

Economic Interactions of Migrants and their Households of Origin: Are Women More Reliable Supporters?

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One of the salient features of internal migration in Thailand is the increasing participation of women in population mobility. Drawn by growing economic opportunities in urban areas, more and more women are participating in migration streams. This paper examines, from a gender perspective, the interactions between migrants and their households of origin, in terms of the transfer of money and goods. The analysis of the National Migration Survey data suggests that, as the theory of New Economics of Labour Migration posits, migration might have functioned as a survival strategy of many Thai households. The flows of money and goods into migrant-sending households are large and essential supplements for the livelihood of the households. Presumably conditioned by traditional gender roles in Thai culture, female migrants showed deeper commitment than male migrants in providing economic supports for their households left behind.

Introduction

Many would agree that Thailand is one of the developing countries that has achieved stunning economic success in the last few decades. Until the financial crisis in July 1997, the country's GDP had sustained a remarkable growth averaging over seven percent a year in the late 1980s (World Bank, 1994). Thailand in the early 1990s had almost achieved the economic status of the four dragons in Asia, namely, Hong Kong, the Republic of Korea, Singapore and Taiwan. Although the Thai economy had been predomi-

nantly agricultural, since the 1970s the government has actively promoted the service sector, especially tourism, to boost the country's economy (Phongpaichit, 1993). More recently, the expansion of the government-led, export-oriented manufacturing industries has stimulated unprecedented economic growth (Chalamwong, 1998). Thus, the country underwent a rapid shift away from an agricultural economy. By 1995, the contribution of agriculture in GDP terms had dropped to 11 percent, while the share of industry and service amounted to 40 percent and 49 percent, respectively (World Bank, 1997).

It is well documented that this remarkable economic expansion paralleled the increasing geographical mobility of people in Thailand (Watanabe, 1997; Nakanishi 1994; Phongpaichit, 1993; Pejaranonda *et al.*, 1995; Soonthorndhada, 1987). Indeed, the experience of Thailand indicates that migration is an intrinsic part of development. The decennial census of the country revealed that the total number of migrants, referring to the persons who changed their usual place of residence in the five years preceding the census date, grew from 1.7 million to 2.1 million between 1970 and 1990 (National Statistics Office, respective years). In particular, long-distance moves recorded profound increases during this period: the number of interregional migrants continued to grow, from 0.8 million in 1970 to 0.9 million in 1980 and then to 1.4 million in 1990. Interregional migrants have outnumbered intraregional migrants in the country since 1980.

The period of rapid economic growth was also marked by changes in Thailand's migration streams. During the 1950s and the 1960s, rural to rural migration was the most dominant type of internal migration, as employment opportunities had been primarily available in the agricultural sector (United Nations, 1982, Watanabe, 1997). The pattern has changed since the late 1970s - rural to rural migration declined while flows of people to urban destinations increased. In the rural areas, opportunities to acquire additional farmland and other sources of income declined. On the other hand, the urban labor market in Bangkok and its adjacent areas expanded (Watanabe, 1997). Attractive job opportunities outside agriculture, coupled with widening rural-urban differentials in income, prompted rural dwellers to start moving to urban centers in search of gainful employment. In particular, the relatively poor Northeastern region of Thailand became the major source of migrant workers. The level of rural to urban labor migration gains further importance when circular migration of farmers is taken into account (Chamrathirong *et al.*, 1995; Phongpaichit, 1993)

Another salient feature of internal migration in Thailand is the participation of women in population mobility. Especially significant, autonomous mobility toward urban centers arose among women who are young and single (Phongpaichit, 1993; Soonthorndhada, 1987), for additional

labor in response to demands in the manufacturing and service sectors. Furthermore, a growing number of Thai women have completed primary education and have migrated to urban destinations for higher levels of schooling (Pejaranonda *et al.*, 1995). Thus, the population censuses reveal that since 1980, women have outnumbered men in cityward migration, thereby changing the sex ratio of populations in urban areas (Pejaranonda *et al.*, 1995).

Given the growing prominence of women in internal migration in Thailand, the present study aims to examine gender differences arising out of migration by focusing on the interactions between migrants and their households of origin. The study presumes that the behavior of migrants can be affected by gender-based role expectations in a given culture, thus exerting different effects on their households of origin. The paper focuses on the following two questions. To what extent do households interact economically with migrants who had moved out? Is there any difference in the contribution by male and female migrants to their households of origin? The empirical examination of migration outcomes from a gender perspective has remained scarce in migration literature. This study, therefore, will try to fill this gap.

The consequences of migration can be addressed in various dimensions, including demographic, economic, environmental, and socio-psychological aspects (Guest, 1998; INSTRAW, 1994). This study looks at the direct economic outcome of migration on households, in terms of the amount of cash or the value of goods that are transferred between migrants and their households of origin. The theory of new economics of labor migration postulates that under settings where a well-functioning market is absent or inaccessible, households attempt to minimize risks to their economic well-being by diversifying the allocation of household resources, including family labor (Massey *et al.*, 1994; Stark and Bloom, 1985; Stark, 1982). Hence, the migration of a family member can be seen as a survival strategy of households based on their own cost-benefit calculation. In this theory, the out-migrant is viewed functionally as continuing to maintain close contacts with the household of origin through remittances (Bilsborrow, 1998). Migrant remittances can have a positive direct impact on households which receive them, easing their capital constraint, especially when sudden needs arise. Migrant remittances, as source capital, may also increase the family budget for expenditures and eventually stimulate the economy of migrant sending areas.

