REPORT OF THE NORTHEASTERN FOLLOW-UP TO THE NATIONAL MIGRATION SURVEY

MIGRATION AND THE RURAL FAMILY: SOURCES OF SUPPORT AND STRAIN IN A MOBILE SOCIETY

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Foreword

In January 1992 Mahidol University supported the first planning seminar held by the Institute for Population and Social Research for the National Migration Survey (NMS), a historical milestone in migration research in Thailand. The results of the survey provided baseline data for further understanding of the migration process in Thailand as it affects various aspects of national concern. It has stimulated a great deal of policy-related discussions and plans for further research in the field.

In this report the Institute for Population and Social Research continues its tradition of producing high quality data for basic research by presenting results from the Northeast Follow-up to the National Migration Survey (NMS2). The NMS2's focus on rural out-migration from the Northeast will enable us to understand the dynamics involved in migration decisions affecting individuals and households, the role of migrant remittances in family survival, and the impact of temporary and long-term migration on the economic and social welfare of family members and their communities.

Mahidol University's continued research efforts in social issues are major contributions to our understanding of how socioeconomic development affects the individual, the family, the community and the nation as a whole. The university's aims of improving the quality of life of Thai people both physically and spiritually are again pursued in this research.

Professor Athasit Vejjajiva, MB (Lond.), FRCP, FRACP, FACP
President of Mahidol University

Preface

The ambitious social and economic development programs that Thailand pursued since the 1960's have shown impressive progress in the economic and demographic fronts. Our economy recorded sustained growth despite economic slowdown in most countries in the world. Thailand's fertility decline during the past twenty-five years is one of the world's fastest ever recorded.

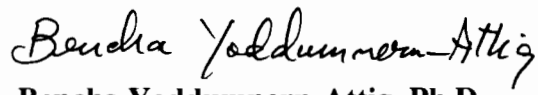
However, social issues remain one of the major concerns in our current national policy agenda, which aims for the improvement of the people's quality of life along with the pursuit of sustainable economic development for the long-term.

The continuing rapid urbanization of Bangkok and metropolitan areas surrounding the primate city has increasingly focused on migration as a target for policy-related action. This is partly due to the perceived strain on social services in urban areas, which is exacerbated by incoming migrants. The massive population flows towards Bangkok, both temporary and long-term, call for a more accurate assessment of migration consequences not only for individuals and families but also for origin and destination areas. Identification of what population sub-groups suffer the most from these population shifts would help focus future programs and policy initiatives.

Migration as a mechanism for poverty alleviation is also important in line with the growing economic inequality in Thailand. But is there a growing dependence of family members left behind in rural areas on remittances from short-term and long-term migrants? Use of remittances solely for consumption purposes would be counter-productive in the long-term unless some portion of remittances are channelled to economic or educational investments. How to redirect the use of remittances to more productive ventures is a major policy question facing the nation today.

In addition, the current work globalization and trade liberalization trends underscore the importance of understanding the migration selectivity process in order to harness Thailand's labor resource pool. If we are to promote the delay in school-to-work transitions to improve the quality of the country's labor force in light of the increasingly competitive labor market in the region, what incentives and disincentives should be promulgated in schools and in the workplace? In the same vein, how should the increase in illegal immigrant labor from neighboring countries be handled? Finally, what is migration's role in the growing AIDS epidemic in the country today?

The NMS2 results presented in this report will hopefully help to draw national and regional policy initiatives for migration, education and the labor force. We hope that the results are useful and that they stimulate further study in this important area.



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The Northeast Follow-up to the National Migration Survey (NMS2), which was conducted in Thailand from August to October 1994, was funded by the Ford Foundation. Special thanks go to David Thomas for his support of our research efforts.

The idea for a follow-up to the 1992 National Migration Survey was initiated even in the planning stages of that project. Dr. Somsak Boonyawiroj from the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) provided encouragement in these early stages.

The Mellon Foundation, through a grant to the Population Research Institute, Pennsylvania State University, provided vital support for Dr. Kerry Richter's participation as principal investigator for the project. It also provided funding for Dr. Gordon DeJong, Director of the Graduate Program in Demography at the Pennsylvania State University, in his service as a consultant for the project. Dr. DeJong's broad experience in migration research in Southeast Asia and elsewhere provided valuable assistance in the early stages of questionnaire design.

