

Ethnic Resources and Migration Networks: Tom Yam Restaurant Entrepreneurs in Malaysia

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1. Aim

This paper examines in better understanding the connections between ethnic resources and migration networks to concern Tom Yam restaurant entrepreneurs in Malaysia.

2. Data & Methods

For this purpose, drawing up examples based on qualitative approach fieldwork, in-depth interviews of Tom Yam business entrepreneurs in Malaysia who are Muslim from the southern border of Thailand by use of snowballing technique.

3. Results

We found that Tom Yam restaurant business growth has occurred in Malaysia. Tom Yam restaurants are Thai *halal* food restaurants in Malaysian society. These businesses are run by Muslims from the southern border region of Thailand and, sell Thai food in Malaysian society. Almost all Tom Yam owners worked in Tom Yam restaurants in Malaysia before stating their own business. The self-employment pattern of Muslim business from Thailand, particularly the success of Tom Yam restaurant business, is current explained by the social resources explanation. However, Tom Yam restaurants are run by Muslim owners from Thailand, there are different kinds of ethnic groups among Muslim Tom Yam restaurant owners in Malaysia between Thai Muslim and Malay Muslim. There are an indispensable interconnection between ethnic resources and the establishment of migration networks based on owner's ethnicity. Migration networks, which are family networks and social networks, are important in the way they generate resources for business establishment and management.

4. Conclusion

From these findings, the expansion of the Tom Yam restaurant business is a part of the process of globalization in the border crossing of Thai food culture. Tom Yam restaurants serving popular *halal* Thai food are scattered around Malaysia, but do not exist in Thailand. The owners of such restaurants continue to employ workers who are the same ethnicity with owner ethnicity as they do. Having the same ethnicity is not the only reasons why Tom Yam restaurants owners employ them. Migration networks among owners are another important factor.

References

Bunmak, S. 2011, *Migrant Networks in Thailand and Malaysia: The case of Irregular Nayu Workers in the Tom Yam restaurants in Kuala Lumpur*, LAP Lambert Academic Publishing, Saarbrücken.