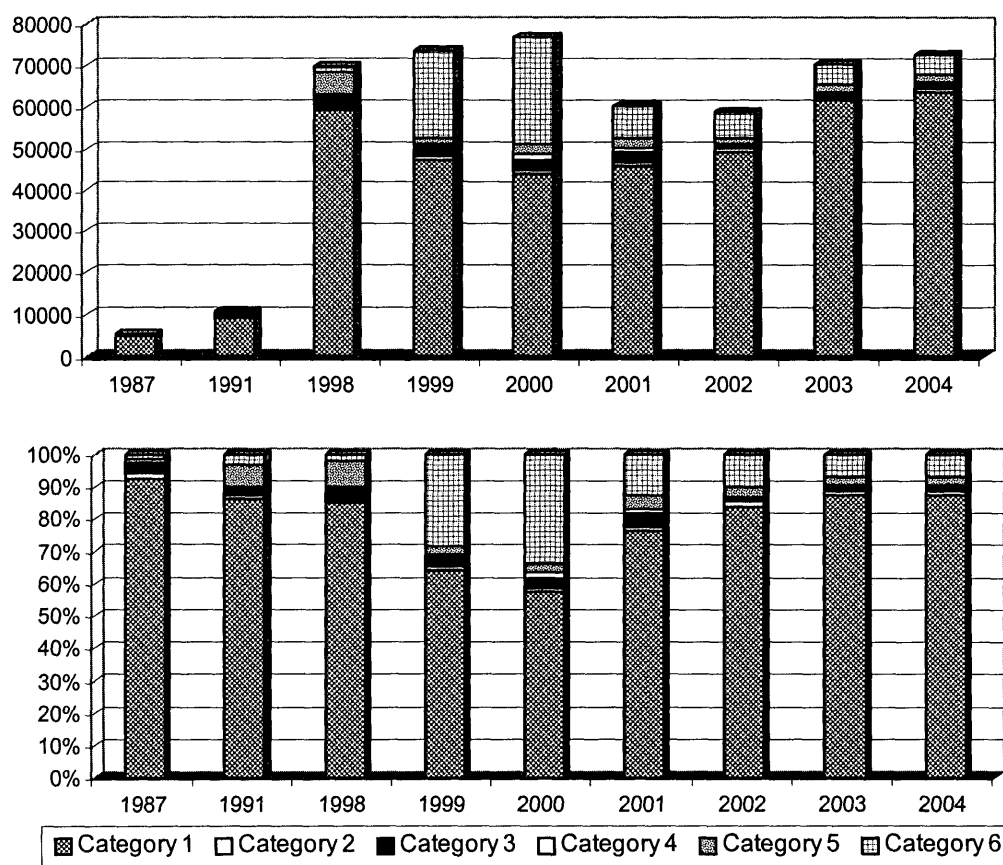
In order to review the economic activities of foreign workers, it is important to examine the occupations and economic sectors (or industries) in which foreign workers are employed. The examination of their occupational distribution reveals levels of skills of foreign workers, while the examination of economic sectors reveals the type of work of foreign workers by nationalities.

Examination of economic activities by occupation of foreign workers in Thailand is somewhat problematic. Apart from having their own limitations (as discussed in Chapter Two), the officially published statistics relating to foreign workers' occupations compiled by the DOE from issue of work permits are not quite complete. For some reason, the statistics for some years (especially during the period of the 1992 Reorganization of Ministries), if available at all, are only partially available. Furthermore, since 1987, there have been at least three revisions of the national occupational classification system for official data collection in Thailand. Thus, in order to examine trends, statistics of some selected years are reviewed here and – for the sake of comparison – the categories of foreign workers' occupations are re-classified (for best fit) under a new classification revised specifically for this study. This is based on the International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO-88) and the comparable new Thailand Standard Classification of Occupations (TSCO-2001) (Department of Employment 2003b; International Labour Organization 2003a). Unlike the ISCO-88 and TSCO-2001, however, the occupational classification revised and employed here encompasses six

categories. Category 1 (with reference to ISCO-88 category 1, 2 and 3) are professional, technical and managerial groups, covering legislators, senior officials, managers, professionals, technicians and associate professionals, as well as teachers. Category 2 (with reference to ISCO-88 category 4) comprises clerks and related workers. Category 3 (with reference to ISCO-88 category 5) includes workers in sale and service vocations. Category 4 (with reference to ISCO-88 category 6) consists of skilled agricultural, animal husbandry, fishery, and hunting workers. Category 5 (with reference to ISCO-88 categories 7, 8 and 9) includes craft and related trades workers, plant and machine operators and assemblers, and elementary occupations. Workers with unclassifiable vocations, as well as trainees, are embraced in category 6. This new classification is, of course, not uncontroversial; however, it enables the characteristics of foreign workers under such varied occupational classifications to be plausibly compared in a time series manner, so as to reveal trends. Also of note, the examination of occupations of workers under the Resolution of the Cabinet is unnecessary and will be omitted on the grounds that they are all in elementary occupations (Appendix G).

With regard to expatriate workers under temporary permission and Special Laws, while there have been no major changes in the occupational composition since 1987 (with the exception of 1999 and 2000), some clear trends are apparent. Since 1987, the bulk of foreign workers under these two types of permission combined have been predominately professional, technical and managerial workers (the reason for examining workers of these two types together is given above) (Figure 5.11). This indicates that these types of foreign worker are mainly skilled. The number of expatriate workers in Category 1 (professional, technical and managerial workers) increased from 5,018 in 1987, to 9211 in 1991, and to 59,159 in 1998. The number, however, fell slightly to 47,182 in 1999 with the acute effect of the 1997 Economic Crisis, but then began surging in 2001 when the effect of the Crisis was waning, to peak at 63,708 in 2004 (Figure 5.11). On the other hand, although the total number of foreign workers under all other occupational categories also increased in 1991 and 1998, it was fairly stable over the period between 1998 and 2001 before declining after 2002. A notable exception to the trend, however, was Category 6 in 1999 and in 2000; workers in this category increased dramatically from 1,318 in 1998 to 20,990 and to 25,958 in 1999 and 2000 respectively. But soon the number also dropped greatly to 7,495 in 2001, and recently to 4,937 in 2004. It is not clearly apparent why the aberrations occurred.

Figure 5.11 Number and Proportion of Foreign Workers in Thailand Under Temporary Permission and Special Laws by Occupation, 1987-2004



Note: 1) Category 1 comprises professional, technical and managerial groups, covering legislators, senior officials, managers, professionals, technicians and associate professionals, as well as teacher.
 2) Category 2 comprises clerks and related workers.
 3) Category 3 comprises workers in sale and service vocation
 4) Category 4 comprises skilled agricultural, animal husbandry, fishery, and hunting workers.
 5) Category 5 comprises craft and related trades workers, plant and machine operators and assemblers, and elementary occupations.

Sources: For 1987 and 1991: Department of Labour (1987-1991) *Year Book of Labour Statistics* (various tables).
 From 1998 to 2002: Department of Employment (1998-2002) *Year Book of Employment Statistics* (various tables).
 For 2003: Department of Employment (2004a), online.
 For 2004: Department of Employment (2004b), online.

Notwithstanding this, it is important to try to assess how significant or trifling foreign workers of each occupational category in the workforce have been over time by reviewing their distribution in the workforce. As presented in Figure 5.11, in 1987, there were a total of 5,417 authorised foreign workers who possessed temporary work permits and work permits issued under special laws, of whom 92.6 per cent were professional, technical and managerial workers. A mere 1.9 per cent of this total were clerks and related workers (in Category 2); 2.4

per cent were sale and service workers (in Category 3); and about 0.1, 1.7 and 1.3 per cent of the total engaged in vocations in Categories 4, 5 or 6 respectively.

There is some evidence, however, of a minor shift in occupational composition in 1991 and between 1998 and 2001. It is clear that, over this period, although the number of professional, technical and managerial workers increased in absolute terms, it in fact declined proportionally; and subsequent proportionate reductions in professional, technical and managerial workers are linked with the rise in the other occupational categories, generally those in Category 3, Category 5 and, especially, Category 6. In 1987 and 1991, workers in Category 3 made up about 2.4 and 2.1 per cent of the total respectively, but rose to 4.3 per cent in 1998 and remained around 3.3 to 4.3 per cent in the period between 1999 and 2001. The share of workers in Category 5 increased considerably from 1.7 per cent in 1987 to 6.5 per cent in 1991, 7.9 per cent in 1998, and remained around 2.2 to 4.1 per cent between 1999 and 2001. Additionally, workers in Category 6 in 1987, 1991, and 1998 constituted 1.3, 3.4 and 1.9 per cent in the total workforce respectively before creeping up to 28.5 in 1999 and 33.8 per cent in 2000. However, the shifts of occupational composition prove to be brief, and while in proportional decline, professional, technical and managerial foreign workers were still dominant among temporary work permit holders and workers under Special Laws, constituting 86.2, 84.8, 64.1 and 57.4 per cent of the workforce in 1991, 1998, 1999, and 2000 respectively.