Identifying the consequences of migration is necessary to ascertain where policy intervention is needed (Bilsborrow, 1998). However, the scarcity of migration data has long prevented a study of the consequences of migration (Guest, 1998). Thailand is no exception. Furthermore, serious

attention to the gender-specific migration in Thailand has only recently commenced (Taneerananon, 1994). In fact, the absence of solid, quantitative evidence on the consequences of migration has led to the prevalence of unwarranted negative views of female migration in the country. The focus of media attention on the sex industry has given rise to a singular image of Thai migrant women, that of poor peasant girls who migrate to work in Bangkok's massage parlors. While this sub-group of migrant women should be targeted for immediate policy actions, they certainly do not represent totality of the outcomes of female migration in Thailand. As will be discussed below, women in Thailand are known to be traditionally economically active and mobile, providing significant support for the welfare of their households. The migration of women and their contribution to their families can positively affect the economic status of their families, independent of the migrants' own experiences at their destinations.

This paper begins by reviewing the existing literature on gender roles in Thailand and their relationship with migration. Following the description of the National Migration Survey (NMS) which I have employed in this study, the interrelations between migrants and their households of origin in terms of transfer of money or goods are presented. Then, gender differences in the economic contribution of migrants to the households of origin are explored. Lastly, the outcome variables are examined in relation to migrants' individual characteristics and their migration experiences.

Gender Roles and Migration in the Thai Context

Until recently, the migration literature focused on the exploration of the determinants of migration within an economic framework (Bilsborrow, 1998; Massey *et al.*, 1994). It is important to recognize, however, that there is a wide range of social, demographic and cultural factors that are potentially important in explaining the migration decisions and behaviors of migrants. In particular, sex differences in migration behavior cannot be adequately understood without taking into account gender-specific expectations or cultural restrictions embedded in a society. Norms concerning economic and familial roles appropriate for women structure access to opportunities outside the home and hence have a major influence on female migration patterns (Guest, 1993). In this section, I will link gender roles in Thai culture with population movements.

In Thailand, women have long played an important role in traditional subsistence economies. Peasant women have shared responsibilities with men in most of family farming and food production (Singhanetra-Renard and Prabhudhanitisarn, 1992). Women participate actively in agricultural

activities such as padi farming, soybean and tobacco cultivation, and vegetable gardening. Thai women have also been active in petty trading. Women vendors have traditionally controlled various types of commerce, allowing them to circulate between their homes and nearby markets.

In general, gender norms in Thailand do not restrict women's labor force participation. The Theravada Buddhist orientation, deeply rooted in Thai society, teaches that Buddhist goals can be achieved through the accumulation of merit (*bun*), and views men and women as being attached to the world in different ways (Keyes, 1984; Kirsh, 1982 and 1985). A man's major merit-making act is fleeing the world through monastic life, whereas a woman's major merit-making act is tied to more secular activities *i.e.*, to enhance the well-being of the family. These Buddhist norms have led to long-standing gender roles in Thai society: men specialize in Buddhist monastic roles and politics or administration, while women are responsible for household matters (Yoddumnern-Attig, 1992; Kirsh, 1985). The commonly held view is that such gender-specific role expectations made Thai women play a vital role in economic activities (Keyes, 1984; Kirsh, 1982). For women, earning supplementary money for their household does not conflict with traditional morality.

Such active roles as women have traditionally played in household economies are important in explaining the increased geographical mobility of Thai women in recent decades. When urban-biased development increased the demand for cheap labor in the manufacturing, service, and commerce sectors, wage employment in urban centers presented new options for peasant women. The very fact that Thai women traditionally have been active economically made it easier for them to take up these increasing gainful opportunities. There have been few barriers for women to move temporarily into urban areas and become wage-earners. Young women could also be released from rural households without greatly affecting the household's agricultural activities (Phongpaichit, 1993). Moreover, many women considered such migration for work as their responsibility or duty to bolster family finances (Singhanetra-Renard and Prabhudhanitisarn, 1992).

The remittance behavior of female migrants may be also shaped by gender role expectations in the country. There are cultural expectations that children ought not only to express gratitude and respect, but also to make material contributions to their parents for raising them (United Nations, 1995; Yoddumnern-Attig, 1992). Under Buddhist belief, sons can earn considerable religious merit for their parents if they ordain to spend a period of time in the monkhood. In the case of daughters, they can demonstrate their gratitude to their parents in the mode of financial or labor contribution. Thus, it may not be surprising to find that women who

migrate away from the home make substantial contributions in the form of remittances to their parents. From the viewpoint of parents, there are also strong normative expectations of receiving support from daughters. An advanced education is sometimes seen as a long-term investment in expectations of old age security or parental assistance (Yoddumnern-Attig, 1992). These expectations for familial support are still common especially among rural dwellers (Pramualratana, 1992).

