



Development Strategy for Enhancing Thai Population Security in Time of Change

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Abstract. Population Security has become an important area that requires constant vigilance and development amid rapid and widespread changes in economic, social, and technological fields. This paper is prepared to achieve several primary objectives: 1) Explore key concepts for enhancing and securing Population Security in Thailand during times of change; 2) Examine the current socio-economic conditions of the Thai population; 3) Establish a future perspective on anticipated changes; and 4) Suggest appropriate development strategies to improve the security of the Thai population. Thailand's security faces various interrelated risks across economic, social, cultural, natural resource, environmental, and information technology dimensions, with global, regional, and national implications. Current data trends highlight potential challenges in the social and economic sectors, elderly health care, crime and security, and natural and regional resource management. It is critical to formulate strategies that support the long-term security of the Thai population amidst ongoing shifts in the economic, social, educational, and health sectors. These strategies must align with sustainable economic growth, health and educational facilities, and social and economic opportunities so every individual in the country can enhance long-term security.

Keywords: Strategy, Development, Population Security, Change.

1 Introduction

Population Security is becoming increasingly necessary and deserves more attention amid the rapid development of the technological, social, and economic sectors. This issue needs to be considered carefully because it is a necessary component in maintaining the stability of the country and the welfare of the people. Thailand is currently trying to adapt to this rapid change which can have both opportunities and risks. Ensuring the security and safety of its people as the government needs to do in the face of transformation, requires a strategic and comprehensive plan to strengthen resilience and reduce risks that will arise due to the complex process. Population Security is critical to promoting a prosperous and stable future, so policies and practices are needed.

The Thai government needs to formulate and implement effective strategies and plans for the protection of Population Security amidst the many challenges it has to face.

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The challenges of this development include the involvement and contribution of all sectors of society and government. Strategic planning and collaboration are key factors in successfully achieving and meeting the needs and aspirations of diverse communities. The involvement of multiple sectors requires an inclusive approach to help build unity and resilience in addressing complex issues. The dynamics of collaboration will determine the security and well-being of the Thai population so that sustainable and equitable development will be accomplished.

This paper highlights the objectives outlined as important. Population Security is the main focus of exploring basic concepts related to its improvement and development during this transformation period. Moreover, this critically analyzes Thailand's current socioeconomic conditions and how the population adapts. This article also presents a forward-looking scenario that combines management practice anticipating potential changes and innovative developments to enforce the security of the Thai population. A comprehensive framework for strengthening Population Security in the face of ongoing transformation is what the paper aims to support by focusing on these fundamental objectives.

2 Finding and Discussion

2.1. Development Strategy

The United Nations (UN) Development Strategy incorporating the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), is a comprehensive framework for sustainable development worldwide. This Development Strategy outlines the goal setting and methodology for advancing the economic and social sectors of an organization, country, or entity. Moreover, the ultimate goal is to enhance prosperity, foster sustainable development, and improve various aspects of economic, social, environmental, and human rights conditions for the target population.

Thailand's 13th National Economic and Social Development Plan (B.E. 2556-2570) has elaborated thoroughly the specific goals and guidelines of Thailand's socioeconomic development following the international objectives. To achieve Population Security, Thailand needs to implement a careful and comprehensive plan focusing on social welfare, economic stability, and equitable development to accomplish sustainable growth and improve the quality of life for its citizens (the National Economic and Social Development Board, B.E. 2565)

- 1) **Economic Security:** Emphasizing sustainable economic development by promoting inclusive growth and providing opportunities for people to access jobs and generate income, ensuring economic stability and well-being for the population.
- 2) **Social Security:** Focusing on developing an egalitarian society, addressing social imbalances, and creating a sustainable and capable society, including initiatives such as prioritizing education, social support, job creation, and access to healthcare services.

- 3) **Rights and Equality:** Prioritizing the creation of rights and equality for all, ensuring everyone has opportunities to access resources and basic rights related to their livelihood, aiming to increase security in rights and equality within society.



Figure. 1: Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)
Source United Nations 2021

2.2. Population Security

Population Security ensures the safety and protection of a population group exposed to a particular situation or risk, such as conflict, environmental disaster, or displacement, to protect the well-being of this population [2] [3] [4]. The creation of protective measures for strong needy groups needs to be prioritized to build Population Security. However, this will require public and private sector collaboration. Human Security covers a broader range of matters related to individual safety and security, social stability, and guaranteeing a dignified and independent life, which is wider than Population Security. Population Security and Human Security, along with their detailed differences, highlight that specific measures and strategies, such as disaster preparedness, conflict resolution, and social welfare programs, are needed to address the unique challenges faced by vulnerable population groups, thereby fostering resilience and stability against potential threats [5].