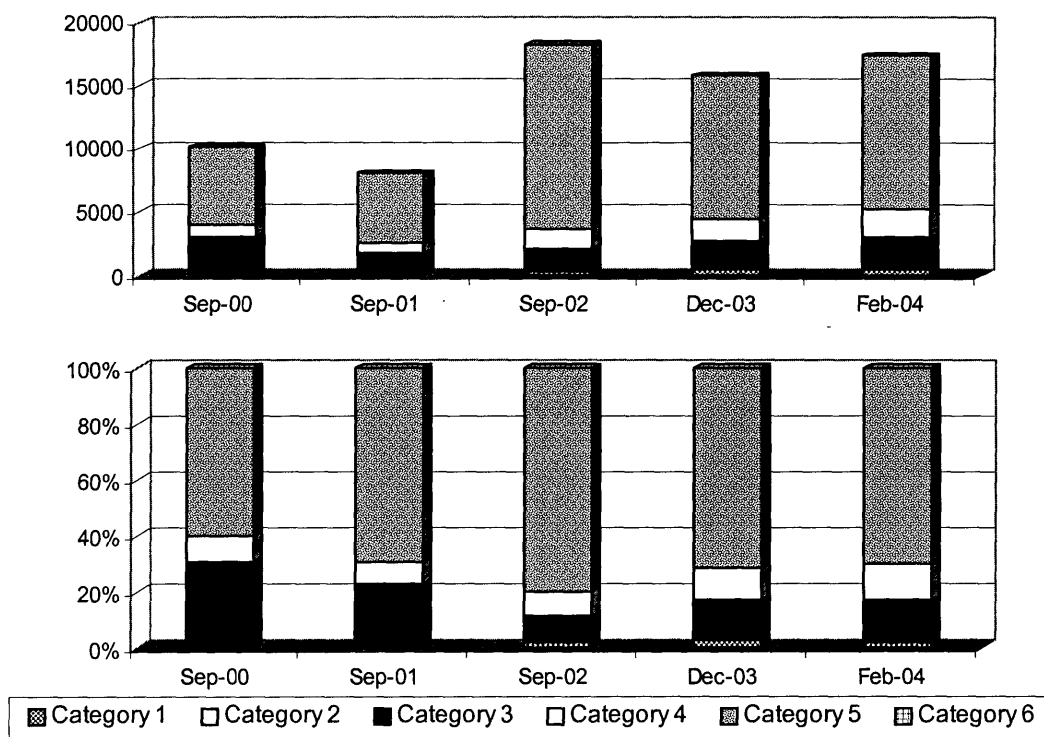
After 2001, the number of authorised professional, technical and managerial foreign workers under temporary permission and Special Laws rose absolutely and proportionally, while the number of workers in other occupational categories declined constantly in both absolute and relative terms (Figure 5.11). Currently, as of February 2004, out of 72,633 temporary work permit holders and foreign workers under special laws in the country, 87.7 per cent are professional, technical and managerial workers (in Category 1), 1.2 per cent are clerks and related workers (in Category 2), 1.8 per cent are employed in sale and service activities (in Category 3), less than 0.1, and 2.5 per cent engaged in vocations pertaining to Category 4 and Category 5 respectively, and 6.7 per cent are workers with unclassifiable vocation or trainees (Category 6). It is noteworthy, nonetheless, that the absolute number and distribution of workers in Category 6 has been markedly sizeable since 1999 (also discussed earlier). But

because workers in Category 6 are given a generic classification of 'other' and/or 'trainee', this examination cannot elucidate much about each individual occupation. Nevertheless, with the enduring sizable share of workers in Category 6, it appears there has been an increasing variation of occupation of workers in the workforce instead of concentrating namely on professional, technical and managerial vocations. Yet, this evidence is still far too scanty to determine a definitive trend. What is unclear is whether the increasing occupational variation is ephemeral or perpetual, especially since the numbers of workers in Category 6, as well as those in all other occupational categories (except professional, technical and managerial workers), are on the decline in both absolute and relative terms (Figure 5.11).

In stark contrast with the aforementioned occupational characteristics of expatriate workers whose work permits were issued under temporary permission or under Special Laws, Figure 5.12 shows that Under-Clause-12 foreign workers are concentrated in 'unskilled and semi-skilled' work. This is because, by law, occupations that Under-Clause-12 foreign workers can engage in are strictly circumscribed. For reasons given earlier, statistics about Under-Clause-12 foreign workers can be examined only between the years 2000 and 2004. It is very clear from Figure 5.12 that, since 2000, Under-Clause-12 workers have been primarily workers in Category 3 (sale and service workers), Category 4 (skilled agricultural, animal husbandry, fishery, and hunting workers), and Category 5 (craft and related trades workers, plant and machine operators and assemblers, and workers in elementary occupations), composing an average of 98 per cent of the total workforce per year. Even though the absolute number of workers in most categories have been constantly increasing, only those in the three leading occupational categories (Category 3, 4 and 5) in fact have been grown in relative terms, whilst the number of workers in the other occupational categories (Category 1, 2 and 6) has been proportionately moderately stable over the time period. In 2000, there were only 101 professional, technical and managerial Under-Clause-12 workers (Category 1); and their number dropped to three people in 2001 before creeping up again to 385, 459, and 460 people in 2002, 2003, and 2004 respectively. Since 2000, there is evidence in Figure 5.12 that the number of workers in Category 2 and Category 6 has always been diminutive, constituting at the most of 0.2 per cent for Category 2 and less than 0.1 per cent of Category 6 of the total number of Under-Clause-12 foreign workers. Among the three dominant groups, workers in Category 5 have unfailingly been the largest one, followed by workers in Category 3 and those

in Category 4. The absolute number of Under-Clause-12 foreign workers in sale and service vocations (Category 3) indeed declined during the first three years from 2,973 in 2000, to 1,831 in 2001, and to 1,655 in 2002 before surging to 2,192 in 2003 and 2,479 in 2004; whereas skilled agricultural, animal husbandry, fishery, and hunting workers (Category 4) in this workforce have been increasing significantly, doubling from 937 people in 2000, to 1,804 people in 2003, and further to 2,206 people recently (as of February 2004). By February 2004, on the one hand, foreign workers in Category 3 constituted 14.3 per cent of the total, which was indeed only about half the size of their share in 2000 (Figure 5.12).

Figure 5.12 Number and Proportion of Foreign Workers in Thailand Under Clause 12 by Occupation, 2000-2004



Note: 1) Category 1 comprises professional, technical and managerial groups, covering legislators, senior officials, managers, professionals, technicians and associate professionals, as well as teacher.
 2) Category 2 comprises clerks and related workers.
 3) Category 3 comprises workers in sale and service vocation
 4) Category 4 comprises skilled agricultural, animal husbandry, fishery, and hunting workers.
 5) Category 5 comprises craft and related trades workers, plant and machine operators and assemblers, and elementary occupations.

Sources: For 2000: Alien Occupational Control Division (2000), p. 44.
 For 2001: Alien Occupational Control Division (2001), p. 66.
 For 2002: Alien Occupational Control Division (2002), p. 74.
 For 2003: Department of Employment (2004a), online.
 For 2004: Department of Employment (2004b), online.

On the other hand, the current distribution of foreign workers in Category 4 has increased to 12.7 per cent of the total workforce from 9.3 per cent in 2000, to 8 per cent in 2001, 9 per cent in 2002, and 11.4 per cent in 2003. Over the examined time frame, the statistics show that foreign workers in Category 5 – the largest groups of Under-Clause-12 foreign workers – have been proliferating both absolutely and proportionally. In 2000, there were 6,058 Under-Clause-12 workers in Category 5, constituting just above 60 per cent of the workforce. By September 2001, as the total workforce shrunk, the total number of workers in Category 5 dropped to 5,538 people but their share in the workforce actually increased to 69 per cent. Then, in 2002, the number of Under-Clause-12 workers in Category 5 peaked at 14,557 people and at about 79.7 per cent of the total, before falling slightly to 11,291 people and to 71.5 per cent of the total at the end of 2003. By February 2004, out of the 17,341 Under-Clause-12 foreign workers remaining in the country, 12,158 people were workers in Category 5, contributing around 70 per cent of the total of this workforce.

The rarely published statistics of economic activities of foreign workers by economic industrial group and nationality, computed and presented in Appendix M, illustrate interesting characteristics of foreign workers (excluding permanent work permit holders and workers under the Resolution of the Cabinet) in Thailand. Due to the paucity of these statistics, an examination of trends is impossible. According to Appendix M, as of December 2002, the first ten industries employing most foreign workers in the country – in ascending order – are education, retail distribution (excluding motor vehicles and motorcycles); food and drink manufacturing; hotel and catering; construction; wholesale distribution (excluding motor vehicles and motorcycle); agriculture, hunting and related activities; furniture and other manufacturing; general business activities; and supporting and auxiliary transport activities (including travel agencies). (Note that what is included in ‘general business activities’ is unknown.) The large population of foreign workers (not including permanent work permit holders and workers under the Resolution of the Cabinet) in Thailand are composed of Japanese, English, Indian, Chinese, Burmese, American, Taiwanese, Filipino, Australian, and German – the ten largest groups of foreign workers, among whom Japanese is the largest group.