Data Sources

In order to empirically examine gender differentials in economic linkages between migrants and their families, this study employs data from the National Migration Survey of Thailand (NMS), conducted by the Institute for Population and Social Research (IPSR) of Mahidol University, Thailand. Specialized migration surveys, such as the NMS, are considered to be the best source of data for investigating the determinants, consequences, and patterns of migration (Bilsborrow, 1998). Unlike censuses or any other administrative sources of information, the NMS offers an opportunity for an in-depth analysis of the economic interdependence of migrants and their households of origin. The survey gathered information pertaining to remittances and the value of goods that a household received from and sent to out-migrants, and identified the familial relationship between out-migrants and their household members in the origin.

The NMS was conducted between late-May and mid-September in 1992. The timing of this survey was crucial because many of the seasonal migrants were expected to be at their usual place of residence during the wet season (Chamratrithirong *et al.*, 1995). High levels of temporary migration during the dry season of February through May are known to exist in Thailand, but the phenomenon tends to be ignored or underestimated in main sources of migration data, including the census (Chamratrithirong *et al.*, 1995:18). The choice of this survey period potentially improves the coverage of temporary migration by season.

The NMS employed a multi-stage cluster sampling procedure in order to yield a sample of 7,537 households which were both nationally and regionally representative (Chamratrithirong *et al.*, 1995). For Bangkok, 70 census blocks were randomly selected from all census blocks in the capital. For the other four regions excluding Bangkok, namely, the North, the Northeast, Central, and the South, 17 provinces were randomly selected from a total of 72 provinces. It comprised four provinces from Central, five provinces from Northeast and two provinces from South. From each selected province, two districts were randomly selected in order to obtain

the rural sample, and then four villages were randomly drawn from each district. For the urban sample, four urban areas were chosen with probability proportional to size from a list of urban places in each province. The final procedure of sampling involved a random selection of 30 households from each targeted census block in Bangkok and the rural villages, and 20 households from each sample urban place.

The present study analyzes data generated by two sets of questionnaires employed by the NMS, namely the household schedule and the individual schedule. Using the household schedule of the questionnaire, information on basic characteristics not only of a household (such as household size, household income), but also of each household member, was collected. When any of the previous usual residents of the household had moved out and resided elsewhere for more than one month (out-migrants), information pertaining to their personal characteristics and their relationship to the household of origin were obtained from a household member separately. The NMS identified a total of 5,609 out-migrants, irrespective of the timing and distance of the move. The question was also asked whether a household was sending or receiving remittances to and from anybody living outside the household. Thus, information that was gathered by the household schedule of the NMS is an origin-based data set of out-migrants and their households. It allows an examination of the amount of cash and the value of goods transferred between out-migrants and their households of origin. In order to examine the economic linkages between out-migrants and their households of origin, these two files were merged with the common household identification number.

After collecting the data on households and their members, the NMS randomly selected a total of 3,771 individuals, aged 15 to 44 years, from the list of enumerated household members. A more in-depth interview was conducted with each of these individuals by using the individual schedule. In this data set, migrants were defined as persons who had resided in other sub-districts (*tambon*) for more than one month, but with no reference to the timing of the move. Besides individual socio-demographic characteristics, the economic status of migrants, including their remittances to households of origin, were also investigated. This study uses information from 2,868 migrants derived from the individual sample data set. They represent the destination-based data of migrants. It should be noted that, unlike the data on out-migrants collected by the household module, these data are gathered directly from migrants through an interview.

Empirical Analysis

Two-way Relationships of Out-migrants and their Households of Origin

The first section of the empirical analysis explores the economic interactions of migrants and their households of origin using the data from the household schedule of the NMS. As illustrated in Figure 1, migrants and their households can interact in two ways. On the one hand, the households can be related with the out-migrants as providers of economic support. Although little migration literature in Thailand has specifically looked at this type of relationship, it is important to recognize this direction of familial support because it implies financial responsibilities or burdens for households of origin in varying degrees. On the other hand, households can also benefit from support provided by out-migrants. A large amount of literature on migration has centered on this perspective. The section below reviews both directions of interactions between households of origin and out-migrants.