Two researchers from the original National Migration Survey team from the Institute for Population and Social Research, Aphichat Chamratrithirong and Kritaya Archavanitkul, served as consultants to the NMS2 project. Their inputs were particularly beneficial in planning and participating in the final seminar and formulating policy recommendations. The NMS2 project also received valuable assistance from Dr. Jawalaksana Rachapaetayakom, Director of Human Resources Planning Division at the National Economic and Social Development Board (NESDB).

The researchers would like to thank the interviewers whose diligent efforts contributed to the high quality of the data. In addition, we would like to thank our respondents in Isan who welcomed us into their homes for the second time to provide this vital information.

The NMS2 Research Team

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the National Migration Survey

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Bangkok

Executive Summary

Northeastern Follow-up to the National Migration Survey

In 1994 the Institute for Population and Social Research, Mahidol University conducted a follow-up survey for the rural Northeastern sample households from the National Migration Survey of Thailand (NMS), which had been conducted two years earlier in 1992. The objectives of this project were to analyze the determinants of migration in this highly mobile area, and to investigate the size and importance of remittance income for rural households. A greater understanding of migration determinants, particularly in areas of high out-migration like the rural Northeast, is crucially needed to design effective rural and national development policies. This need is particularly vital in light of the serious questions raised about the effectiveness of migration in alleviating rural poverty.

The study found that levels of migration out of the rural Northeast of Thailand are high. Although males were much more likely than females to have undertaken a migration, levels of female movement were substantial. There was a striking differential in the age pattern of migration between males and females, with high levels of migration of males being sustained into middle age, while migration rates of females rapidly declined after early adult ages. These age patterns can be explained by the higher levels of seasonal migration among males than females. It is probable that this pattern is a result of seasonal migration being a strategy mainly employed by households in the family building stage of the life cycle. Parents with growing children require additional income during periods of the year when agricultural work is not available.

Most of the seasonal migrants leave their home areas after the harvest seasons of October/ November; they stay away for relatively short periods of time, returning in April/May. There is heavy out-migration of all types of migrants during the months of April/May. Migration of rural Northeast residents is directed primarily to Bangkok and the five surrounding provinces. A higher proportion of seasonal migrants, however, migrate to other Central region provinces and within the Northeast itself. This probably reflects the importance of agricultural work at places of destinations for seasonal migrants.

Family members have a strong influence on the decision to migrate, particularly parents (for young people) and spouses (for married people). Non-migrants were found to have faced discouragement from family members, which appear to have had an influence on their decision not to migrate. As found in previous studies, migrants have strong social networks at the destination, particularly in regards to friends. Many factors go into the decision to

migrate, including the costs and benefits of moving, the type of work at the origin and the destination, family ties, personal freedom, and life experience.

Both quantitative and qualitative evidence illustrate the importance of remittances in providing support to Northeastern rural households. A high proportion of households reported that they had received remittances in the two years since the previous survey. These were received through a variety of methods: many received remittance income when family members returned home, whether to visit or to stay. Besides finding that a high proportion of households in the sample received remittances, the proportion of individual migrants who remitted was also quite high. Return migrants were slightly more likely to remit than out-migrants. Male migrants were more likely to remit than females, but this was mainly due to the fact that more men migrated to work than women. Also, daughters who were out-migrants were more likely to remit than sons.

The study also found that agricultural households in particular substantially supplement household earnings with remittances. Lower income households were more likely to have migrants in the past two years, and those with out-migrants tended to have the lowest incomes. Thus while migration as an economic strategy does benefit households, the benefits for the most part do not allow households with migrants to "catch up" to those who (presumably) do not need to migrate. This is particularly true for households with out-migrants. The implication is that households with temporary migrants also are more likely to have economic resources that provide for the basic needs of the family, which are supplemented by seasonal cash earnings. Out-migrant households may be less likely to be able to provide for these basic needs and so require more long term-migration.

This pattern is confirmed when the uses of remittances by households are examined. The vast majority of households reported that they used remittances for basic necessities like food and clothing. Households of return migrants were more likely to report that they used remittances for non-essential items, and households with out-migrants were more likely to say that remittances were essential to their survival. In many cases remittances were used for items essential to the household farm enterprise, such as buying fertilizer/seeds or paying off a debt. Investments in education and improvements in housing quality were other important uses of remittance income.