However, in the largest industry in terms of employment of foreign workers – education – it is not Japanese who are employed the most but American, English and Filipino (52.3 per cent in aggregate). Education is their prime industry for employment; as high as 32.4 per cent of American, 28.4 per cent of English, and 27.3 per cent of Filipino workers are employed in this industry. The obvious explanation for this is likely to be the high demand for English language teachers in Thailand. Also from an English speaking country, the largest group of Australian workers in Thailand, approximately 21 per cent, are found engaging in Education, followed by General business activities (11.1 per cent), and Hotel and catering (9.2 per cent). As with the Australians, the second largest group of Americans (8.2 per cent) and English (10.5 per cent) are employed in general business activities. English, American and Australian workers, all told, make up 40.5 per cent of the total foreign workers employed in general business activities and Japanese contribute 14 per cent to the workforce. On the other hand, the second largest group of Filipino workers (24.3 per cent) are in Hotel and catering. And Filipino workers (11.8 per cent) constitute the largest group of foreign workers in this industry, followed by Japanese (9.1 per cent), English (7.1 per cent), German (5 per cent) and Australian (4 per cent). It must be borne in mind, however, that more than half the workforce in this industry hail from other countries not in the ten largest sources of foreign workers in Thailand, and the five aforesaid leading groups of workers in Hotel and catering, in aggregate, constitute only 37 per cent of the workforce. This implicitly means that foreign workers omitted in Appendix M such as French (5.1 per cent), Italian (4.4 per cent), and Swiss (3.9 per cent) are also prominent groups of foreign workers in the industry (see Figure 5.14.1).

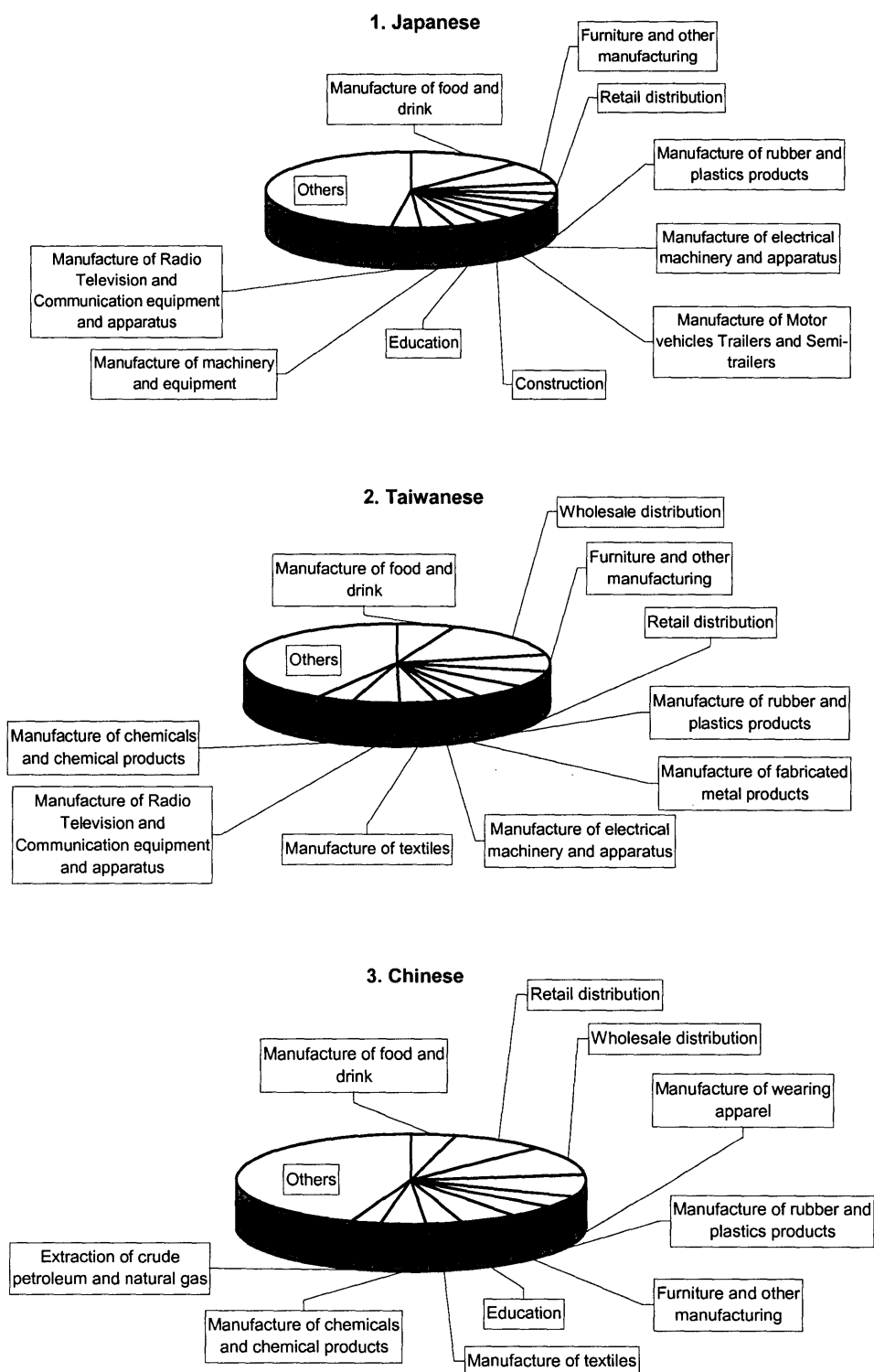
Interestingly enough, Appendix M shows that more than half of the total Japanese workers (55.4 per cent) are not employed in the aforementioned top ten largest industries. The largest groups of Japanese workers work in manufacture of food and drink (12.9 per cent), and furniture and other manufacturing (9 per cent). Japanese make up the largest group of foreign workers in those two industries, comprising 33.4 per cent in manufacture of food and drink, and 40.9 per cent in furniture and other manufacturing. Other industries in which the Japanese are employed include retail distribution (4.5 per cent), manufacture of rubber and plastics products (4 per cent), manufacture of electrical machinery and apparatus (4 per cent), manufacture of motor vehicles, trailers and semi-trailers (3.9 per cent), construction (3.7 per cent), education (3.4 per cent), manufacture of machinery and equipment (3.4 per cent), and

manufacture of radio television and communication equipment and apparatus (3.3 per cent) (Figure 5.13.1). This seems to indicate quite clearly that Japanese workers are concentrated in manufacturing industries, which can be explained by the Japanese intense FDI in Thailand.

Outside the top ten group of foreign workers are the Chinese (55.5 per cent) and Taiwanese (58.5 per cent). Both China (includes Hong Kong) and Taiwan are also Thailand's major sources of FDI. Like the Japanese, most of both the Chinese and Taiwanese workers are employed in manufacturing industries (Figures 5.13.2 and 5.13.3).

Detailed examination of the statistics reveals that the majority of Taiwanese workers (58.6 per cent) work in – in ascending order – manufacture of food and drink, wholesale distribution, furniture and other manufacturing, retail distribution, manufacture of rubber and plastics products, manufacture of fabricated metal products, manufacture of electrical machinery and apparatus, manufacture of textiles, manufacture of Radio Television and Communication equipment and apparatus, and manufacture of chemicals and chemical products (Figure 5.13.2). Similarly, the top ten industries in which most Chinese workers (55.5 per cent) engage are manufacture of food and drink, retail distribution, wholesale distribution, manufacture of wearing apparel, manufacture of rubber and plastics products, furniture and other manufacturing, education, manufacture of textiles, manufacture of chemicals and chemical products, and extraction of crude petroleum and natural gas (Figure 5.13.3). Thus, the largest groups of both Taiwanese (15.1 per cent) and Chinese (10.2 per cent) are in manufacture of food and drink, and Taiwanese and Chinese workers were respectively the second (10.5 per cent) and third (9.4 per cent) largest groups of foreign workers in the industry, following the Japanese (33.4 per cent).

Figure 5.13 Japanese, Taiwanese and Chinese Workers in Thailand by Industries, 2002



Source: Department of Employment (2003a), online.