FIGURE 1
ECONOMIC INTERACTIONS OF OUT-MIGRANTS AND THEIR HOUSEHOLDS OF ORIGIN

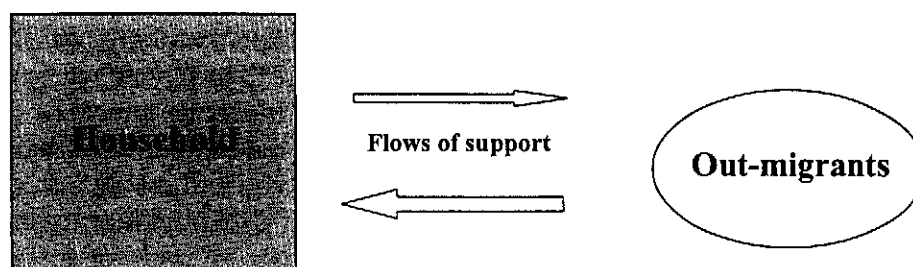


TABLE 1
NUMBER AND PROPORTION OF HOUSEHOLDS PROVIDING SUPPORT FOR OR
RECEIVING SUPPORT FROM SOMEONE LIVING ELSEWHERE

Type of household	Number	Percent
A. Households supporting someone living elsewhere	2,158	28.6
Of which		
Supporting non-migrants living elsewhere	1,828	24.3
Supporting migrants who moved out more than 2 years ago	156	2.1
Supporting migrants who moved out in the last 2 years	174	2.3
B. Households supported by someone living elsewhere	2,756	36.6
Of which		
Supported by non-migrants living elsewhere	1,563	20.7
Supported by migrants who moved out more than 2 years ago	415	5.5
Supported by migrants who moved out in the last 2 years	778	10.3
Total number of households interviewed	7,537	100.0

SOURCE: National Migration Survey 1992, Household module. Weighted data.

NOTE: Support refers to the transfer of money or goods during one year prior to the survey.

Table 1 shows the proportion of households providing support for or receiving support from out-migrants, in terms of the transfer of money or goods during the year prior to the survey. For the purpose of comparison, the proportions of households experiencing such exchanges with non-migrants living elsewhere were also included in the table. The data in the table suggest that in Thailand, the exchange of money or goods between households and those living elsewhere is a common practice. Out of 7,537 households surveyed by the NMS, 29 percent of them sent cash or goods to someone living outside the household (panel A), whereas 37 percent of them received cash or goods from someone living elsewhere (panel B). In both ways, sending cash was a more common form of assistance than providing goods.

Although households in Thailand exchange money or goods primarily with non-migrants living elsewhere, their economic linkage with out-migrants is also important. The table shows that nearly a quarter, or 24 percent, of total households enumerated supported non-migrants economically¹ and 4 percent of them did so for migrants who used to be their

¹ Non-migrants who receive economic support from households typically include parents, parents-in-law and siblings of heads of households.

usual residents. The interaction of households with out-migrants gains more importance when the reverse direction of economic linkage is considered (*see* panel B). The percentage of households receiving cash or goods from non-migrants residing elsewhere comprised 21 percent of the households enumerated, whereas that from out-migrants who used to be usual residents totaled 16 percent. Thus, in Thailand households are more likely to be recipients of money or goods from out-migrants than to be providers for out-migrants.

However, such economic support for households by out-migrants may decline over time. The data in Table 1 show that households were more likely to be supported by recent migrants than old-time migrants. About one in ten households received economic assistance from migrants who moved out during the last two years. The proportion of households assisted by migrants who left the household more than two years ago accounted for only 6 percent. Hereon, migrants who moved out of the households of origin in the two years prior to the survey are referred to as "recent migrants" throughout this paper, in contrast to "old-time migrants" who moved out more than two years ago.

Households Providing Support for Out-migrants

This section focuses on the relationship between households and recent out-migrants who were receiving support. The analysis was limited to recent migrants for two reasons. First, as examined above, households have shown closer economic linkage with recent migrants than old-time migrants. Second, information pertaining to the characteristics of recent migrants was considered more accurate, as the questionnaires to obtain these data were answered by a proxy respondent, not by migrants themselves.

The NMS data reveals that when households send money or goods to recent out-migrants, these flows typically go from the household head to their children living outside the household (*see* Table 2). Nearly 70 percent of persons who provided such support to recent out-migrants were heads of households who presumably have control over household resources. Spouses of household heads accounted for another quarter of providers. Regarding the recipients of such support, children made up more than 70 percent of the total recipients. There were almost equal numbers of male and female children who received money or goods from households. Thus, no significant gender selectivity was observed in providing economic assistance for children who moved out.

The analysis of socio-demographic characteristics of such recent out-migrants receiving support from their households of origin revealed that

TABLE 2
RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HOUSEHOLDS OF ORIGIN AND SUPPORT TO
OUT-MIGRANTS BY SEX OF OUT-MIGRANTS

	Total	Number Male	Female	Total	Percent Male	Female
Persons who provide support to out-migrants						
Household head	108	60	48	69.7	71.4	67.6
Spouse of head	36	18	18	23.2	21.4	25.4
Others	11	6	5	7.1	7.1	7.0
Total	155	84	71	100.0	99.9	100.0
Relationship of recipients to household head						
Child	109	56	53	70.3	66.7	74.6
Son or daughter-in-law	28	17	11	18.1	20.2	15.5
Siblings *	6	3	3	3.9	3.6	4.2
Others	12	8	4	7.7	9.5	5.6
Total	155	84	71	100.0	100.0	99.9
Major reasons for sending money						
Living costs	83	40	43	54.5	48.2	60.6
Education	57	36	21	36.5	43.4	29.6
Investment	2	2	0	1.3	2.4	0.0
Sends goods, no cash	12	5	7	7.7	6.0	9.9
Total	154	83	71	100.0	100.0	100.1

SOURCE: National Migration Survey 1992, Household module.

