The Influence of Existential Locality on Labor Force Age Migration Decision Making

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Background

Humans are social animals and human settlement is emphasized as the way people help and accept each other as community members. Usually, as a member of a community, a person is influenced by the community he lives and other members in the community also act as care givers as well as helpers for any business. Among the principal definers of community membership is blood relations or kinship. In fact, kinship is one of the more complex systems of human culture. All human groups have a kinship terminology, a set of terms used to refer to kin. In many parts of the life of an individual such as childhood in which kin act to take care of a child when his parents work outside, kin play a helping role, and in most societies, kinship relations influence things like who one can and can not marry, who one must show respect to, and who one can count on in a crisis. Kinship terminologies vary in different societies from as few as twelve to more than fifty terms. Theoretically, kinship is a complex system that determines how people relate to each other and their roles, responsibilities and obligations in relation to one another, to ceremonial business and to land. This is seen in the so-called 'kin system', a method of subdividing the society into named categories which are related to one another through the kinship system (Central Land Council, 2000).

In many societies, having houses located nearby affects the living arrangements of people in the community even though the inhabitants of these houses are not related as blood kin but rather as ‘informal” or “fictive” kin. In Thailand, the topic of informal kinship is intimately known and understood. A study by Samakkarn (2002) revealed that informal kinship or fictive kinship in Thailand has partly been brought about by economic change (Samakkarn, 2002). In the past, Thai people mostly lived in an agricultural society in the form of the extended family and in the arms of kin.

The socio-economic development happening around the world including Asia has caused changes in the family to a more nuclear family structure. The evidence suggests that with advanced development, movement and migration means that some children have to live among strangers in urban areas while the elderly in rural areas are likely to receive less care from their families (Mason, 1992). So, fictive or informal kinship has happened as one respects others as relatives even when they are not biological kin. Normally, fictive kin would be important whenever they live in a nearby house or area and can help people in other families. Settho (1983) said that informal or fictive kin always happens naturally among people who locate their houses closely and have the same level of economic status and occupation (Settho, 1983).

Kinship in Thailand has been strongly accepted for its benefits, especially where migration takes place. For three decades, the phenomenon of rural to urban migration of adults for work has been ubiquitous in most countries throughout the world, especially in developing countries. This phenomenon brings about negative effects to the elderly and children left behind even though migration can provide a positive effect in terms of remittances (Goldstien, 1971; Gulati, 1993; Sawangdee, 1997; Bongaarts and Zimmer, 2001). But in fact, the negative consequences occurring from out migration of household members may be not serious, especially in a society in which the kinship system is very strong. The formal and informal kinship system in Thai society is mainly shown in the form of neighborhood and plays a critical role as supporter and care giver for family members such as through taking care of a baby and helping in required household business (Ritcher et al., 1997). In Thai society, kinship action is widely accepted as a social capital which forms a pattern directly affecting development, the roles, the principles and the processes of people-based development. The role of kinship can fulfill the people's need and it is accepted as a local development mechanism. A study of Nartsupa (1996) revealed that rural Thai people still feel a strong relationship of kinship with their neighbors (Nartsupa, 1996).

Kanchanaburi is a province in the central region where historical and natural sites attract tourists from around the world to visit. Furthermore, economic, social and environmental aspects of the province are partly changing because it is located near the Myanmar border where there are a huge number of Burmese migrants migrating illegally every day. The province has also become an important industrial and agricultural mixture containing both rural and urban dwellings. Given this importance, the Kanchanaburi Project was established with a 1999 Wellcome Trust Award to the Institution for Population and Social Research (IPSR) as a Center for Research

Excellence. The project is aimed to monitor of population change and to evaluate the effects of intervention based research. The project studies 5 strata of urban-semi urban, rice field, plantation, uplands and mixed economy; these are studied separately based on an assumption that each different socio-geography generates different behavioral patterns in the people (Kanchanaburi Project, 2005). In addition, the distance from Kanchanaburi to Bangkok and other provinces is close enough for the strong power of civilization and urbanization of Bangkok and its vicinity as the magnet city to pull skilled and semi-skilled laborers to get jobs and live in urban circumstances easily. The percent of out-migrants from Kanchanaburi to other areas has gradually increased from 10 percent in 2001 to 12, 13, and 15 percent in 2002, 2003 and 2004 respectively (Kanchanaburi Project, 2005). It is assumed that the gradually increasing migration trend in Kanchanaburi province will continue. If this is true, one may wonder what the negative effect on children and the elderly left behind would be. Thus, we, as researchers, selected data from Kancahnaburi Demographic Surveillance System (KDSS) in the latest round (round 5, 2004) for investigation. Details of the data will be described in the section outlining research methodology.