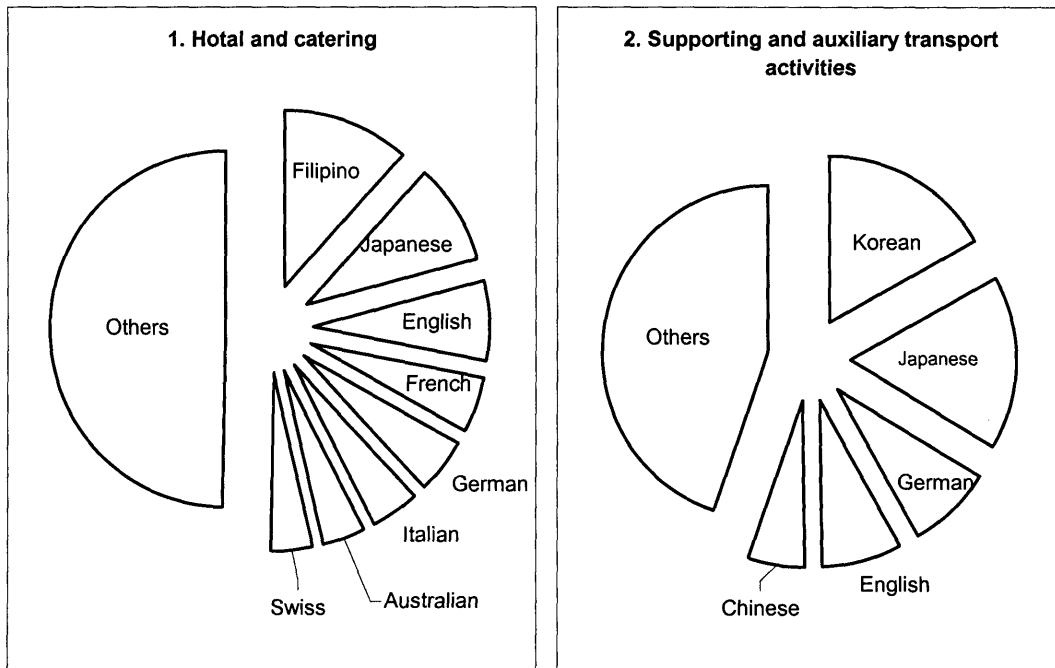
Indians – the third largest group of foreign workers in the country – are preponderantly employed in retail distribution (28.4 per cent) and wholesale distribution (11.1 per cent) and they constitute the largest group of foreign workers in both industries, comprising about 21.5 per cent in retail distribution and 15.9 per cent in wholesale distribution. As it is also an English speaking country and one of the world major exporters of academics, it is surprising that workers from India represent only 3.3 per cent in education and only 4.1 per cent of the total of Indian workers in Thailand engaged in Education (Khadria 2002). Nevertheless, it has been reported that the Thai government recently started to encourage the employment of qualified Indian teachers to teach English and mathematics in school (*Bangkok Post* 8 Jun. 2005). Thus, the number of Indians in this industry is expected to rise in the future. As far as retail distribution and wholesale distribution are concerned, Chinese, Burmese, Taiwanese, and Japanese are prominent groups of foreign workers in these industries, besides the Indians (Appendix M).

With regard to the tenth largest group of foreign workers in Thailand – German – the statistics indicate that Germans concentrate mainly in Services industries. According to Appendix M, the bulk of German workers are employed in hotel and catering (13.7 per cent), supporting and auxiliary transport activities (8.6 per cent), retail distribution (6.3 per cent), education (6.1 per cent), manufacture of food and drink (6.1 per cent) and general business activities (5.9 per cent). Also especially noteworthy, in supporting and auxiliary transport activities, including the activities of travel agencies, German workers (8.5 per cent) are one of the leading groups, following Korean (16.9 per cent) and Japanese (16.6 per cent) (Figure 5.14.2).

Of late, as also reviewed in previous sections, the Burmese emerged as a major source country of foreign workers in Thailand. Burmese workers form the fifth largest group of total authorised foreign workers (except permanent work permit holders and workers under the Resolution of the Cabinet) in 2002. Unlike the other aforementioned ten largest groups of foreign workers, Burmese by and large concentrate in unskilled and semi-skilled activities – especially, in agriculture, hunting and related activities; retail distribution; and construction. In all three industries, Burmese workers constitute a sizable group, comprising around 44 per cent of total foreign workers in agriculture, hunting and related activities; 15.9 per cent in retail distribution; and 12.4 per cent in construction. Burmese workers are the largest group in

agriculture, hunting and related activities, and construction; and the second largest group in retail distribution, after the Indians.

Figure 5.14 Foreign Workers in Thailand in Some Specific Industries, 2002



Source: Department of Employment (2003a), online.

According to the statistics presented Appendix N, by the end of the incidental re-registrations in Tak province (on 15 January 2003), migrant workers under the Resolution of the Cabinet from Myanmar, Laos, and Cambodia, in aggregate, numbered 409,339 people. Workers in fisheries and related jobs (23.3 per cent) constitute the largest group in this workforce, followed by factory labourers (22.4 per cent), (livestock and crops) agricultural workers (20.9 per cent), (general) labourers (17.4 per cent), and domestic helpers (16 per cent) (Appendix N). Not surprisingly, Burmese workers predominate in this workforce and they make up more than 78 per cent in all types of work. Among the current registered Burmese workers, factory workers (22.8 per cent) are the largest group, followed by agricultural workers (22.4 per cent), fishery workers (22 per cent), general labourers (18.1 per cent) and domestic help (14.7 per cent). Whereas Laotian workers are concentrated in domestic and factory work, Cambodian workers abound, in particular, in the fishery industry and related jobs. Out of 36,818 registered Cambodian workers, 19,407 are fishery workers (or over half of the total registered

Cambodians), representing 20.3 per cent of registered foreign workers in the fishery industry. In comparison, there are only 1,412 fishery Laotian workers, making up merely 1.5 per cent of the total registered fishery workers. Laotian workers outnumber Cambodian workers about three to one and four to one in factory work and domestic work respectively. The registered (general) labourers and agricultural workers from both Laos and Cambodia are, somewhat, equivalent. Out of 85,428 foreign workers registered as agricultural workers, 76,145 (or 89.1 per cent of the total) are Burmese, 4,779 (or 5.6 per cent) are Laotian, and 4,504 (or 5.3 per cent) are Cambodian. As well, there are 61,442 Burmese, 3,907 Laotian, and 5,989 Cambodian registered as general labourers. An explanation for the marked vocational predominance of Laotian and Cambodian workers discussed earlier will be returned to later when gender differences of these workers are examined.

As can be observed in Appendix N, there are some gender differences in various vocations worth noting. Unfortunately, statistics of the two incidental re-registrations in Tak province do not reveal gender, hence those of the re-registration under the 27 August 2002 Resolution of the Cabinet (the nationwide registration) only will be reviewed. There is, however, enough evidence from the statistics of the re-registration under the 27 August 2002 Resolution of the Cabinet alone to show that the traditional pattern of gender division of labour prevails. For the relatively equally distributed sizes (54.4 per cent male and 45.6 per cent female), male workers are concentrated in traditional male dominated vocations, such as general labourer work (73.7 per cent), agricultural work (68.4 per cent), and fishery work (61.1 per cent). On the other hand, female workers predominate in domestic help work, constituting 87.2 per cent of total registered domestic helpers. However, the total of factory workers are split fairly equally between male and female workers. It is worth noting, too, that gender differences are present also in different nationalities. As shown in Appendix N, whereas the bulk of registered Laotian workers are female (60.2 per cent of the total registered Laotians), the majority of Cambodians registered are male (69.2 per cent of the total registered Cambodian workers). This, thus, explains their marked-preponderance in some vocations – especially in domestic and factory work for Laotians and in fishery work for Cambodians – as mentioned above. Nevertheless, there seems to be equality in gender distribution among registered Burmese workers. Out of 305,187 Burmese registered under the 27 August 2002 Resolution of the Cabinet, the statistics show that 54.6 per cent are male and 45.4 per cent are female.

Based on the Thailand Standard Industrial Classification (TSIC-2001), Appendix O presents the industrial distribution of registered foreign workers under the Resolution of the Cabinet since 1996 (Ministry of Labour 2003). Note that the raw administrative data of registered foreign workers from the Registrations compiled by DOE (and others) does not allow an immediate assessment of trends in workers' economic activities over time. This is because there have been few systematic (standard) data collections since the first registration in 1994. This is further complicated by the fact that the government often imposed different regulations and conditions with each new registration, especially using different lists of permitted economic activities. Thus, for the sake of comparison in a time series, the data needs to be re-systematised. Importantly, it must be borne in mind, also, that all registered foreign workers under the Resolution of the Cabinet are in elementary occupations. From Appendix O, it is obvious that, since the 1996-1997 Registration, agriculture and fishery have always been one of the three largest industries in terms of employment of this type of foreign worker. The other vital industries are also construction, manufacture, and private household services.

As can be seen in Appendix O, out of 293,652 migrant workers registered and granted work permits through the 1996-1997 Registration, 101,484 workers (or 34.5 per cent) were in construction, 78,665 workers (or 26.8 per cent) were in agriculture, 51,923 workers were in fishery and related jobs, 34,283 workers (or 11.7 per cent) were in private household services or domestic helpers, 22,547 workers (or 7.7 per cent) were in manufacture, 3,097 workers (or about 1 per cent) were in transport, storage and communications, and 1,653 workers (or 0.6 per cent) were in mining and quarrying. However, when the government sanctioned a new registration in 1998 and again between 1999 and 2000, the largest group of the workers shifted to fishery, followed by agriculture. In both 1998 and 1999-2000 Registrations, the number of workers registered in agriculture and fishery, in aggregate, constituted over 70 per cent of the total registered population, while workers in construction and manufacture each made up between 2 and 9 per cent of the total registered foreign workers (Appendix O).