NOTE: * Including siblings of household head's spouse.

there were no significant differences in the traits between male and female migrants.² Overall, the majority of recipients of support were young and unmarried children of households heads. The average age of the recipients was 20 years old. Sixty-two percents of them were students, with another 23 percent of them being engaged in agriculture. Therefore, it is not surprising to find that the money sent from households to these out-migrants is mostly used for living costs or education (*see* Table 2). These two major categories of expenditure accounted for 91 percent of the total answers among households that provide economic assistance to recent out-migrants.

² The Chi-square test was found to be not significant at 0.05 level.

TABLE 3
MEAN INCOME OF HOUSEHOLD SUPPORTING OUT-MIGRANTS AND AMOUNT OF
CASH AND VALUE OF GOODS THAT A HOUSEHOLD SENT TO OUT-MIGRANTS
BY SEX OF OUT-MIGRANTS

	Total	Male	Female
Total monthly income of household supporting out-migrants (in bahts)	5895	6221	5308
Amount of cash a household sent to out-migrant per month (in bahts)	1114	1010	1122
Percent of the total income of household	18.9	16.2	21.1
Value of goods a household sent to out-migrants per month (in bahts)	170	59	286
Percent of the total income of household	2.9	0.9	5.4
Number of households	139	80	66

SOURCES: National Migration Survey 1992, Household module.

NOTE: Some households support more than one out-migrants of either sex.

Providing economic support to out-migrants is by no means a trivial responsibility for the households concerned. Table 3 shows the mean income of households supporting out-migrants, together with the mean amount of cash and the mean value of goods that an out-migrant receives. According to these data, the amount of cash that the households remitted accounted for nearly 19 percent of the total household income and the cash value of goods remitted comprised another 3 percent of the total household income.

It is interesting to observe that households send more money and goods for female out-migrants than for male out-migrants. The average income of households supporting female migrants was found lower than that of households supporting male migrants, but the former sent higher amounts of cash to migrants than the latter. In terms of the value of goods, households were sending female migrants amounts nearly five times as much compared to those sent to male counterparts. Hence, combining the amount of cash and the value of goods, households spend more than a quarter of their income to support female migrants, whereas they spend approximately 17 percent of their income to support male migrants. Unfortunately, the NMS data could not ascertain whether such stronger support for female migrants was to secure the living costs of female migrants at their destination, or an investment in the expectation of long-term return for the household's well-being.

TABLE 4
RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HOUSEHOLDS AND RECENT OUT-MIGRANTS PROVIDING
SUPPORT TO HOUSEHOLDS OF ORIGIN AND USE OF CASH RECEIVED
BY SEX OF OUT-MIGRANTS

	Number			Per cent		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
<i>Persons who receive support from out-migrants^{a/}</i>						
Household head	483	279	204	70.5	71.9	68.7
Spouse of head	152	75	77	22.2	19.3	25.9
Children, son or daughter in law	30	23	7	4.4	5.9	2.4
Siblings	5	4	1	0.7	1.0	0.3
Others	15	7	8	2.2	1.8	2.7
Total	685	388	297	100.0	99.9	100.0
<i>Relationship of out-migrants who provide support^{b/}</i>						
Child	396	222	174	57.8	57.1	58.8
Son or daughter-in-law	176	84	92	25.7	21.6	31.1
Spouse of head	58	55	3	8.5	14.1	1.0
Parent or parent-in-law	24	5	19	3.5	1.3	6.4
Others	31	23	8	4.5	5.9	2.7
Total	685	389	296	100.0	100.0	100.0
<i>Main use of cash received^{a/}</i>						
Living costs	600	349	251	88.4	90.9	85.1
Investment	26	15	11	3.8	3.9	3.7
Education	17	8	9	2.5	2.1	3.1
Receives goods, no cash	35	12	23	5.2	3.1	7.8
Others	1	0	1	0.1	0.0	0.3
Total	679	384	295	100.0	100.0	100.0

SOURCE: National Migration Survey, Household Module

NOTES: ^{a/} including more than one recipient in household.

^{b/} including more than one migrant supporting the same household.

Households Receiving Support from Out-migrants

The analysis in the preceding section A revealed that in Thailand, households were more likely to be related to out-migrants as recipients of economic support rather than as providers. Like the relationship between households and supported out-migrants, the relationship between households and out-migrants who support the households of origin typically involves the heads of household and their children. According to the sample households examined, 71 percent of recipients of cash or goods were household heads and another 22 percent were directed towards spouses of the heads (*see* Table 4). Children, accounting for 58 percent of the

total, were the primary providers of economic assistance for households of origin. It is worth noting that sons or daughters-in-law were the second most important providers of support, comprising more than a quarter of the total. This suggests traditionally close ties of family members and economic responsibility of children toward parents. It is not uncommon in Thai culture for children to support parents-in-laws financially, after they are married and have established their own households elsewhere. The disaggregation of the data by gender of migrants revealed a relatively higher proportion of "spouse of head" among male migrants who provided support to their household of origin, implying that the migration of male household members might create female-headed households at the place of origin.