Investigations from 1960 till the present time show repeated findings that personal characteristics such as age, sex, marital status, and educational level and household economic status factors such as poverty and size are the main determinants of migration. These determinants have been proved again and again (Hare, 1999; Andrienko and Guriev, 2004). However, no study has sought to ascertain the influence of kinship role as measured through existential locality (EL) and its relation to migration decision making. The EL in this study is defined by the number of houses located within a radius of 150 meters where every house is defined as a center of a circle. We believe that the more the number of houses nearby the more chance there is for people to get help from those living nearby; this allows migrants to migrate out freely without unnecessary concern for the fate of those who are left behind. This knowledge gap leads to contextual deficiencies in the field of migration study and among the community of experts on migration. Thus, this study is intended to point out these deficiencies and fill the knowledge gap on the existence of the kinship role in terms of the dependent persons left behind who can live very well in the warm arms of their kin. The function of kin makes migrant feel free to migrate out without any concern for the fate of the left behind. The benefit of this study is not only to fill the knowledge gap by providing an account of the relationship of the two variables, EL and migration decision making, generating significant positive effects which have never been explored before, but also to seek some evidence to confirm sociological theory in

the macro structural dimension on the significant role of formal and informal kinship in managing the household business when a migration situation has happened. With this research, the role of kin would be confirmed and the policy for migration would be designed directly responding to the real situation of migration in Thailand. Therefore, research objectives are provided as follows:

1. To identify the specific action of EL in the Thai context
2. To examine the influence of EL on migration decision making.

Theoretical background: kinship system and migration

Theoretically, migration is the way people respond to their poverty and other constraints. This type of response is vividly explained by the multiphasic response theory of Kingsley Davis. Davis (1967) mentioned that in the process of transition to low and controlled population growth, population always responds in a variety of ways and with every means to population pressure. These multiphasic responses have not included only determination to control marital fertility, but they also include internal and external migration (Davis, 1967). At the same time, a study of Stark and Levhari (1982) also mentioned the role of family members related to migration. This study argued that households were the principle agents of decision making and migration was always viewed as a part of a family strategy for sustenance and socioeconomic improvement. Empirical models of migration showed that the decision to migrate mainly comes from joint decisions among all members of the household (Stark and Levhari, 1982). Furthermore, the decision to migrate of any person can be explained by Rational Choice Theory (RCT). The theory was originated by George Homans (1961) and it explains that whenever the household believes migration is the best way out, all members would make a decision on the most valuable choice. Decision making is not only based on economic outcomes but it is also based on security, and protecting those left behind (Homans cited in Scott, 2000). With these three theories, the role of kin should be employed for consideration whenever the migration situation has occurred.

However, when the migration issue is focused on, the classical model usually used to investigate the determinants of migration is that according to the theory of Ravenstein, (1885) which mainly focuses on migration selectivity. Also, the theories on push and pull factors of Lee (1966) as well as the human capital approach of Schwartz (1973) bring educational level and skill variables into consideration. Thus, in terms of migration, there are many variables traditionally included in the model such as age, sex,

occupation, educational level, economic status etc. These variables have been studied and investigated repeatedly (Schwartz, 1973; Lee, 1966). Also, the influence of the number of labor force age migrants in a household has been investigated and found to be one important variable due to the density of labor force age persons being emphasized as a source of surplus labor so it directly relates to the decision making for migration of the household. Also, males are generally more often allowed to migrate than females (Rozelle et al., 1999; De Jong, 2000). A clear example is shown in a study by Changsom (2003) done in Thailand who pointed out that whenever a family needed someone to migrate out for a job, not all are allowed; a family tended to keep females to take care of the elderly and children and let the males migrate out (Changsom, 2003). This study shows the empirical finding that migration in Thailand can be explained through "the household strategy".