It is noteworthy that, since the 1996-1997 Registration, only in the 1998 Registration that work in Wholesale and retail trade was opened to registered foreign workers and there were 2,604 workers registered under this industry in 1998; work in Private household services, however, was prohibited between 1998 and 2000. When the government re-opened work in

Private household services for foreign workers in 2001, the number of registered workers in this industry jumped from 34,283 people in 1997 to 82,389 people. What is very interesting in the 2001 Registration (and the following re-registrations) is not only that the government again allowed workers to register in Private household services, but also the government permitted workers to register in a 'special jobs' category, which includes miscellaneous activities and self-employed workers. Consequently, some noticeable shifts in the economic activity distribution have occurred: workers in this 'special jobs' category became instantly the predominant group, constituting 31.2 and 31.9 per cent of the total registered population in 2001 and 2002 respectively. This reflects the current more relaxed approach of the government's schemes on illegal migrant worker, and the acute demand for foreign workers in other economic activities, especially those in the area where the 3D (dangerous, dirty and degrading) jobs are concentrated. Between 2001 and 2002, the numbers of registered self-employed workers were not quite significant in relative terms comparing to workers in the 'special jobs with employers'; however, as compared to workers in some other industries (such as Manufacture and Mining), their absolute numbers were indeed very large (Appendix O). There were 26,712 and 13,447 self-employed workers who registered and re-registered themselves in 2001 and 2002 respectively.

Nevertheless, there seems to be a straightforward correlation between nationalities and industries (economic activities) similar to the pattern found with the re-registration between September and November 2002, which was examined above. As can be seen in Appendix O, Burmese workers – not surprisingly – predominated in every industry since 1999. With the exception of the Transport, storage and communication industry in the 1999-2000 Registration, Burmese workers have constituted at least 69 per cent of workers in all permitted industries since 2000. The majority of Burmese workers, nonetheless, were found in fishery and related work, agriculture and (after 2001 especially) in the 'special jobs'. Equally, since 2000, Cambodian workers have abounded in fishery and related activities, and transport, storage and communications industries. Between 1999 and 2000, Cambodian workers even outnumbered Burmese workers in transport, storage and communications industries by almost 20 per cent, comprising 55.3 per cent of the total foreign workers registered in this industry. It is also evident from Appendix O that fishery and related activities, in particular, have always been the most important industry for Cambodian employment, employing 71.1 per cent of registered

Cambodians between 1999 and 2000, and over 35 per cent after 2001. After the re-opening of work in private household services in 2001, registered workers from Lao became a prominent feature of workers in this industry, constituting at least 20 per cent of total foreign workers in the private household services. Notably, beside private household services, work in construction and agriculture and ‘special jobs’ tend to be the most preferred jobs among registered Laotians.

5.5 Geographical distribution

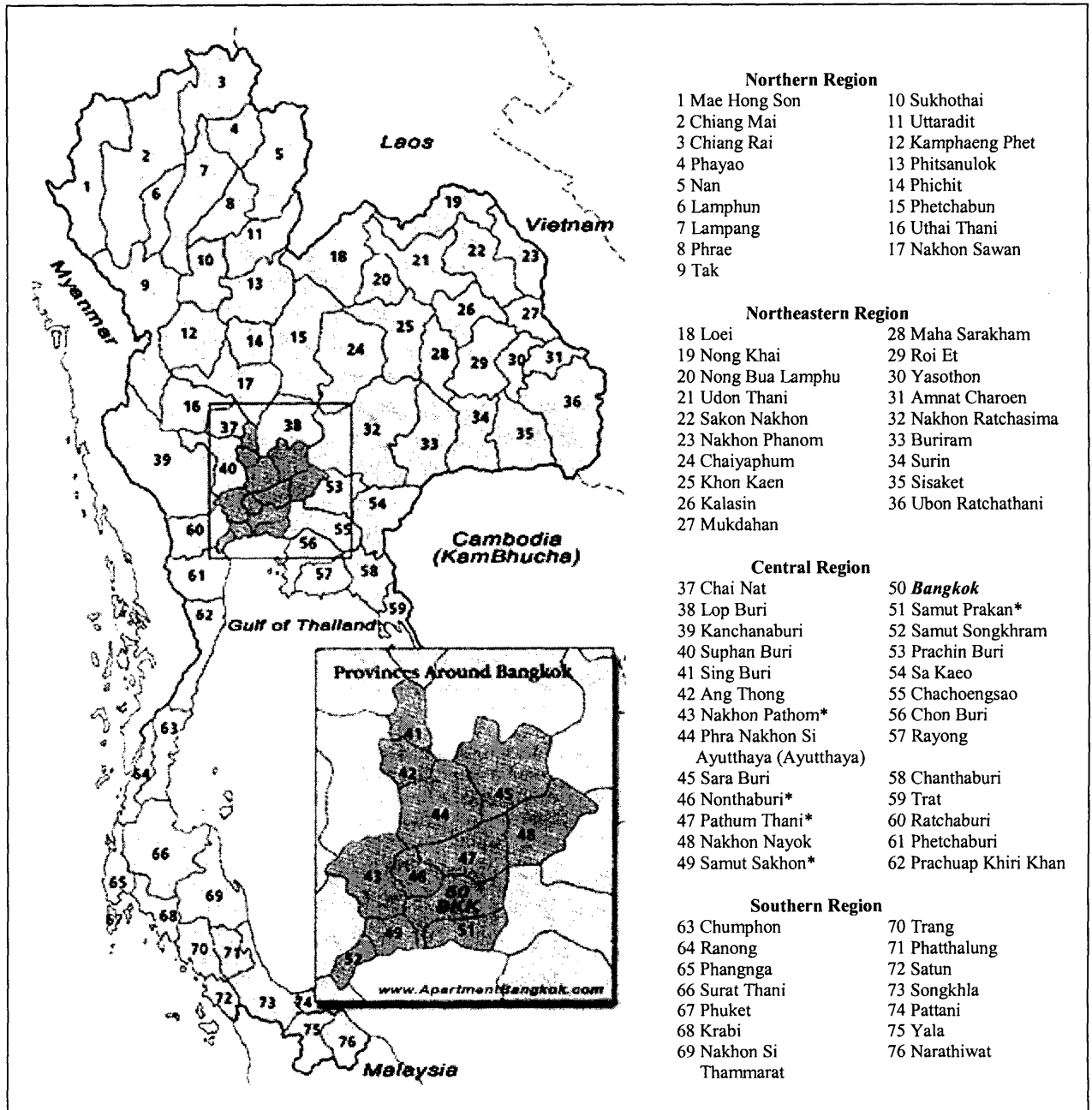
Thailand covers a total area of 514,000 square kilometres (or 198,000 square miles) in the centre of the Southeast Asian mainland. At present, the country is administratively divided into 76 provinces (or *changwat*) (Map 2). Bangkok is the capital city and the Bangkok Metropolitan area includes Nakhon Pathom province, Nonthaburi province, Pathum Thani province, Samut Prakan province and Samut Sakhon province. The Bangkok Metropolitan area is indeed (politically and economically) crucial for Bangkok and the Thai economy because, unlike many cities, Bangkok is an expanding city. It, therefore, deserves special emphasis in this examination. Geographically, Thailand divides into four natural regions: the Central (or Chao Phraya River Basin), the North, the Northeast (or the Korat Plateau), and the South (or Southern Peninsula). It is important to examine the geographical distribution of the foreign workforce by administrative and regional divisions.

Trend of geographical distribution

Figures 5.15.1 to 5.15.5 depict the location of different types of foreign workers in the different parts of the country. There appears, also, to be some patterns of regional difference from the following examination. It seems that, since 1987, permanent work permit holders, temporary worker permit holders, and foreign workers under special laws appear mainly in the Bangkok Metropolis; whereas, Under-Clause-12 foreign workers predominantly have settled in the Regional areas, especially between 1987 and 1994 in the Northeast. With the exception of the Northeast, foreign workers under the Resolution of the Cabinet have been equally distributed between Bangkok, the Bangkok Metropolitan region, and the other three major regions (the Central, the North, and the South) since 2001. It is, nevertheless, important to note