Some institutions in Thailand have defined Population Security to emphasize the critical need for comprehensive security across social, food, health, and economic dimensions. This definition highlights the far-reaching implications for the protection and well-being of all residents within Thai society. Economic security ensures adequate income for sustainable living, social security promotes equality and justice, health security facilitates comprehensive health services, and access to indispensable daily resources is guaranteed to create critical components. Additionally, it includes physical security and safety in the environment and society, considering various risks and situations. Support and risk management systems are in place to ensure that the overall security of the population is understood and accepted in all communities and contexts in Thailand [6].

The security of Thailand is still facing risks from various interconnected dimensions, such as economic, social, cultural, natural resources, environmental, and technological aspects. The challenges and threats are complex and multifaceted, affecting security at global, regional, and national levels (Office of the National Economic and Social Development Council 2022)

- 1) **Global Level:** Involves influential countries in shaping international policies and forming international groups affecting global security contexts.
- 2) **Regional Level:** Related to security in the Southeast Asian region, focusing on economic and energy aspects, the strength of regional groups, and competition affecting regional security.
- 3) **National Level:** Addresses population security and economic security in the country, political problems, peace in the southern border areas, refugees, and the migration of populations. It also considers energy and food security and the security of the population.

2.3. The current situation of the Thai population and the future landscape of change

The National Economic and Social Development Council (NESDC) (2009) has conducted population projections for Thailand for the years 2010-2030 (B.E.2553 - 2583). The results show that since the year 2010 (B.E.2553), the population of Thailand has been increasing slowly. Starting from 63.8 million people in 2010 (B.E.2553), the number of Thai nationals and non-Thai nationals with registered residences gradually increased by approximately 0.2 percent per year, reaching a peak of 67.2 million people in 2028 (B.E.2571). After that, the population is expected to decline, and it is projected that by the year 2030 (B.E.2583), the population of Thai nationals and non-Thai nationals with registered residences will decrease to approximately 65.4 million people. This suggests that between 2028 and 2030 (B.E.2553 - 2583), the Thai population is expected to decline at a rate of -0.2 percent per year.

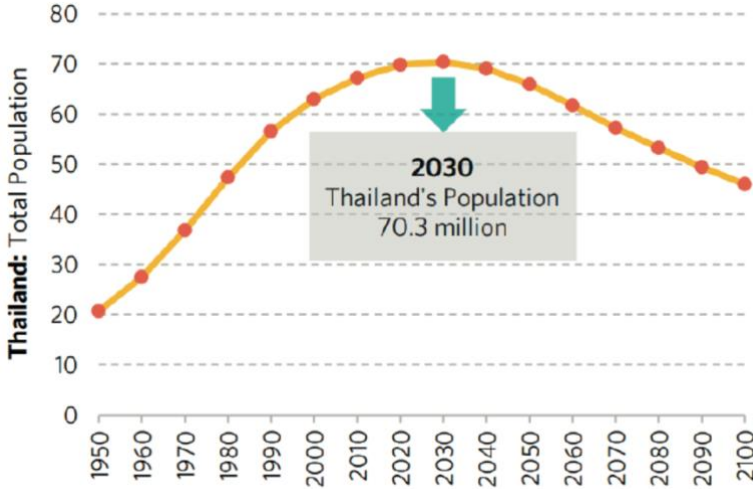


Figure 2: Population Growth in Thailand, AD 1950–2040
 Source: UNFPA Thailand 2019

Since 1970, the Thai population has been gradually increasing, leading to a significant slowdown in the population growth rate, eventually turning negative. Afterward, the age structure of the population has shifted towards an increasing proportion of elderly individuals continuously over a 40-year period. Predictably, the percentage of the population aged 60 and above, which was is expected to rise in 1990, further increasing to 25.5% in 2015 (B.E.2558), and reaching in 2030 (B.E.2573), as illustrated in Figure 3.