However, this gender bias to males in migration can change. Ravenstein (1885) mentioned that migration is selective and that gender bias is found (Ravenstein, 1885). In the past, most types of occupation were mainly available for males. The social role of males was expected to be the breadwinner taking responsibility for other family members' sustenance. Thus, in developing countries, migration was the best way out for males to get better economic improvement in the period before 1970. Since 1975, though, the textile industry has been expanded in size and importance because of the export-oriented policy of many low developed countries. Since then, the number of female migrants has gradually increased. A study of Poolpolamnuay (2003) confirmed that female workers in the non-agricultural sector in Thailand had been allowed to migrate due to female migrants being more likely to generate financial support for the elderly parents left behind (Poolpolamnuay, 2003).

Another variable is the number of kin in place of origin or in community clusters. Where the neighborhood relationship is found as in Thailand, the topic of informal kinship is quite important. Nartsupa (1996) said that informal or fictive kinship always happens naturally among people who locate their houses closely and have the same level of social class i.e. economic status and occupation. Action of kin generates huge benefits in terms of social ties and neighborhood ties in Thai society (Nartsupa, 1996).

Of migration aspects, marital status is one of the individual characteristics that affects decision making among people of labor force age since marital status indicates a person's responsibility to his/her family, especially a migrant who has children left

behind. Being single means that a migrant has freedom to find better opportunities for life while being married means the higher responsibility or "ties" the migrant carries for his/her family. A study of Ritcher et al. in northeastern Thailand found that married migrants are more likely to bring their spouses and children to live with them whenever they have to migrate due to the migrants feeling more free to bring them to live together and wanting them to have a chance to open their view in a developed urban area. (Ritcher et al., 1997). Not only marital status, but household size is also has an influence on migration decision making. Normally, larger household size implies a higher consumption rate for the household which is a main push factor for out migration. This variable suggests that more persons in the household means more chance for potential migrant to migrate without any concern for the fate of the left behind and property owned. Furthermore, a study of Saifi (2006) done in Kanchanaburi, in the central Thai context, also revealed that the availability of household members could be assumed to facilitate the use of health services for the elderly, as they would be instrumental in assisting the elderly in planning, deciding and utilizing health services (Saifi, 2006). In addition, a study of Rosenzweig and Stark (1989) also pointed out that marriage of daughters to locationally distant husbands can serve to mitigate income risk and facilitate consumption smoothing. The finding also revealed that migration for marriage among daughters in South Indian villages contributes significantly to a reduction in the variability of household food consumption (Rosenzweig and Stark, 1989) That is to say, having more members means more chance for potential migrants feeling free to migrate. Moreover, there are many studies mentioning that the number of elderly and children in household is a tie influencing decision making among other household members to migrate or not to migrate (Choeichom, 2005). Similarly, household debt is one push factor that affects decision making because migration can provide a better job and expected earnings would be used for paying the debt. For instance, a study of Guest in Thailand in 1998 pointed out that being in debt was a major cause of rural-urban migration (Guest, 1998). Besides debt, household wealth is a very important condition as revealed in the studies of Lee (1966) and Finley (1987) which mentioned that wealth can keep people in their home location because they have already settled down while some have said that it pushes people to move given that it is easier for wealthy people to afford the cost of migration (Lee, 1966; Finley, 1987). Thus, in order to investigate with any certainty the influence of EL on migration decision making, variables related to migration selectivity characteristics, the human capital approach and household strategy have to be controlled. The research methodology for this analysis is as follows.

Research Methodology

The methodology is divided into two parts; the first part shows the way to set EL and the second covers the linkage process between EL and individual data. Details are as below.