Regarding intentions to move in the future, a high proportion of the sample said that they anticipated moving, whether temporarily or permanently. Just as with actual mobility, intention to move is strongly related to being male, younger, having more education, working in agriculture, and having low income. A high proportion of those intending to move (70 percent) planned to do so in the dry season. Investigation into the impact of the government policy which would provide income to rural residents if they agreed not to

migrate found that a large proportion of seasonal migrants (85 percent) would agree not to move if they were offered 1,200 baht per month. Only a small additional percentage would be affected by raising this amount to 1,800 baht, but this group includes those with greater earning power such as men and those with more education.

The prevailing perception among villagers is that migration has a positive impact on the economy and general living conditions in the Northeastern villages of Thailand. Although migration's influence on the availability of labor is not clear, respondents felt that migration seems to increase the demand for labor in these villages, perhaps due the prevalence of seasonal moves. Additionally, the survey indicates that a decline in seasonal migration would not provide much relief on the pressure for social services for housing and public transportation at the places of destination. Illegal migration was found to be viewed with reservation by rural Northeasterners, since those who know of its existence suspect that it reduces the job chances for Thais in general, and their job chances in particular. The job threat posed by illegal migrants is more likely to be sensed by older respondents (i.e., aged 30 or more) than by their younger counterparts. Finally, AIDS infection is a risk that is often associated with migrants. Male migrants, in general, are considered to have greater sexual risk behavior than female migrants, but some female migrants (perhaps in reference to female prostitutes) are perceived to have higher sexual risk behavior than male migrants.

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Chapter 1
Introduction

1.1 History and Rationale for the Project

While the importance of migration and urbanization to the economic development process is well known, the ability to track population movements and to analyze the consequences and determinants of mobility has been hampered by the lack of detailed and accurate data. In response to this need the Institute for Population and Social Research, Mahidol University conducted the National Migration Survey of Thailand (NMS) in 1992. This survey collected data on migration patterns from a nationally- and regionally- representative sample of households (for details see Chamratrithirong et al. 1995). The major objectives of the survey were as follows: 1) to identify micro-level migration patterns on a regional and national level, including major origin and destination points such as the Northeastern region and Bangkok; 2) to examine the determinants of migration at the community, household and individual level; and 3) to investigate the consequences of migration for individuals by measuring migrant satisfaction and assessment of improvement in the quality of life.

Results from the NMS showed much higher rates of seasonal and circular migration than had been previously documented (Chamratrithirong et al. 1995). This is mainly due to the fact that previous estimates were based on census data, which only contain information on the place of residence five years before. Because the NMS was conducted during the wet season, many seasonal migrants were interviewed at their usual place of residence where they had returned for the rice planting period. This increased the accuracy of the results on short-term and seasonal moves, as it is easier to locate such migrants in their home communities. High rates of seasonal and circular migration had long been suspected from the results of small-scale studies, and as expected the Northeast was found to be the region with the highest levels of both short and long-term migration rates. Reasons for this include the poor soil quality, lack of irrigation and poverty in this region, problems which have been exacerbated by

severe drought in recent years. Findings from the NMS indicate that temporary migration of one or more family members during the slack agricultural (dry) season is a common strategy for agricultural families to supplement household income. In addition, more permanent or long-term migration of one or more family members is prevalent, with remittances allowing the family left behind to survive on the family farm.

The idea of doing a follow-up to the NMS was initiated even in the planning stages of that project. Particular interest was expressed by members of the NMS research team and advisory committee to create a longitudinal data set, at least for some key sending and/or receiving areas. While retrospective questions about reasons for moving reveal something about the decision-making process, such answers are likely to be colored by the migration experience. For this reason the predictive ability of information collected by a cross-sectional survey, beyond broad descriptions of the characteristics of migrants and non-migrants, is in question. Only a longitudinal design can reveal the exact circumstances preceding an actual move. This includes both household and individual circumstances, including number of dependent family members, occupation and education, and personal satisfaction with the current location. A longitudinal design also enables the assessment of the degree of accuracy of responses concerning intentions to move. A greater understanding of migration determinants, particularly in areas of high out-migration like the rural Northeast, is crucially needed to design effective rural and national development policies.