Out-migrants who provided support to their households of origin were found to have the following socio-demographic characteristics. They were aged 24 years on average, with female migrants slightly younger than male migrants. An average out-migrant supporting a household had barely completed compulsory primary education of 6 years. Thus, compared with out-migrants receiving economic support from households, they were found to be older and less educated. Approximately three-fifths of out-migrants providing economic support were single and the equal proportion of them were urban dwellers, regardless of gender. Over three-quarters of migrants, male and female alike, claimed that they had left their households for work-related reasons. Production work was the most common activity that both male and female migrants were involved in at their destinations, followed by agriculture. Housewives comprised some 20 percent of female migrants who claimed to be involved in "other" activities.

The NMS data suggest that remittances sent by out-migrants are important supplements to the income of the households left behind. The overwhelming majority, 88 percent, of households used the money sent by out-migrants for their living costs (*see* Table 4). Thus, remittances from out-migrants directly affect the welfare of their households of origin. Overall, only a small proportion of households utilized the remittance for more productive use such as investment or education. The gender of migrants did not affect the use pattern of remittance. It is unfortunate that the NMS data do not allow for a categorization of the use of remittance in more detail nor for an exploration of how remittances were distributed across different household members.

The economic dependence of households on migrants becomes more obvious when the actual amount of remittance is calculated. Table 5 compares the mean monthly income of households, mean amount of cash received, and the value of goods received per month, for households

TABLE 5
MEAN AMOUNT OF CASH AND VALUE OF GOODS RECEIVED BY HOUSEHOLDS
BY TYPE OF PROVIDER

	Migrants moved out in the last 2 years	Migrants moved out more than 2 years ago	Non- migrants	Total*
Total monthly income of				
household (in baht)	4852	3972	7578	6571
Cash received per month (in baht)	1284	874	1463	1541
Percentage in the total income	26.5	22.0	19.3	23.5
Value of goods received				
per month (in baht)	123	102	153	114
Percentage in the total income	2.5	2.6	2.0	1.7
Average size of household	4.0	4.1	4.2	4.2
Number	777	518	1538	2718

SOURCE: National Migration Survey, Household module.

NOTE: * Households which receive cash or goods from someone living elsewhere.

supported by recent migrants, old time migrants and non-migrants. The average income of households receiving support from out-migrants was found considerably lower than that of households receiving support from non-migrants. It averaged 4,900 baht per month for households supported by recent migrants and 4,000 baht for those by old-time migrants, as compared to 7,600 baht for households supported by non-migrants. The income level of households supported by recent migrants was higher than that of households supported by old-time migrants, possibly due to the higher remittance of money by recent migrants, rather than the income-generating capabilities of households themselves.

Indeed, the migration of household members might have been a strategy to ensure the survival of the household. Among households supported by recent migrants, the proportion of cash received from out-migrants accounted for 27 percent of the total monthly income of households, implying a high reliance on remittance from migrants. With the decline in the amount of remittance from out-migrants, the proportion of cash received comprised 22 percent of the household income among households supported by old-time migrants. The corresponding figure for households receiving support from non-migrants was 19 percent.

TABLE 6
PROPORTION OF MIGRANTS SENDING CASH OR GOODS TO THEIR
HOUSEHOLDS OF ORIGIN BY SEX OF MIGRANTS

	Total	Male	Female
Total number of migrants	2,868	1,324	1,544
Number of migrants sending cash	1,004	442	562
Percent of total migrants	35.0	33.4	36.4
Number of migrants sending goods	643	249	94
Percent of total migrants	22.4	18.8	25.5

SOURCE: National Migration Survey 1992, Individual module.

Gender Differentials in the Economic Contributions of Migrants to Households

The preceding analysis revealed the importance of economic support that households receive from out-migrants in the context of Thai migration. Do female migrants provide the same level of assistance as male migrants? The analysis that follows focuses on the economic contribution of out-migrants, with particular attention paid to gender of migrants. To conduct more in-depth analysis from the viewpoint of migrants, I turn to the data set derived from the NMS's individual schedule. Note that the individual data set contains a wider range of data on individual socio-economic characteristics as well as information pertaining to migration experiences. Although the sample consists of migrants aged between 15 and 44 years only, this is the age range that covers the large majority of migrants identified in the survey.

The NMS identified a total of 1,004 migrants who have sent money and 643 migrants who sent goods to their households of origin during the year prior to the survey (see Table 6). These migrants comprised 35 percent and 22 percent of the total migrants, respectively. Female migrants were more likely to provide economic support than male migrants, especially in the form of sending goods. Approximately 36 percent of female migrants sent money to their households of origin. The corresponding figure for male migrants was 33 percent. While 26 percent of female migrants sent goods to their households of origin, only 19 percent of male migrants did the same.