A step for finding the proper EL

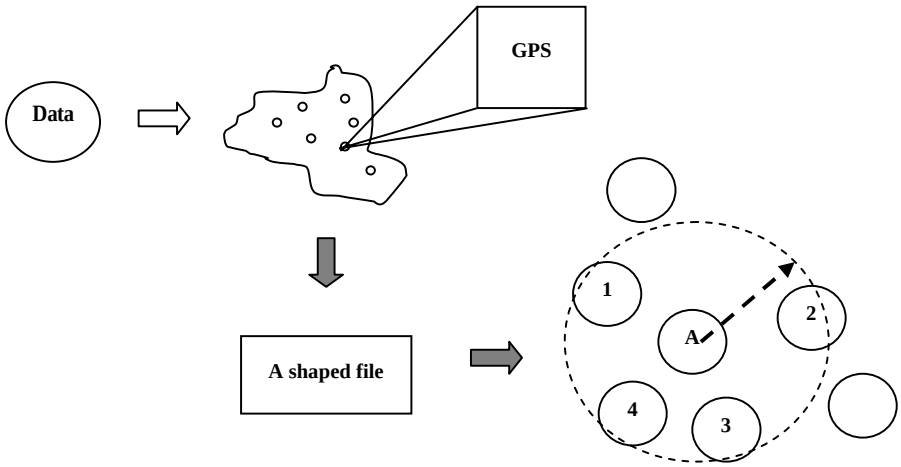
In order to study a kinship settlement as measured through EL, a field trip for qualitative study to understand more about socio-geography was made by going to 5 villages as case studies of the five strata in KDSS. This step aimed to investigate the appropriate distance at which kin can effectively function, as well as to ascertain the existence and action of formal and informal kinship for helping each others. Data collection was done by observation, small group discussion and indepth interviews with key informants such as elderly and children of households in which members of labor force age had migrated out, as well as members of households living close as a neighborhood cluster. Interview questions covered formal kinship and informal kinship settlement, proper distance of kin for working well together, as well as roles of both types of kin in living arrangements and providing care for vulnerable groups. Findings from all approaches (small group discussion, interviews, and observation) were in consideration; it was decided that distances up to150 meters were distances at which people could give help to each other effectively as they were able to walk the distance easily and could shout to people at that distance. When the field findings were finished, a radius of 150 meters was set as the proper distance for other houses from the house designated as the center of a particular circle since interviewees believe that it is a distance at which kin can function very well in helping each other given that every house is a center of its own circle for the study. After the appropriate distance measuring EL was set, the next step was as follows.

A step linking EL with individual data

When EL distance is defined by every house being the center of a circle with a 150 meter radius, the number of houses located within 150 meters has to be counted in all the circles defined by a house at the center point. KDSS provides the fundamental data related to all houses and their characteristics such as household identification number (Household ID), number of household members, age and gender of household

members etc., and data from Global Positioning System (GPS) points out the location of each house in the study area. Then, a shape file was generated to link data from GPS with the fundamental data of KDSS from round 5 (2004). With these processes, the existential locality (EL) or number of formal and informal kin houses were counted via Arcview software program. The process is shown in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1
The process of getting the Existential Locality (EL)



Output from the process is shown in Figure 1, meaning that house "A" has 4 houses located nearby or 4 houses within its existential locality (EL), that is within a radius of 150 meters. After the process for establishing EL was finished, terms of migration were defined for the study. We defined a term called "potential migrant" for this study, meaning those aged 15-59 years old and having the potentiality to migrate. Thus, the potential migrant covers those of labor force age who are migrants and those who are non-migrants. Also, a term called "labor force age migration decision making" was defined as a selected status of the potential migrants which was divided into migrant status and non-migrant status. Migrants are those who decided to move out of the village since two months before the study and non-migrants are those who decided to still stay in the village in the study year (2004). In order to prove whether EL generates positive or negative effects on pushing people to migrate out or to tie them to the village, the study divides the study area of Kanchanaburi province into five strata based on economic features and economic production. These are rice, plantation, urban-semi urban, uplands and mixed economy. The division into different strata is based on

the assumption that a difference in socio-geography means a difference in migration decision making and the phenomenon of migration generally. This study employs only one data source, KDSS round 5 (2004). The main reason behind selecting round 5 of KDSS as the year to be studied is because the situation of elderly living with spouses dramatically increased from 3 percent in 2003 to 21 percent one year later while those living with their children have significantly decreased. This situation is pointing out a trend of the elderly left behind that it has gradually increased. Moreover, this is the latest round with the most-up-to date data. The study sample covers labor force age persons aged 15-59, a total of 35,659 individuals, divided into 25,555 non-migrants and 10,104 migrants. Classified by stratum, numbers and percentages of migrants and non-migrants are as presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1: The numbers of labor force age migrants and non-migrants, classified by stratum

Strata	Labor force age		Total
	Migrant	Non-migrant	
- Urban/semi urban	26.2% (1,907)	73.8% (5,371)	100.0% (7,278)
- Rice field	27.1% (1,549)	72.9% (4,183)	100.0% (5,732)
- Plantation	28.3% (1,597)	71.6% (4,040)	100.0% (5,637)
- Uplands	30.9% (2,924)	69.1% (6,528)	100.0% (9,452)
- Mixed economy	28.1% (2,127)	71.8% (5,433)	100.0% (7,560)
Total	28.3% (10,104)	71.7% (25,555)	100.0% (35,659)

