

Marriage Migration from Thailand to Germany

Chances and Challenges after Immigration



Marriage migrants are active actors in the migration process. Spouses from Southeast Asian countries like Thailand represent a significant number of immigrants in Germany. In relation to the different conditions of marriage on the one hand and the various circumstances in the country on the other hand, it is assumed also regarding socio-structural features, that female spouses from Thailand shape a very heterogeneous group.



Illustration of a Thai farmer woman with a western man by Corey Fields, <https://contexts.org/articles/transnational-gender-vertigo/>

There are estimated over **58,000** Thai people living in Germany beginning with a trend that took off in the 1960s and 1970s when Thai women, particularly those employed in private industry and farming, began to marry Germans.

Current State of Research: Thai spouses constitute a statistically meaningful group among new immigrants in Germany and it is presumed that they have specific difficulties in the migration process due to their motivation and background. There is a wide range of transnational marriage literature existing, but because marriages between Germans and Southeast Asian women are rather seen as a topic of women trafficking than marriage migration, the literature about Thai-German marriages is more related to the latter. It is assumed that Thai women are seen as a passive victim rather than an active actor (Ruenkaew) which shows that the different factors and motives has not been researched in a more deeply manner.

Research Questions:

Target group: Thai spouses who migrated to Germany

- ◆ Which factors influence Thai women to marry German spouses and to migrate to Germany?
- ◆ Which educational/ vocational qualifications do Thai wives bring along?
- ◆ What are the problems and opportunities of a female Thai spouse after the migration to Germany?



Friendship pins with the flags of Thailand and Germany: www.crossed-flag-pins.com

Methodology:

- ◆ Qualitative survey to obtain meaningful results about the situation of migrated female Thai spouses in Germany
- ◆ Face-to-Face-Interviews in Berlin

Key topics are:

- ✧ Socio-demographic and biographical data
- ✧ Marriage conditions and circumstances before marriage
- ✧ Educational and professional qualifications and skills before marriage
- ✧ Social integration, social environment
- ✧ Social standing in Thailand and Germany
- ✧ Identification, future perspectives and lifestyle goals

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This table shows the number of Thai wives married by Germans in Germany per year. In the year 2014 roughly over **1000** Thai women got married and in 2013 and 2012 Thailand was even ranked under the top 5 countries of marriage migration.

Top 10 - Männer wählten Frauen aus...

	2014	2013	2012
Top 1	Türkei (2910)	Polen (2533)	Polen (2610)
Top 2	Polen (2514)	Türkei (2473)	Türkei (2488)
Top 3	Russland (2075)	Russland (2133)	Russland (2161)
Top 4	Ukraine (1399)	Ukraine (1332)	Ukraine (1276)
Top 5	Italien (1083)	Thailand (1132)	Thailand (1112)
Top 6	Thailand (1027)	China (817)	Italien (1016)
Top 7	China (856)	Rumänien (792)	Österreich (796)

Source: Statistisches Bundesamt, Verband binationaler Familien und Partnerschaften, http://www.verband-binationaler.de/fileadmin/Dokumente/Statistiken_Zahlen/Top10_Frauen_Partnerswahl_2014-2012.pdf