Aside from the propensity to provide support as expressed in the proportion of migrants sending cash or goods, the substantive contribution of migrants to their households of origin needs to be assessed. The mean income of migrants, the amount of cash, and the value of goods that

TABLE 7
INCOME, AMOUNT OF CASH AND VALUE OF GOODS REMITTED BY
MIGRANTS BY SEX OF MIGRANTS

	Total	Male	Female
Total monthly income (baht)	3,699	4,422	3,129
Cash sent per month (baht)	392	388	396
Percent of total income	10.6	8.8	12.6
Value of goods sent per month (baht)	88	68	103
Percent of total income	2.4	1.5	3.3
Number	1,181	521	660

SOURCE: National Migration Survey, Individual module.

migrants remit were calculated separately for male and female migrants and shown in Table 7. The results shown in the table revealed little differences in the amount of cash that male and female migrants remitted to their households of origin. On average, a male migrant remitted 388 baht per month to their households of origin, whereas a female migrant remitted slightly higher, 396 baht per month. The sex differential was more apparent in terms of provision of goods. Female migrants were more likely than male migrants to send goods to the household of origin. The value of goods that a female migrant sent averaged 103 baht per month, as compared to only 68 baht per month by a male counterpart. Overall, the data suggest that households benefited more from support made by a female migrant than by those made by a male migrant, in terms of absolute values of contribution.

It is important to note, however, that the relatively high economic contribution of female migrants was made possible by reaping little individual economic benefits. The comparison of migrants' economic contributions to households with the income of migrants indicated that although female migrants earned less than male migrants, the former sent a greater portion of their income to support their family or household than did male migrants. The data showed that 13 percent of female migrants' incomes was allocated for remittance and 3 percent for goods sent to their households of origin. As for male migrants, 9 percent of their income was allotted for remittance and less than 2 percent for goods.

Determinants of Remittance Sent by Out-migrants

It is not clear from the previous analysis of remittance behavior if such gender gaps were attributable to gender differences in socio-economic

status or gender-specific behavior in supporting their families. In order to identify the determinants of economic contribution of out-migrants to their households of origin, a multivariate regression model was formulated. The model examines variation of economic contribution that migrants make in relation to a set of explanatory variables. As it aims to reveal particular influences of independent variables, the model was tested separately for male and female migrants.

In order to assess the overall economic contribution of out-migrants to households of origin, regardless of the mode of assistance, the amount of cash and the value of goods that migrants sent were combined together to construct one indicator of the total remittance. The amount of the total remittance per month was used as a dependent variable in the regression model.

The total remittance was assumed to be dependent upon two sets of group variables: individual characteristics and migration experiences. Individual dependent variables include age of migrants, number of years of education, marital status, place of residence, occupation, and income per month. Migration experience variables are the reason to move, migration decision, and the duration of stay since one migrated to the current place of residence. Dummy variables are used to represent the marital status, occupation, sex, the reason to move, and migration decision. Occupations were classified into three groups, namely, agriculture, production work, and other occupations, with other occupations as the omitted variable. More detailed descriptions of these variables are presented in Annex Table 1.

Table 8 provides the results of ordinary least square regression (OLS). The overall model suggests that, once other variables are controlled, there is no significant sex difference in the amount of remittance sent to migrants' households of origin. The variable that has the strongest influence on the amount of remittance is the income level of migrants at the destination. Economically motivated migration and the education of migrants also positively affected the amount of the total remittance sent to households of origin.

The comparison of gender-specific regression models indicates that the determinants of remittance to households of origin are strikingly different between male and female migrants. For male migrants, age and education were positively related to the amount of remittance, controlling for other variables entered in the model. Engagement in agriculture was negatively associated with the amount of remittance. Compared with occupations such as production work, agriculture is less likely to generate monetary income. Therefore, migrants' participation in agricultural work at destinations may generate relatively little money to send back to their

TABLE 8
REGRESSION COEFFICIENTS EXPLAINING ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE OF MIGRANTS TO FAMILY MEMBERS LIVING ELSEWHERE

Independent Variables	b	Total S.E.	Beta	b	Male S.E.	Beta	b	Female S.E.	Beta
Individual characteristics									
Age in years	10.114	4.720	0.086	18.443**	7.357	0.161	3.804	6.125	0.032
Education in years	9.238*	7.071	0.046	18.210*	10.619	0.097	-0.623	9.570	-0.003
Marital Status (Single=1)	96.786	65.515	0.052	-4.575	98.667	-0.003	167.787*	87.587	0.084
Place of residence (Urban=1)	36.377	69.395	0.02	-40.115	99.421	-0.024	91.537	95.383	0.046
Agriculture (Yes=1)	-128.624	90.019	-0.056	-245.678*	132.313	-0.119	-83.969	123.369	-0.033
Production (Yes=1)	13.166	69.776	0.006	82.621	102.252	0.046	-31.628	96.386	-0.014
Income per month	0.030***	0.004	0.23	0.007	0.006	0.058	0.049***	0.006	0.357
Migration experiences									
Reason to move (Work=1)	140.508**	56.633	0.079	74.940	85.213	0.045	194.606**	76.896	0.101
Decision to migrate (by oneself=1)	-56.375	66.561	0.026	-129.016	98.436	0.062	-0.725	89.360	0.000
Time since the move	-0.647	0.503	-0.049	-1.451*	0.798	-0.101	89.360	0.652	-0.004
Sex (Female =1)	87.845	56.176	0.05						
Constant	-19.151			-19.857			104.229		
R ²	0.092			0.056			0.160		
Sample size	1016			439			576		

* Significant at 0.10 level.