From Table 1, it is clearly shown that percentage of migrants is varied between 26%-31% in five strata but, conversely, about 70% are non-migrants. It is interesting that at least 70% of people do not move even though there are many pull factors at any destination around the country such as economic opportunity in Bangkok and vicinity and/or other industrial developed areas throughout the kingdom (NESDB, 2006). Thus, the independent variable of existential locality (EL) is firstly set while other clearly proved variables in approaches of migration selectivity and human capital such as age, sex and marital status of migrant, economic status of the migrant's household and household size are categorized as controlled variables. Briefly, operational definition and scale of measurement of each variable employed for this analysis is presented in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Operation definition and scale of measurement of each variable

Variables	Operation definition	Scale of measurement
1. Dependent Variable		
- Migration decision making	Status of labor force age persons divided into migrants and non-migrants in the year of study. Migrants are those who have moved out of the village since 2 months before the study. Non migrants are those who are still staying in the village in the study year	Nominal scale 0 = not migrate 1 = migrate
2. Independent Variable		
- Existential locality	Number of neighboring houses located within 150 meter of radius of each house when it is defined as the center of a circle	Ordinal scale 0 = having no house or one house 1 = having two houses and more
3. Controlled variables		
3.1 Labor force age migrant characteristics		
- Age of potential migrant	Age of potential migrant	Ratio scale
- Gender of potential migrant	Gender of potential migrant	Nominal scale of 0 = female and 1=male
- Marital status of potential migrant	Marital status of potential migrant	Nominal scale of 1 = single, 2 = married and 3 = ever married
3.2 Household size and socioeconomic status		
- Number of children in household	Number of children living in household at the time of study	Ratio scale
- Number of elderly in household	Number of elderly living in household at the time of study	Ratio scale
- household wealth	Economic status of household measured by household income and assets	Ordinal scale of 1 = poor, 2 = middle and 3 = rich
- household debt	Economic status of being or not being in debt	Nominal scale of 0 = no debt 1 = having debt
3.3 Labor force age out-migration	Number of labor force age persons who migrated from household	Ratio scale

Results

Descriptive statistics showing mean and standard deviation explaining the central tendency related to variables of the sample are shown in Table 3. The greater part of the labor force age person was in the uplands stratum at a total of 9,242. Mean age of labor age persons was around 34 years old for all strata, an age which is nominated as middle age. Gender proportion between males and females is close and most samples were married, followed by those who were single. The number of those who had ever married was not high. On household members, it was found that there were not many elderly living in households while there were around 2 children on average living in each household. Most households were of wealthy economic status but were also in debt. The most important point is that households in general had 0-1 houses in their existential locality within a radius of 150 meters. Table 3 summarizes this data.

Table 3: Descriptive statistics related to variables

	Urban/semi-urban			Rice field			Plantation			Uplands			Mixed economy		
	N	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD
- Age of potential migrants	7,278	33.83	12.25	5,732	33.78	12.15	5,637	33.36	12.02	9,452	33.07	12.1	7,560	33.92	12.26
- Sex of potential migrants	7,278	0.48	0.5	5,732	0.48	0.5	5,637	0.5	0.5	9,452	0.51	0.5	7,560	0.48	0.5
- Marital status of potential migrants															
• single	2,118	0.34	0.47	1,537	0.28	0.45	1,298	0.25	0.43	2,143	0.25	0.43	1,855	0.27	0.44
• married	4,180	0.57	0.49	3,673	0.64	0.48	3,815	0.68	0.47	6,499	0.69	0.46	5,015	0.66	0.47
• ever-married	646	0.09	0.28	456	0.08	0.27	409	0.07	0.26	600	0.06	0.24	540	0.07	0.26
- Number of potential migrants	6,951	3.69	1.76	5,667	3.65	1.75	5,524	3.61	1.63	9,242	3.64	1.76	7,411	3.79	1.87
- Number of elderly in HH	6,951	0.76	0.68	5,667	1.01	0.70	5,524	0.86	0.72	9,242	0.46	0.65	7,411	0.85	0.78
- Number of children in HH	6,951	2.55	2.24	5,667	1.96	1.90	5,524	2.18	1.95	9,242	3.47	2.96	7,411	2.52	2.52
- Household economic status															
• poor	937	0.13	0.33	1,617	0.28	0.45	1,929	0.34	0.47	5,679	0.6	0.49	1,730	0.23	0.42
• middle	1,185	0.16	0.37	1,370	0.24	0.43	1,387	0.25	0.43	1,528	0.16	0.37	1,474	0.19	0.4
• rich	4,829	0.66	0.47	2,680	0.47	0.5	2,208	0.39	0.49	2,033	0.22	0.41	4,207	0.56	0.5
- Household debt	6,951	0.72	0.45	5,667	0.89	0.31	5,524	0.86	0.34	9,281	0.72	0.45	7,411	0.81	0.39
- Existential locality	7,278	0.84	3.91	5,732	0.07	0.57	5,637	0.13	0.84	9,452	0.16	0.92	7,560	0.11	0.77

