

**TROUBLE IN PARADISE ANALYZING THE EFFECTS OF INTERNATIONAL
LOW-SKILLED MIGRATION ON LOCAL WORKERS : A STUDY OF KOH PHI
PHI, KRABI PROVINCE, THAILAND**

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ABSTRACT

Although the study of migration and its impacts is not a recent phenomenon, the increasing globalization and interconnectivity of this world warrants a new perspective on the issue. Some countries wish to tear down metaphorical walls while other countries want to build physical walls, all in response to the same phenomenon, international, low-skilled labor migration. This year, the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) launched the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC), theoretically bringing with it not only the free flow of goods in the region, but also of skilled labor. Some critics feel that opening up the region to skilled labor mobility is not enough, and that the AEC should also allow for freer movement of low-skilled laborers in order to fill labor market demands and combat irregular migration.

Prior to opening the doors for the free movement of labor in the region, it is essential to understand the impacts that such movement can cause, not only for migrants but also for the local host communities and laborers. Scholars are still divided on the issue. Some insist that low-skilled labor migration is beneficial to local communities and laborers as it fills labor gaps and can lead to upward employment mobility for local workers. Other insist that low-skilled labor migration can be detrimental to the local workers by driving down wages and limiting employment opportunities as migrants compete with locals for jobs. While many of these scholars utilize national- and firm-level statistics to confirm their findings, no studies were found that addressed this issue using qualitative research methods at an individual level. This study utilizes a sequential qualitative research methodology to gather data from individual workers and host community residents to understand the possible impacts that such international, low-skilled labor migration can have on a community. Using an interpretive phenomenological analysis (IPA) model, this study analyzes whether or not international, low-skilled labor migration has impacted the economic, social and/or cultural rights of the workers and residents of Koh Phi Phi, Krabi Province, Thailand.

**KEY WORDS: LABOR MIGRATION / ECONOMIC RIGHTS / LOCAL
WORKERS / TOURISM EMPLOYMENT / KOH PHI PHI**

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