This need is particularly vital in light of the serious questions raised about the effectiveness of migration in alleviating rural poverty. On the one hand, households who have a family member who can migrate seasonally or permanently and remit wages to the family have a great advantage over those who do not, as urban wages far exceed income from farm profits. For households where all family members in the prime labor force ages are needed to maintain the farm or to care for children or older people, the limited amount of income gained from farming may be the only source of support. This process thus creates a disparity between "haves" (receiving remittances) and "have-nots" (relying entirely on farming for their livelihood) in rural communities. But it should be remembered that the economic status of those dependent on remittances is often precarious, as uncertain economic conditions, conflicting loyalties or simple unreliability may cause these obligations to go unfulfilled. Women are often placed in a particularly vulnerable situation, as child care obligations and their lesser earning power make them more likely to stay behind in rural areas. At the same time, many women migrate to Bangkok without their children, as they are unable to combine child care with work in a formal setting. This process creates a situation where rural villages are popu-

lated mainly by the old and the young, with grandparents bringing up young children who rarely see their parents (Archavanitkul et al. 1992; Pramualratana 1992; Richter 1994; Richter and Havanon 1994).

The social costs of high levels of migration, including long separations between spouses, children being raised far from their parents, and old people having no offspring nearby, have been a subject of much speculation but little focused research. There is also a lack of reliable data on the frequency, amount and degree of dependence on remittances for rural households, both because most data relies on respondents' recall of periods of as long as a year and because survey questions often do not allow for the sporadic nature of remittances.

Though the International Development Research Center of Canada (IDRC), who funded the National Migration Survey, originally allocated funds for a follow-up survey in the Northeast, inflation and the high costs of implementing a national survey ultimately made this impossible. In early 1994 researchers from IPSR approached the Ford Foundation in Bangkok for support. With a particular emphasis on the livelihood of rural Northeasterners, the degree of support earned from outside the home community and the potential vulnerability of families dependent on such support, the project commenced in May 1994.

1.2 Research Design

Both quantitative and qualitative techniques were used to address these objectives. First, in order to take advantage of the longitudinal nature of the data, information on all household members who were present in 1992 was updated in the NMS2. This included details on all migration in the past two years. Any new household members who migrated, married or were born into the household in the past two years were included on a secondary household roster. In the individual questionnaire, respondents were asked to update all life history information (including migration, work history, marriage and births). Return migrants, who had migrated in the two years between the surveys but were now living in the same district where they were contacted for the NMS, were asked in detail about migration decision-making and experiences. For out-migrants, life history and migration information was collected from family members left behind. A sub-sample of out-migrants to Bangkok was also followed up for an in-depth interview, as discussed in detail below. All respondents were also asked about their future intentions to move and how recent Thai government policies may influence their plans.

In order to obtain detailed information on the degree of household support that comes from migration, all households were asked a detailed series of questions on their degree of dependence on remittances. These included money or goods

sent from another location by family members, brought with them when they came for a visit, or brought back by a temporary migrant when they returned home. Besides asking about the amount and frequency of remittances, household members were asked about the specific uses of the money. Respondents to the individual questionnaire were also asked in detail about their own remittances to their household, and the degree to which they felt the household depended on this income; for example, whether they would have had problems feeding the family without remittance income, or whether such income was used primarily for the purchase of consumer goods or for improving housing quality.

Besides re-contacting all households and individuals in the rural Northeastern sample of the National Migration Survey, the NMS2 project also conducted a series of in-depth interviews of respondents affected by the migration process. These provide detailed qualitative data on the migration decision-making process, on issues of family support and on migrant satisfaction that is unavailable from the quantitative survey. Return migrants were interviewed in their home communities, with a balanced distribution by gènder and marital status. Out-migrants were interviewed in Bangkok, as described in detail below. Several of these cases included parents who had left children in the care of others in their rural hometowns, whether for a temporary or longer-term period.

In addition to interviewing migrants, the project selected a group of "special" cases for an in-depth interview who were in particularly vulnerable circumstances. These included households who received considerable support through remittances from an absent family member, especially where the household was composed mainly of dependents such as children and the elderly. Cases of women with young children who are dependent on the earnings of an absent spouse were also included. Information collected in the in-depth interviews provides insight into decision-making, household survival strategies, points of stress and tension within the household and other issues concerning migration behavior that enrich the findings of the household survey.

1.3 Research Methodology and Results

As outlined above, the sample of households in the NMS was designed for both regional and national representativeness. Of the 7,537 households in the total sample, 1,600 households were drawn from the five sample provinces in the Northeast. Migration was defined as a movement of at least one month's duration across a *tambol* (sub-district) boundary. After identifying those aged 15-44 in the household census, a sub-sample of individuals were interviewed in depth about their migration experience, with two-year migrants being over-sampled. The 600 individuals in the rural Northeast who were part of this sub-sample in the National Migration Survey were the target

group for NMS2. Since more than one individual could be selected from a household, the 600 individuals were drawn from 505 households; this was the sample of households to be re-interviewed for NMS2.