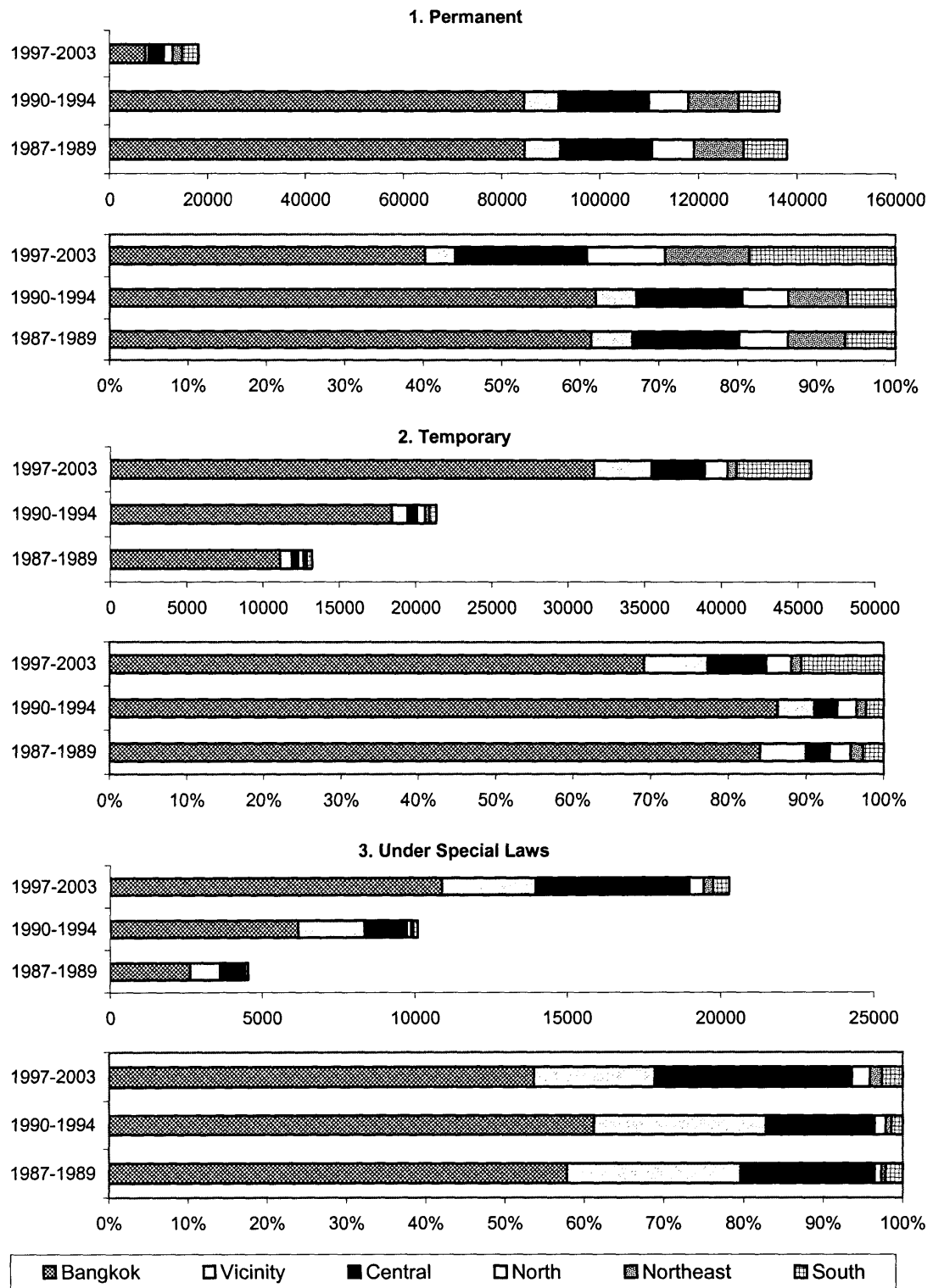
that the result from the examination in this section is only indicative. The statistics, in fact, indicate the location of the issue of work permits.

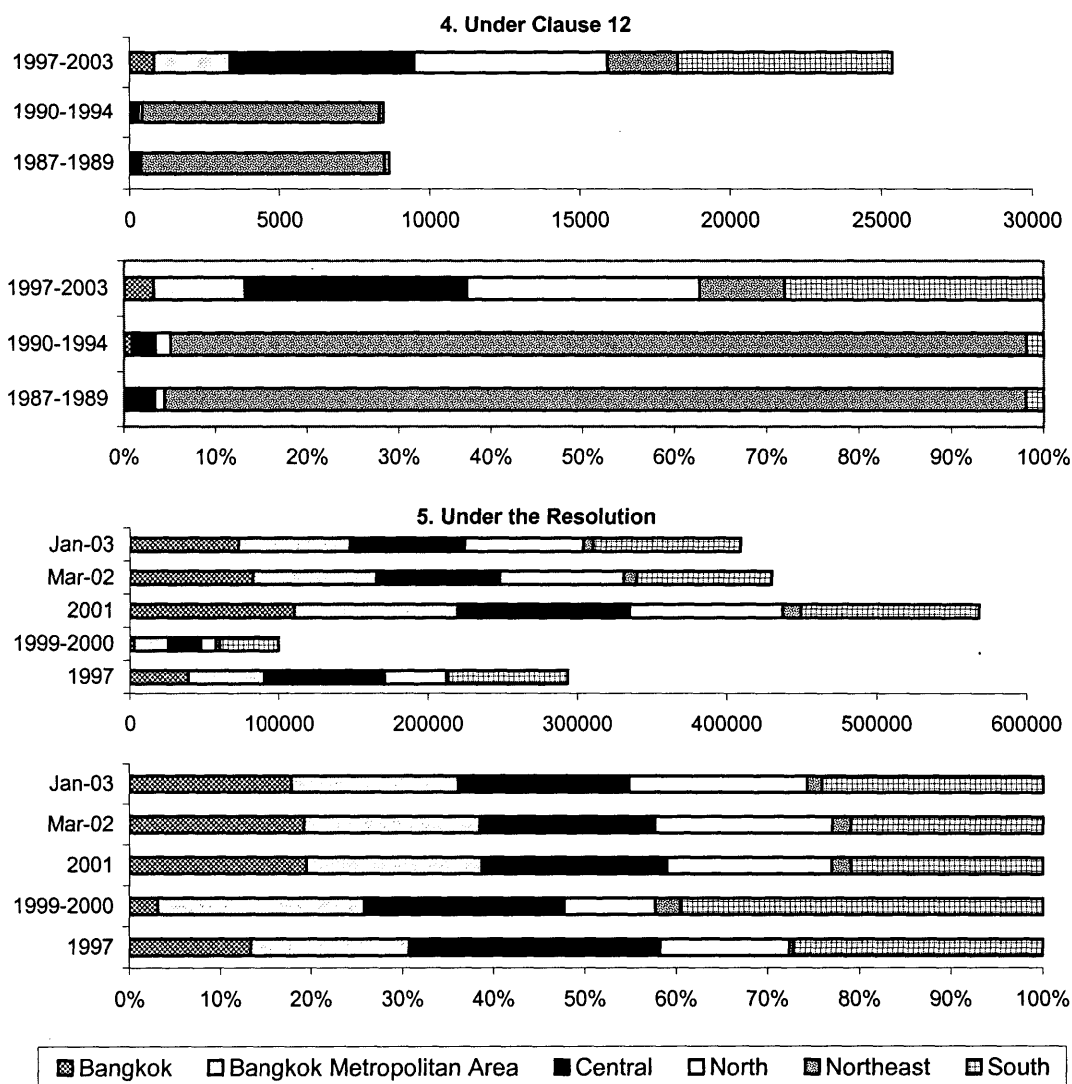
Map 2 Thailand



Note: * In the Bangkok Metropolitan area
Source: Bell-Realestate (2006), online

Figure 5.15 Distribution of Foreign Workforce in Thailand by Regions





- Note:
- 1) The Central do not include Bangkok and the Bangkok Metropolitan area
 - 2) In Figure 5.15.1 – Figure 6.4: Data between 1995 and 1996 are not available
 - 3) In Figure 5.15.5: Data in 1998 are not available

Sources: Permanent and temporary work permit holders, and workers under Special Laws and Under-Clause-12 workers data from 1987 to 1992: Department of Labour (1987-1992) *Year Book of Labour Statistics* (various tables); data from 1993 to 1996: Department of Labour Protection and Welfare (1993-1996) *Year Book of labour Statistics* (various tables); data from 1997 to 2001: Department of Employment (1997-2001) *Year Book of Employment Statistics* (various tables); data for 2002: Department of Employment (2003a), online; and data for 2003: Department of Employment (2004a), online.
 Foreign workers under the Resolution of the Cabinet: data for 1997: Alien Occupational Control Division (1997), p.79-81; data for 1999: Alien Occupational Control Division (2002), p 93; and data from 2001 to 2003: Vatanathon, Porntip (2003), p. 53-65.

Between 1987 and 1994, Bangkok alone contained over half of the permanent work permit holder population. Out of an average of 137,935.7 and 136,419 permanent worker permit holders a year in 1987-1989 and in 1990-1994, 84,670.7 and 84,555 of them resided in Bangkok, respectively. Among the four regions, the Central (not including Bangkok and the

Bangkok Metropolitan area) had the largest number of permanent work permit holders, followed by the Northeast, the South, and the North (Figure 5.15.1). Currently, for the reasons given elsewhere, permanent work permit holders had dwindled significantly (with an over 80 per cent reduction from 1990-1994 to 1997-2003). Bangkok was the biggest loser (about 91 per cent loss from 1990-1994 to 1997-2003). Thus, between 1997 and 2003, even though Bangkok is still the largest destination for this type of worker, Bangkok and the Bangkok Metropolitan area, on average, retain about 44 per cent of the total remaining population of permanent work permit holders per year. On average, 18.5 per cent of permanent work permit holders are in the South per year; 16.8 per cent of them are in the Central region (not including Bangkok and the Bangkok Metropolitan area); and around 10 per cent each are in the Northeast and the Northern regions (Figure 5.15.1).

