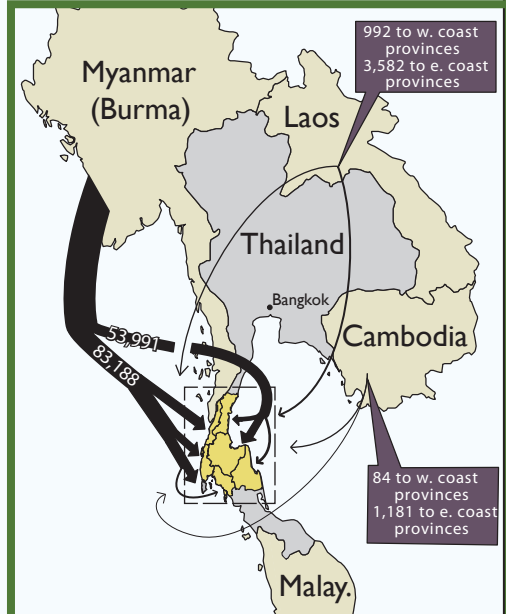
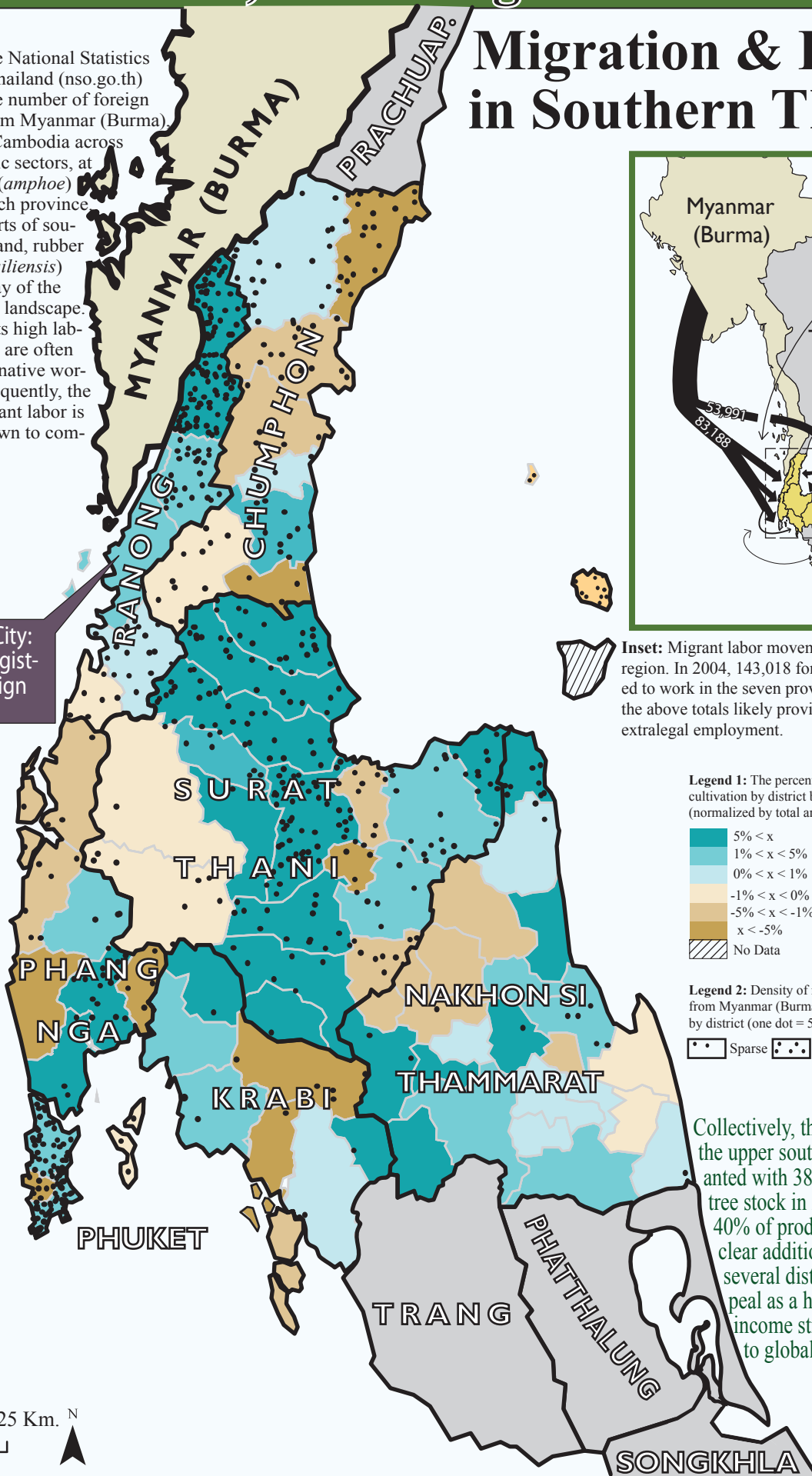


# Elastic Labor, Elastic Agriculture:

## Migration & Rubber in Southern Thailand

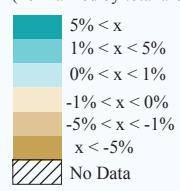
In 2004, the National Statistics Office of Thailand (nso.go.th) reported the number of foreign workers from Myanmar (Burma), Laos, and Cambodia across all economic sectors, at the district (*amphoe*) level for each province. In many parts of southern Thailand, rubber (*hevea brasiliensis*) is a mainstay of the agricultural landscape. However, its high labor demands are often not met by native workers. Consequently, the use of migrant labor is widely known to compensate.

Ranong City: 26,221 registered foreign workers



**Inset:** Migrant labor movement into the upper southern region. In 2004, 143,018 foreign workers were registered to work in the seven provinces shown here. However, the above totals likely provide an underestimate due to extralegal employment.

**Legend 1:** The percent change in area under rubber cultivation by district between 2002 and 2004 (normalized by total area of the district)



**Legend 2:** Density of registered foreign workers from Myanmar (Burma), Laos, and Cambodia by district (one dot = 50 people)



Collectively, the seven provinces of the upper south shown here were planted with 38% of Thailand's rubber tree stock in 2004 and contributed to 40% of production quantity. The clear additions to cultivated area in several districts signal rubber's appeal as a high-value crop, whose income streams are tied closely to global commodity chains.