Influence of Existential Locality on labor force age migration decision making

Considering the influence of EL on migration decision making divided by stratum revealed that there is a similar pattern for all strata as EL generates negative effect on migration decision making. The result of binary logit regression on the likelihood to migrate among labor age persons by stratum is shown in Table 4. The coefficients presented in Table 4 are in the form of odds ratio. An odds ratio greater than 1 indicates that the independent variable increases the log odds when all else is equal. On the contrary, an odds ratio less than 1 indicates that the independent variable decreases the log odds (Jampaklay, 2006). Table 4 shows clearly that variables such as age, sex, and marital status of migrants have the findings similar to previous studies pointing out the influence of these factors. The findings show that higher age means lower likelihood of potential migrants to migrate in every stratum, except in uplands where higher age means higher likelihood of moving out. In the uplands area of KDSS, data from qualitative study shows that the irrigation system does not cover the whole area, so productivity per crop is quite low and migration is the way out. This finding is in accordance with a study of Findley (1987) which mentioned that low farm production is a main cause of migration. Males tend to migrate around 2-43 percent more than females in every stratum. This finding is consistent with a study of De Jong, et al. in Thailand which revealed that women are less likely to migrate out because of the need to take care of their parents (De Jong, et al., 1996). Married people are significantly less likely to migrate by 15, 33 and 14 percent than single persons in urban, uplands and mixed economy strata respectively. An additional elderly in the household decreases the odds of migrating by 20 and 16 percent in urban and mixed economy strata. On the contrary, an additional child in the household increases the odds of migrating by 4-8 percent in every stratum. All the above findings are in the same track as those already proved by previous studies.

Table 4: The exponential coefficient from binary logit model predicting the odds of migrating out by stratum

Independent variable	Urban		Rice		Plantation		Uplands		Mixed economy	
	Exp(B)	S.E.	Exp(B)	S.E.	Exp(B)	S.E.	Exp(B)	S.E.	Exp(B)	S.E.
-Age of potential migrants	0.58****	0.003	0.92****	0.004	0.93****	0.004	1.01****	0.003	0.94****	0.003
-Sex of potential migrants										
• female (ref.)										
• male	1.12	0.062	1.37****	0.068	1.03****	0.068	1.43****	0.054	1.02****	0.057
-Marital status of potential migrants										
• single (ref.)										
• married	0.85**	0.077	1.11	0.085	1.06	0.087	0.67****	0.070	0.86**	0.072
• ever-married	1.65****	0.123	3.10****	0.141	2.26****	0.149	1.01****	0.001	1.05****	0.128
-Household economic status										
• middle (ref.)										
• poor	1.38**	0.107	1.37***	0.091	1.18**	0.087	0.98	0.073	1.30***	0.085
• rich	0.79**	0.083	0.66****	0.086	0.64****	0.088	0.70****	0.086	0.69****	0.007
-Household debt	1.06	0.070	1.01	0.111	1.17	0.103	1.25****	0.061	1.38****	0.076
-Household members	1.09****	0.022	1.13****	0.024	1.14****	0.025	1.14****	0.018	1.06***	0.020
-No. of migrants in HH	1.09**	0.031	1.16****	0.032	1.18****	0.032	1.16****	0.024	1.14****	0.028
-No. of children in HH	1.07****	0.001	1.04**	0.018	1.08****	0.017	1.06****	0.010	1.06****	0.012
-No. of elderly in HH	0.80****	0.047	0.42	0.050	1.10**	0.047	1.02****	0.042	0.84****	0.042
-Existential locality at 150	0.54***	0.211	0.67	0.310	0.40***	0.325	0.63***	0.174	0.57**	0.253
N	6944[1]		5666[1]		5522[1]		9240[1]		7410[1]	
D.F.	12		12		12		12		12	
Model Chi-square	854..24		1120.04		1023.51		2200.33		792.18	
P value	0.000		0.000		0.000		0.000		0.000	