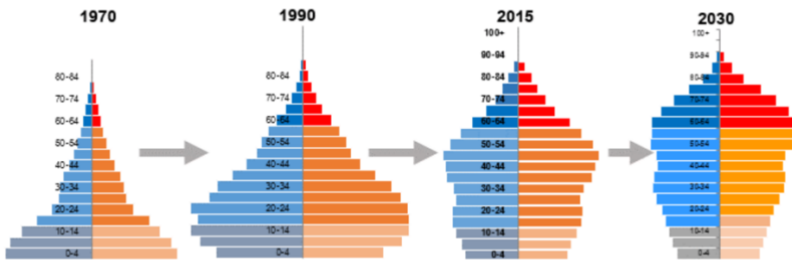


Figure 3: Population Projections for Thailand, 1970 - 2030
 Source: Office of the National Economic and Social Development Council 2022

During the National Economic and Social Development Plans 1 (B.E.2504–2509) and 2 (B.E.2510–2514), Thailand experienced a population growth rate of 6%, considered high fertility. Consequently, the government formulated policies in the 3rd National Development Plan (B.E.2515–2519) to systematically reduce the continuous

population growth rate. Subsequently, in the 7th National Development Plan (B.E.2535–2539), Thailand shifted its population policy to promote population dispersion and stimulate the sustainable development of urban and rural communities. In the 9th National Development Plan (B.E.2550–2554), efforts were made to maintain the fertility rate above 1.8 to sustain a stable population. However, despite these policies, Thailand faced a rapid decline in its fertility rate to 1.6 in 2010 (B.E. 2553), falling below the replacement level. This persistent decline is evident in data from the 2017 (B.E.2562) survey on the situation of children and women in Thailand. The Total Fertility Rate (TFR) was found to be 1.44, while health statistics from 2009 (B.E. 2552) reported a TFR of 1.29, highlighting the urgency to address the declining fertility rate and the challenges posed by an aging society in Thailand (Graduate School of Business Administration, Chulalongkorn University, 2022).

Furthermore, a study by [9] on the appropriate population size for Thailand's future, based on the Theory of Demographic Transition [10], revealed that the country is expected to enter a state of demographic stability. The optimal population size is estimated to be around 42 million by around 2007 (B.E.2550). The study suggests that if the fertility and mortality rates remain constant, the population will stabilize. However, if the fertility rate drops below 1.45, Thailand's population will be at its most suitable size. Conversely, if the fertility rate decreases to 1.2, the population would decrease to only 28 million over the next 100 years.

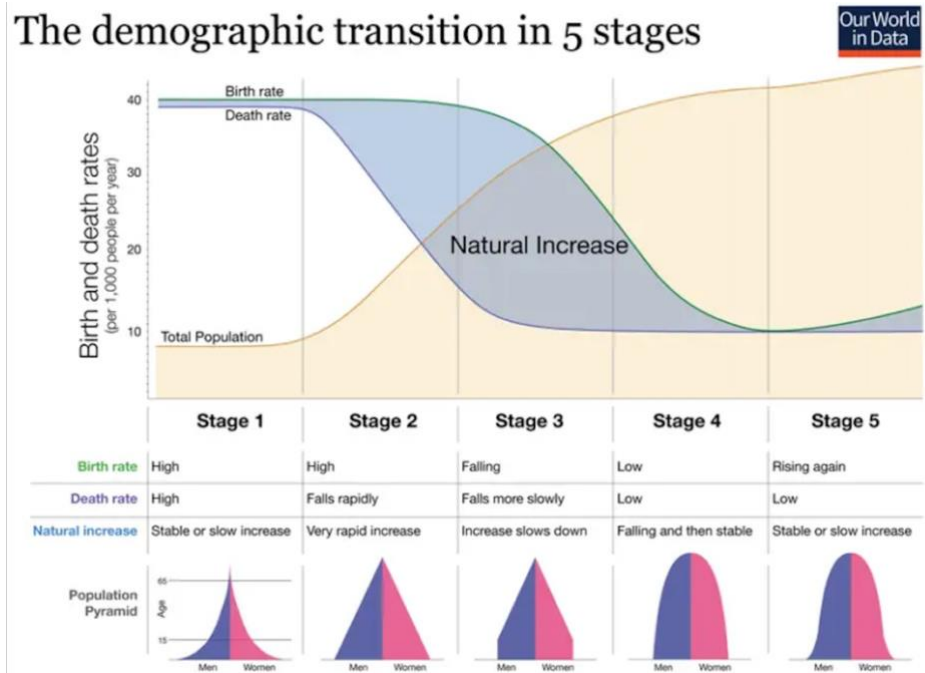


Figure 4: Population Dynamics in a Closed 5-Layer System

Source: Max Roser in Our World in Data

Based on the current situation of the Thai population mentioned above, it allows for the analysis of the future scenario of population stability in Thailand, which may exhibit the following characteristics:

- 1) **Social and Economic Aspects:** Changes in the population structure may lead to an increase in the average age of the population. The workforce of young adults may decrease, while the elderly population may increase. This change could impact the stability of the economy and society, such as a labor crisis and shifts in climate conditions.
- 2) **Healthcare and Elderly Care:** The growing proportion of the elderly population may result in increased demands for healthcare and elderly care services. Caring for the elderly could become an economic and social burden due to the rising need for labor and resources.
- 3) **Crime and Security:** Inappropriate changes in the population structure may contribute to issues related to crime and security. This includes legal violations, disturbances in various areas, and epidemiological transitions from infectious diseases to non-communicable diseases, particularly from a younger to an older population.
- 4) **Area and Natural Resource Management:** Changes in population structure may lead to increased demand for natural resources and concentrated areas, causing income inequality to rise. Unsustainable use of natural resources may pose risks to the stability of populations in those areas.

2.4. Developing Strategies to Enhance Stability in the Thai Population

During times of comprehensive changes in the economy, society, education, and health, developing strategies to enhance the stability of the Thai population is crucial. This should encompass personal, societal, and national levels in the following aspects:

Promoting Equality:

- 1) Facilitate access to economic and social opportunities for socially disadvantaged groups.
- 2) Promote gender equality in all aspects, including employment, education, societal benefits, and access to healthcare services.

Sustainable Economic Development:

- 1) Promote and support economic activities that increase opportunities for job creation and income generation for the population.
- 2) Foster economic activities in rural areas to enhance opportunities for agricultural and industrial activities in those regions.
- 3) Promote the creation of jobs with sufficient income and stability for the population at all levels.
- 4) Establish policies to address the declining workforce and comprehensive policies to support an aging society by empowering and creating value for the elderly population.
- 5) Transform the economic drive by increasing labor productivity rather than simply increasing the number of incoming workers.

- 6) Elevate labor standards to international levels through workforce skill standards and professional qualification standards.

Educational Development:

- 1) Promote and support access to quality and inclusive education for all age groups, especially children and youth.
- 2) Develop education to align with the needs of society and the economy in the future, both academically and in life skills.
- 3) Foster education and vocational training to increase opportunities for high-income employment and future stability.
- 4) Collaborate with the private sector in producing a workforce in various fields of study to meet the specific labor market demands.

Health Preparedness:

- 1) Promote access to quality and free health services for all age groups.
- 2) Distribute healthcare services universally and equally under various healthcare benefit programs.
- 3) Enhance efficiency in healthcare through the use of medical technology.

Population Growth Planning:

- 1) Plan for desirable and sustainable population growth in line with the country's needs and resources.
- 2) Implement measures to promote social and economic contexts that improve efficiency in addressing population stability issues.
- 3) Develop extensive policies for systematic urban communities, including transportation systems, tax management, community access, fair service costs, and changing attitudes and behaviors.

However, in the development to enhance the stability of the Thai population, various challenges and obstacles may be encountered, which could impact the aforementioned process. Firstly, equality in accessing economic and social opportunities remains a challenging obstacle in developing a sustainable population, especially for groups with low income, vulnerability, or difficult environmental conditions. They often face significant barriers, such as limited access to health and education, which can reduce their overall stability. Therefore, creating policies that guarantee equal access to economic and social opportunities is essential. However, infrastructure development is necessary to facilitate high-quality health and education services, increase employment opportunities, and raise incomes. Sustainable economic growth requires us to be more adaptable to change and face challenges amid rapid technological development. Moreover, it also promotes innovation and develops opportunities for urban and rural communities to participate and contribute to the development process actively by addressing these barriers head-on. Population stability is greatly enhanced by advancing environmental initiatives and expanding educational opportunities. Various learning experiences and activities, which promote stability and increase income, are facilitated to ensure population sustainability.

3 Conclusion

This complex process requires a systematic yet flexible approach to increase the stability of Thailand's population during the transition period by covering economic, social, human rights, education, and health dimensions. Advancing social equality and building a sustainable economy that guarantees equal access to opportunities and human rights is essential to achieving a stable and equal life for everyone. Building a stable career and highlighting the importance of health in creating a resilient population that can adapt to continuous change can be achieved by investing in education and health. Achieving these development goals depends on essential collaboration and unity between the private sector and government. Sustainable development and resilience in an evolving society that continually adapts to the changing needs of its people is essential, along with a focus on promoting social responsibility and increasing efforts to increase the stability of Thailand's population.

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