Similarly, over half of the temporary work permit holders and workers under special laws have resided in Bangkok and the Bangkok Metropolitan area since 1987 (Figures 5.15.2 and 5.15.3). However, unlike permanent work permit holders, these types of foreign workers proliferated over the three periods in Bangkok, the Bangkok Metropolitan area and all four regions. Noteworthy, in the last period (1997-2003), the number of temporary work permit holders in the South and workers under special laws in the Central region (not including Bangkok and its vicinity) increased considerably faster than the number of their counterparts in other regions (Figures 5.15.2 and 5.15.3). There were on average 353 and 483 temporary work permit holders per year in the South in 1987-1989 and 1990-1994 respectively, before increasing to an average of 4869.9 per year in 1997-2003. The number of workers under special laws in the Central region (not including Bangkok and the Bangkok Metropolitan area) increased from 766 in 1987-1989 to 1,377 in 1990-1994, and then to 5,016.3 a year in 1997-2003. Therefore, currently – after Bangkok and the Bangkok Metropolitan area – the second largest group of temporary work permit holders resides in the South (10.6 per cent of the total), followed by the Central region (7.5 per cent), the North (3.3 per cent), and the Northeast (1.3 per cent). The Central region has the second largest group of workers under the special laws (24.8 per cent of the total), followed by the South (2.6 per cent), the North (2.3 per cent) and the Northeast (1.5 per cent).

In marked contrast, Figure 5.15.4 shows that, between 1987 and 1994, the Northeast had been the largest host of Under-Clause-12 foreign workers, whereas Bangkok and the Bangkok Metropolitan area had less than 1 per cent of the Under-Clause-12 worker' population. Out of an average of 8,649.6 and 8,464 Under-Clause-12 workers a year in 1987-1989 and in 1990-1994, 8,100.6 (or 93.6 per cent) and 7,878 (or 93.1 per cent) respectively of them were in the Northeast. Perhaps surprisingly, however, after the 1997 Economic Crisis, the number of Under-Clause-12 workers in the Northeast declined absolutely and proportionally to average 2,341.7 a year in 1997-2003 and 9.2 per cent of the total. Currently, the Central region (not including Bangkok and the Bangkok Metropolitan area), the North and the South hosted on average between 6,000 and 7,200 Under-Clause-12 workers per year (1997-2003). Still, between 1997 and 2003, despite the government's strong action towards illegal migrants, Bangkok – on average – has only 818 Under-Clause-12 workers a year (or 3.2 per cent of the total). However, the number of this type of foreign workers in the Bangkok Metropolitan area increased rather significantly both in absolute and relative terms. As can be seen in Figure 5.15.4, the number of Under-Clause-12 workers in the Bangkok Metropolitan area jumped from an average of 2 and 1.3 in 1987-1989 and in 1990-1994 per year to 2,526 in 1997-2003, constituting less than 0.1 per cent in 1987-1989 and 1990-1994 but 10 per cent in 1997-2003 – respectively. This can possibly be explained by the current expanding economic activities from Bangkok to the area.

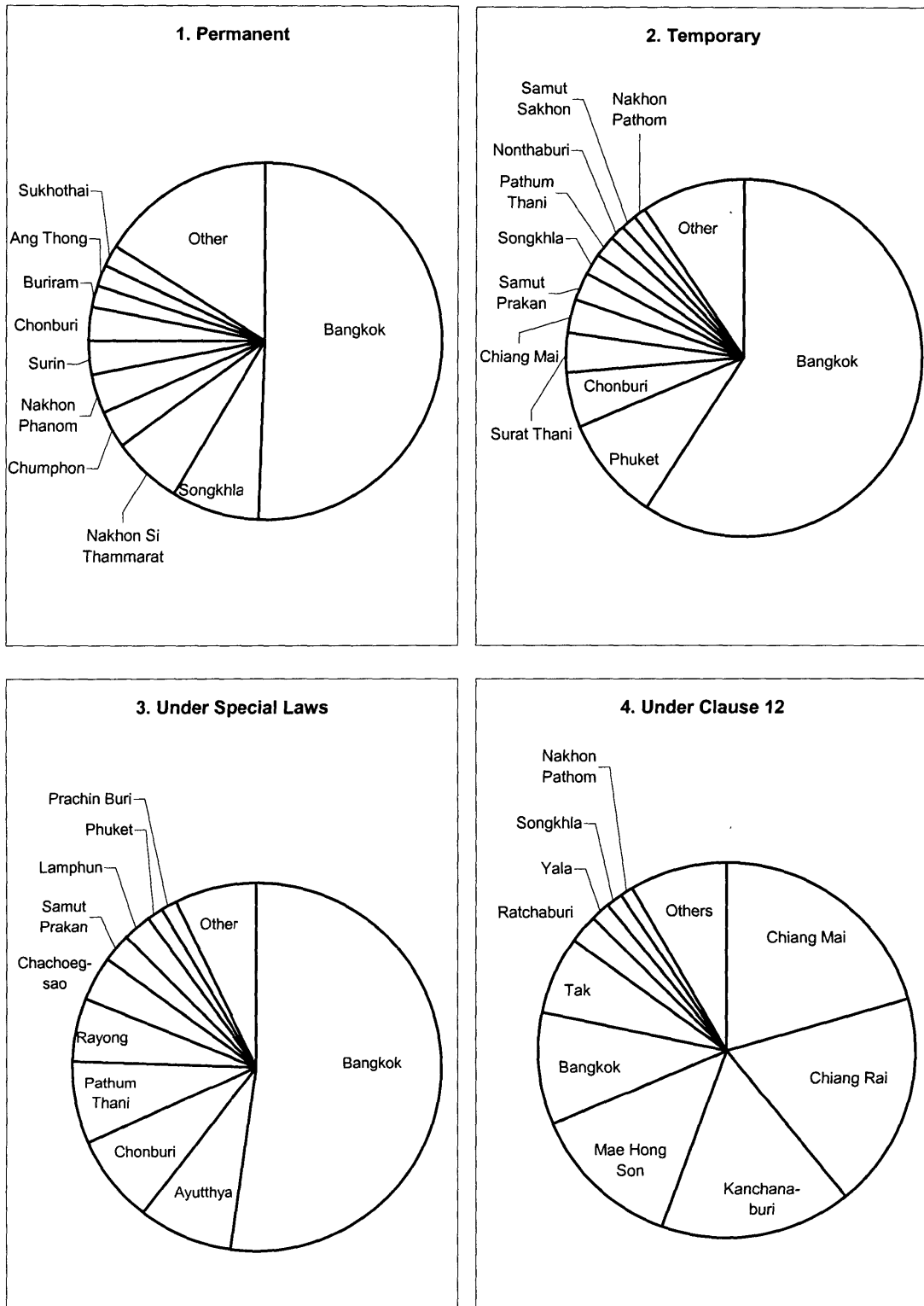
Unfortunately, official published statistics of workers under the Resolution of the Cabinet from the Registrations between 1992 and 1996 do not provide a geographical breakdown. Nevertheless, between 1992 and 1996, it is known that this type of worker was allowed only to reside in designated provinces along the Thai-Burmese boarder in accordance with the regulations of the 1992 and 1994 Registrations. When the geographical breakdown was publicly revealed after the end of the 1997 Registration, the statistics presented in Figure 5.15.5 show that the largest group of foreign workers registered in the Central area (27.5 per cent of the total registered population), followed closely by the South (27.2 per cent), and by the Bangkok Metropolitan area (17.4 per cent), the North (14.1 per cent), Bangkok (13.3 per cent) and the Northeast (0.5 per cent). Then, out of 99,974 registered foreign workers under the 1999-2000 Registration, 2,752 registered in the Northeast, 3,099 registered in Bangkok, 9,973 registered in the North, over 20,000 registered in each the Bangkok Metropolitan area

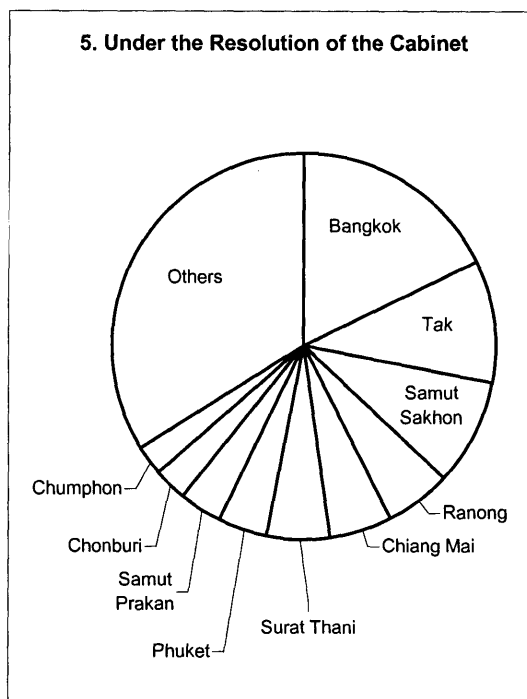
and the Central region, and 39,541 of the total registered in the South. When the new registration was announced in 2001, beside the previously registered workers, there was a profusion of new groups of illegal workers registered, augmenting the workforce in all four regions. Interestingly, however, even though the total number of foreign workers registered in the Northeast increased to 12,132 people, unlike in Bangkok, the registered workers in the Northeast were still proportionally diminutive. They made up merely 2.1 per cent of the total registered population, whereas there seem to be equal distribution of registered workers among Bangkok, the Bangkok Metropolitan area, and the other three regions, comprising between 18 and 21 per cent of the total each (Figure 5.15.5). As reviewed earlier, the total numbers of workers under the Resolution of the Cabinet diminished after the re-registrations in 2002 and 2003; additionally, Figure 5.15.5 shows that the numbers diminished relatively equally in all regions. By January 2003, there were 409,339 registered foreign workers remaining in the country, of whom 1.6 per cent are in the Northeast, 24 per cent reside in the South, and around 17.8 to 19.4 were registered in each of Bangkok, the Bangkok Metropolitan area, the Central and the North. In other words, apart from in the Northeast, there is a relatively even distribution of migrant workers throughout the country in this scheme.