Note: **** p< .001, *** p<.01, ** p<.05, * p< .10

[1] N does not include the missing cases

Importantly, persons who had EL with 2 houses in a radius of 150 meters, were less likely to migrate than those who had no or one house within the 150 meter radius by 46, 60, 37 and 43 percent in urban, plantation, uplands and mixed economy strata respectively. This finding is consistent with several studies which explain that kinship community in Thai society has a major role in expanding networks for accessing resources (Nartsupa, 1996; Sawangdee, 1997). It means that one living in a community where the role of kin is strong can have access to resources which make him have no need to migrate out to get resources in other places. Moreover, a study of Saroban (2004) mentioned that the notion of kin in Thai society covers both blood and non-blood kin, the role of the kin is very strong and it is the main source of warm feeling and helping each other. This study showed that good relationships and warm feeling lead people in rural area to have good mental health and a service mind (Saroban, 2004). A study of Chaiyakul (2004) on the potential capacity of the community under local wisdom for healthcare in Chiang Mai province pointed out that the role of the community in generating warmth and help through Thai medical treatment is a strong source of wisdom strengthening the role of neighbors and community for our society (Chaiyakul ,2004).

As EL is the focal point of this study, percentage of actual migrants among potential migrants who had 0-1 house or 2 houses and more in their EL was calculated via adjusted proportional probability model, taking all other variables such as age, sex, marital status and household economic status etc. as covariate factors. The result is shown in percentage terms in Table 5 below.

Table 5: Percent of labor force age persons making the decision to migrate in two conditions of EL after considering all other covariate factors

Stratum	Percent to migrate		Significant level
	0-1 house	2 houses and more	
Urban	20	12	0.00
Rice	21	15	0.18
Plantation	23	10	0.00
Uplands	25	17	0.00
Mixed economy	23	15	0.01

From Table 5 above, the influence of EL is clearly shown; having more than two houses in their EL, migrants have a 10-17 percent likelihood of migrating on average in comparison with those having less than 1 house, who have a 20-25 percent likelihood of migrating on average for all strata. It means that having EL can tie people making them stay in their home location rather than migrating.

This finding shows something very interesting – that the social ties in Thai society are very strong. People do not want to move out. The social ties means the ways people support and encourage each other in doing any thing in their daily life. In a society where the social ties are strong, people can live with happiness within the arms of their kin and their neighborhood. Even though the economic pull factor from urban area is quite strong persuading many people to migrate to get better jobs and quality of life, not all migrate. Thirty five years ago, a classic study by Peter Uhlenberg (1973) mentioned that push and pull economic factors are not strong enough in some societies to make people migrate out; he mentioned that "sometimes the basic problem is not why people migrate but rather why they do not" (Uhlenberg, 1973). He raised case studies of Negro people in the U.S.A in 1920, Japanese-American migration from internment camps during World War II and the exodus from Southern Applalachia between 1930 and 1960 to show that push and pull economic factors may not be the only strongly influential factors for migration. He explained that the social attachment to the area, in terms of association with churches and clubs, strong family ties, as well as the difficulty of adjustment to a metropolitan environment can keep people living in their home location.

Besides the influence of EL, we will discuss the influence of socioeconomic factors on both individual and household levels of migration decision making. The findings of the study show something which is not new that a poor household is more likely to migrate than a moderate one at 18-38 percent in almost every stratum. In contrast, a rich household is less likely to migrate than the moderate one by 21-36 percent among all strata. This is consistent with a research mentioning that individuals tend to be migrant and non-migrant categories on the basis of earning gains due to a net of migration cost (Tunali, 2000). It means that poverty is an influential factor for decision making to migrate among potential migrants when every thing is equal. In terms of debt, a household in debt is more likely to migrate than those having no debt by around 25-38 percent for uplands and mixed economy strata. This finding is consistent with Lee's theory of migration (1969) which mentioned that economic conditions are one among many push factors pushing the poor to migrate out for a better

chance of living (Findley E. 1987; De Jong, 1996). It means that indebtedness is a powerful condition forcing people to migrate out for more earnings to pay off debt.