** Significant at 0.05 level.

*** Significant at 0.01 level.

SOURCE: National Migration Survey 1992, Individual schedule.

NOTE: The sample comprises migrants who sent either money or goods during the last year.

households left behind. The analysis also suggests that the amount of remittance sent by male migrants decreases as time lengthens at the current place of residence.

With regard to female migrants, unlike male migrants, income appeared as a strong predictor of remittance. It can be inferred that the increase in the income of female migrants by 1,000 baht leads to the addition of remittance by 49 baht. Female migrants who left their households for economic reason remitted 194 baht more than non-economically motivated migrants, indicating the close relevance between female labor migration and their remittance behavior. Lastly, single female migrants made higher contributions to the households of origin than ever-married female migrants. All these results show that there are very different mechanisms operating in remittance behavior between male and female migrants.

Conclusion

Linkages of migrants and their households of origin can take various forms: economic, social, and psychological. When the economic interdependence of migrants and their households of origin was considered, it was found that households in Thailand were more likely to be supported by migrants rather than migrants being supported by households. The flows of money and goods into migrant-sending households are substantial and essential supplements for the economic well-being of households. Thus, as the new economics of labor migration posits, migration functions as a survival strategy of many Thai households.

It should be noted, however, that despite the well-being of migrants to the income of households left behind, there was little evidence that remittances were used for productive investments. Hence, migration may lead to further economic dependency of households on migrants, without contributing much to the economic growth in migrant-sending communities. In order to reduce such economic dependency of households on migrants, policy interventions to boost the local economy are necessary. The government may need to allocate sufficient resources to stimulate local production and industry so that enough earnings can be generated locally.

In response to the growing employment opportunities for feminized occupations in the course of industrialization, an increasing number of women in Thailand are participating in migration streams. Many female migrants in Thailand make a substantive economic contribution to households of origin by sending remittances. The NMS data examined in this paper confirmed that female migrants, who were mostly young and unmarried daughters of household heads, had higher propensity to sup-

port their households of origin by sending money or goods, as compared with male migrants.

If female migrants make such positive contributions to households of origin, do women themselves fare as well as men do in participating in migration streams? Although the migration of a female member of household may improve the household's economic condition, it may at the same time undermine the welfare of the female migrant herself at the destination. The data examined revealed that the economic contributions of female migrants to the households of origin were made by expending larger parts of their own income, as compared to male migrants. One should be reminded that female migrants generally earned much lower salaries than male migrants, possibly by filling low-paying jobs with few benefits and unpleasant working conditions. Labor legislation needs to be reinforced so that female migrants can enjoy equal employment opportunities and equal level of benefits as male migrants do.

The results of the regression analysis also suggest the importance of a gender-sensitive approach in formulating migration control policies in a country such as Thailand. Presumably conditioned by traditional gender roles in Thai culture, there were striking differences in the mechanisms of remittance behavior between male and female migrants. In particular, the amount of remittances that female migrants made was positively related to their motivation to be a migrant worker as well as to their incomes at the destination. The deeper commitment of female migrants than male migrants in sending remittances suggests that outflows of young, unmarried women seeking employment elsewhere can be facilitated further in times of economic hardship.

ANNEX TABLE 1
LIST OF VARIABLES USED IN THE ANALYSIS AND THEIR
MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATION

Variables	Definition	Mean	Standard deviation
Dependent Variable			
Remittance	The sum of cash and the value of goods that migrants send to the household of origin per month (in baht)	480	
Independent Variable			
Age	Age of migrants in years	28.5	7.4
Education	Highest years of schooling completed in years	7.7	4.2
Marital status	A dichotomous variable. It is 1 if migrants were single at the time of the survey, and 0 otherwise	0.3	0.5
Residence	A dichotomous variable. It is 1 if migrants resided in urban areas at the time of survey, and 0 if they resided in rural areas	0.6	0.5
Agriculture	A dichotomous variable. It is 1 if migrants were engaged in agriculture, and 0 otherwise	0.2	0.4
Production	A dichotomous variable. It is 1 if migrants were engaged in production work, and 0 otherwise	0.2	0.4
Income	Income of migrants per month (in baht)	3,699	6,283
Reason	A dichotomous variable. It is 1 if migrants came to the present place of residence for work-related reasons	0.4	0.5
Decision	A dichotomous variable. It is 1 if migrants decided to come to the present place of residence by oneself	0.7	0.5
Time	Duration of residence since one migrated to the current place of residence (in months)	46.8	63.1

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