Current geographical distribution

Currently, according to the DOE statistics presented in Appendix P, the trends in regional distribution continue. Bangkok is still host to the bulk of permanent work permit holders, temporary work permit holders, and foreign workers under special laws, whilst most authorised foreign workers under Clause 12 and workers under the Resolution of the Cabinet are found in regional areas. As of February 2004, 50.7 per cent, 59.1 per cent, and 52.3 per cent of the total population of permanent work permit holders, temporary work permit holders, and workers under special laws, respectively, are in Bangkok alone (Figures 5.16.1, 5.16.2, and 5.16.3). On the other hand, 87.1 per cent and 63.9 per cent of the 17,341 Under-Clause-12 workers and of the 409,339 registered workers under the Resolution of the Cabinet, respectively, reside in the regions (Figures 5.16.4 and 5.16.5). Appendix P additionally reveals the provincial distribution of foreign workers in the country which adds further detail to the picture of geographical distribution of the foreign workforce (as of February 2004). Among the different types of foreign workers, a relatively clear pattern emerges.

Figure 5.16 The Ten Largest Thai Provinces in Terms of Employment of Foreign Workers by Type of Work Permission





Source: Data based on Appendix P

As can be seen in Appendix P and Figure 5.16.1, of 14,423 remaining permanent work permit holders nationwide, 50.7 per cent are found in Bangkok, 7.9 per cent in Songkhla (in the South), 6.6 per cent in Nakhon Si Thammarat (in the South), 3.4 per cent in Chumphon (in the South), 3.3 per cent in Nakhon Phanom (in the Northeast), 3.2 per cent in Surin (in the Northeast), 3.1 per cent in Chonburi (Central region), 2 per cent in Buriram (in the Northeast), 1.9 per cent in Ang Thong (Central region), about 1.9 per cent in Sukhothai (in the North), and less than 1.9 per cent in other provinces each.

The statistics also show that 59.1 per cent of the total 53,153 of temporary work permit holders are in Bangkok, an average of 8.2 per cent in the Bangkok Metropolitan area (or about 1 to 2.5 per cent each in the five provinces in the vicinity), 9.6 per cent in Puket (in the South), 4.9 per cent in Chonburi (Central region), 3.7 per cent in Surat Thani (in the South), 2.8 per cent in Chiang Mai (in the North), 2.1 per cent in Songkhla (in the South), and less than 1 per cent each in other provinces. According to Appendix P, by February 2004, there are a total of 19,480 workers under special laws in Thailand. Of them, 52.3 per cent are in Bangkok, 8.3 per cent in Ayutthya (Central region), 7.6 per cent in Chonburi (Central region), 7.2 per cent in Pathum Thani (in the Bangkok Metropolitan area), 5.5 per cent in Rayong, 4 per cent in

Chachoengsao (Central region), 2.6 per cent in Samut Prakan (in the Bangkok Metropolitan area), 2.3 per cent in Lamphun (in the North), 1.5 per cent in Phuket (in the South), 1.4 per cent in Prachin Buri (Central region), and less than 1.3 per cent each in other provinces (Figure 5.16.3).

Interestingly enough, unlike the aforementioned types of foreign workers, as can be seen in Appendix P and Figure 5.16.4 – in aggregate – just above 75 per cent of 17,341 Under-Clause-12 foreign workers are in Chiang Mai (in the North), Chaing Rai (in the North), Kanchanaburi (Central region), Mae Hong Son (in the North), and Tak (in the North). Bangkok has just about 9.8 per cent of Under-Clause-12 workers. By the end of the special re-registration in Tak province, the statistics show that Bangkok is the largest province to register foreign workers under the Resolution of the Cabinet, comprising 17.8 per cent of the total registered population. It is likely that the current population of registered foreign workers (as of February 2004) is still about the same given that the government has yet held a new registration but has been periodically offering extensions to previously registered foreign workers. As shown in Appendix P, other provinces that registered a large number of this type of worker are Tak (in the North), Samut Sakhon (in the Bangkok Metropolitan area), Ranong (in the South), Chiang Mai (in the North), Surat Thani (in the South), Phuket (in the South), Samut Prakan (in the Bangkok Metropolitan area), Chonburi (Central region), and Chumphon (in the South), making up 10.2 per cent, 9.1 per cent, 5.5 per cent, 5.4 per cent, 5.2 per cent, 4 per cent, 3.7 per cent, 2.7 per cent, and 2.6 per cent of the total registered foreign workers under the Resolution of the Cabinet – respectively (Figure 5.16.5). Equally significant, nonetheless, when the registered population is broken down into origins of the workers and, as well as, provinces of registration as seen in Appendix P, the statistics reveal a rather different pattern, especially for Laotian workers and Cambodian workers. Unlike Burmese workers, as shown in Appendix P, over half of Laotian workers registered in Bangkok and the Bangkok Metropolitan area. The evidence from Appendix P suggests that large groups of registered Laotians can only be found in large provinces in the Central region and the Northeast, where the domestic help jobs are abundant. On the other hand, it was not Bangkok, but Trat and Rayong (both in the Central region) that registered the largest group of Cambodian workers. And it appears that large groups of Cambodian are registered, besides in Bangkok, mainly in fishery provinces near Cambodia. As shown in Appendix P, out of 36,818 registered

Cambodians, 7,549 registered in Trat (Central region), 5,510 in Rayong (Central region), 4,540 in Bangkok, 3,732 in Pattani (in the South), 3,275 Samut Prakan (in the Bangkok Metropolitan area), 3,062 in Chonburi (Central region), 1,315 in Sakaeo (Central region), 1,112 in Chanthaburi (Central region), 1,098 in Chachoengsao (Central region) and, in aggregate, 5,625 in the other provinces.

All in all, apart from Bangkok, permanent work permit holders seem to concentrate in major cities; temporary work permit holders are mostly in the Bangkok Metropolitan area and larger cities, and workers under special laws are predominantly found in some provinces in the Bangkok Metropolitan area and other large industrial provinces, in particular, nearby Bangkok. Under-Clause-12 workers, however, reside mainly in provinces along the border – especially between Thailand and Myanmar where the majority of highlanders and minorities are domiciled. Foreign workers under the Resolution of the Cabinet, besides Bangkok, are primarily in the Bangkok Metropolitan area and larger cities, especially of the North and the South.

5.6 Conclusion

The number of all types of foreign workers (excluding permanent work permit holders) in Thailand has increased over the past decade or so. The number of permanent work permit holders decreased only because the permanent worker permit is no longer issued. The chapter suggests that changes in stocks and flows of foreign workers in the country have mainly been due to the changes in the country's economic situation and the government's immigration policy. Workers under the Resolution of the Cabinet currently constitute the largest group of the foreign workforce, followed by temporary work permit holders; workers under Special Laws; Under-Clause-12 foreign workers; and permanent work permit holders.

The population of temporary work permit holders and workers under Special Laws can effectively be characterised as skilled and male dominated. Workers under the Resolution of the Cabinet and Under-Clause-12 foreign workers, on the other hand, are illegal migrants and/or *personae non-gratae*, working in unskilled or semi-skilled vocations. Their population is, also, increasing in the proportion of women. While workers under the Resolution of the

Cabinet are from Myanmar, Cambodia and Laos; the majority of Under-Clause-12 workers are of nationalities of adjacent less opulent countries and minority groups. Since the late 1980s, Japanese have always dominated the temporary Work Permit holders and workers under Special Laws. This is expected because of their large investment in the country. Chinese, English, Indian and Americans are other large groups of foreign workers in these types of employment.

The chapter, also, finds that the geographical distribution of all types of foreign worker examined in this chapter has not changed much over the past decade or so. Foreign workers are spread around the country, though not uniformly. The majority of permanent work permit holders, temporary work permit holders, workers under Special Laws and workers under the Resolution of the Cabinet are concentrated in Bangkok, the Bangkok Metropolitan area and other major economic provinces. However, Under-Clause-12 foreign workers are predominantly in the Regional areas and, especially, in provinces along the border between Thailand and Myanmar where the large number of highlanders and minorities live.

The utility of the findings in this chapter is twofold. First and foremost, they describe who and where these foreign workers are. Secondly, they provide the groundwork for the study's micro level analysis, the results of which are presented in the next two chapters. From the findings of this chapter, it is clear that foreign workers in Thailand can be divided into two groups: skilled and unskilled workers. A case study of unskilled foreign workers is discussed in the next chapter. Then, Chapter Seven will present a case study of skilled foreign workers. The characteristics of the sample population for the case studies are expected to reflect the findings from this chapter.