In terms of household size which represents the surplus of labor, the finding from this study shows that the higher the number of household members, the higher chance for migrants to migrate out for all types of strata. This is in line with studies in Mexico (Scott, 1977) and India (Kothari, 1982) which revealed that migrants are more likely to come from large families in which there are other adults who stay behind while the prime candidates migrate. It means that migrants believe that those left behind will not be in jeopardy because there is someone who can take care of them. At the same time, having higher number of migrants and children in a household means a chance to migrate for a potential migrant. This finding is consistent with a study of Stark (1982) which mentioned that migration is a household strategy the family uses as a safety valve for soothing some problems relating to economic factors. Something interesting found in this study is that households having the elderly in urban, rice and mixed economy strata are less likely to have migrants who migrate out, while the converse occurred in plantation and uplands as a greater number of elderly was associated with a greater likelihood for migrants to migrate out. On this point, one reason that could be advanced is that difference in socio-geography significantly generates difference in behavioral context, norms and the way of life of people in an area. People are always influenced from the higher level of social context such as the family and the community (Findley, 1987).

The finding from this part shows something revealed in the same track as in the previous studies: that the higher the age of the potential migrant, the less the probability of migration in every stratum. This finding shows the fact that older people normally tend to settle down because of marriage and having permanent jobs in comparison with those who are younger. Moreover, males tends to migrate around 0.02- 0.43 times more than females in almost all of strata due to females in Thai or other Asian societies having to take care of other family households as well as household chores. A study done in Mexico in 1977 by Scott confirmed this finding as it stated that when the mother migrated to another place or even worked outside, the absence of mother at home became one of the underlying causes of child malnutrition (Scott, 1977).

In terms of marital status, also counted as one important variable, this study found that married people are 15, 33 and 14 percent less likely to migrate than single

persons in urban, uplands and mixed economy strata respectively. Persons who are ever-married tend to migrate 0.01-2.10 times more than single persons in all strata. It means that married people tend to not move but prefer to live together with other family members in place. In case of having the necessity to migrate, migrants who can afford accommodation and the cost of living in the place of destination normally bring all other family members to live with them at the place of destination. But in case of having no ability to do that, the living arrangements of those who are left behind, especially those who are in vulnerable groups such as children and elderly, is designed carefully. A study of Ritcher, et al. in 1997 mentioned that decision making of migrants is not the result of individual opinion but is a household opinion as to which is the best way to respond to all family members' needs (Ritcher, et al., 1997)

When household economic factors such as debt and household economic status were included in the model, the study found that the poor household is 0.18-0.38 times more likely to migrate than the moderate income household in almost every stratum. In contrast, a rich household is 21- 36 percent less likely to migrate than the moderate one among all strata. In terms of debt, a household having debt revealed in uplands and mixed-economy strata is around 0.25-0.38 times more likely to migrate than those having no debt. This finding is consistent with many studies pointing out that poverty is a main cause of migration in countries throughout the world. Households having debt have more certainty to migrate if they have a chance to migrate to a more developed place where it is possible to do better (Goldstein, 1971; Gulati, 1993; Andrienko and Guriev, 2004).

Conclusion

Our attempt in this paper was to examine the role of formal and informal kin on migration decision making among labor force age persons, which has never been explored before in a quantitative terms. In terms of qualitative views, the role of formal and informal kin whose houses are located nearby is significantly accepted as they can function well in taking care of the vulnerable groups such as children and older people. Thai people, especially in rural areas, can feel free to work outside their villages due to having no necessary concern for those left behind since they have kin nearby. After an in-depth interview and small group discussion with key informants, proper distance among houses that kin can function well was set so as to count the number of nearby houses, thereby measuring so called "existential locality (EL)". Then binary regression

was employed to investigate whether having more kin houses nearby leads persons of labor force age to migrate or not. Findings from this study pointed out the role of kin as a labor force age person who has kin houses located within 150 meters is less likely to migrate out, but rather to stay in the home location. As we have pointed out previously, this finding shows something very interesting and worth repeating– that the social ties in Thai society are very strong. People do not want to move out since they can live happily with their kin and in their neighborhood. Despite the attractions of the city with its better wages and a better material quality of life, not everyone migrates. This finding confirms the role of kin and community in Thai society and provides a guideline for policy makers so that the role of the community can be strengthened to serve the aging society. This is particularly important given that the phenomenon of the elderly left behind is expected to become
more serious in the near future.

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