The fieldwork for the project took place exactly two years after the first survey, again during the busy rainy season (August-October 1994). This timing increased the likelihood that those who migrated on a seasonal basis would be at their usual place of residence. In the first phase of NMS2, all 505 households containing respondents from the individual sample of the NMS were re-contacted. Key informants in the village such as the village headman and/or deputies assisted in relocating the households. Interviewers had information from the household roster of the NMS survey already filled into the NMS2 household roster. This included characteristics of all usual household members in 1992 (name, sex, date of birth, and their relationship to head, educational attainment and marital status). This information was updated and any new members who had come to live in the household were added in a secondary household roster. As seen in Table 1.1, the success rate was excellent (98 percent). Respondents remembered the NMS interview well and this aided in framing questions for the NMS2 interview, as many questions concerned the time period between the two interviews. Even in the few cases where the whole household had left the village (N=9), usually information about where and when the household moved could be obtained from key informants such as village leaders or neighbors. Only one household refused to take part in the NMS2 interview.

Of the 600 persons interviewed for the individual sample of the NMS, a high re-interview success rate was obtained as

Table 1.1: **Results of the Household Interview, NMS2**

Results of interview	**Number of households** (percent)
Target	505 (100%)
Re-interviewed	495 (98%)
Whole household moved, information obtained from others	8 (2%)
Whole household moved, no information available	1 (<1%)
Refused	1 (<1%)

well (Table 1.2). In some cases a household split had occurred, meaning that the individual had moved to a new household within the same village. In these cases both the new household and the original household were interviewed. As mentioned above, when an individual had out-migrated from the community, household members were asked to give information about the individual's life history in the past two years and remittances. No attempt was made however to ask others the value or opinion-based questions for that individual.

Interviewing for the qualitative phase of the research took place at the same time as the household and individual surveys. While doing the survey fieldwork the research team identified return migrants as potential subjects for an in-depth interview, attempting to achieve a balance by gender and marital status. If one of the in-depth interviewers were present in the field the interview was conducted at the same time as the survey fieldwork; in some cases members of the research team returned to the village later to conduct the interview. In all, 18 in-depth interviews were conducted with return migrants; characteristics are shown in Table 1.3.

The team also identified respondents from the original sample who had migrated out of the village in the past two years. Originally the plan was to conduct some interviews in the Khon Kaen urban area and others in Bangkok. Unfortunately very few out-migrants were found to have moved to Khon Kaen or other regional

Table 1.2 : **Results of the Individual Interview, NMS2**

Results of interview	**Number of individuals** (percent)
Target	600 (100%)
Re-interviewed, same household	432 (72%)
Re-interviewed, new household in same village	20 (3%)
Individual migrated from village; information obtained from household members	133 (22%)
Whole household migrated from village	12 (2%)
Individual died	2 (<1%)
Refused	1 (<1%)

Table 1.3: **Number and Characteristics of Return Migrant and Out-Migrant In-Depth interview Cases**

Marital status	Return migrants		Bangkok migrants	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Single	6	1	4	4
Married	5	5	0	7
Divorced	1	1	1	0
Total	12	7	5	11

centers; for this reason all of the out-migrant interviews were conducted in Bangkok and surrounding suburbs. If a respondent was found to be living in Bangkok, as much contact information as possible was obtained from family members. This information was used to try to set up appointments for an interview with the migrant in Bangkok. Such contact proved to be difficult, as migrants tended to move often and family members did not always have complete or accurate information on their whereabouts. Employers also sometimes refused to allow us to contact and/or interview the person, which created difficulties since many migrants live at their workplace. In all 16 in-depth interviews were completed with out-migrants in Bangkok (Table 1.3). The difficulty in contacting migrants resulted in under-representation in some categories; for example no married men were interviewed in Bangkok and only one female return migrant was interviewed. To some extent this reflects the actual proportion of migrants in each category (single females have much lower rates of short-term migration) and the transient nature of jobs that migrants take (e.g. construction and transportation for married men (Richter and Ogena 1995)).

The research team identified individuals who fit the criteria for the special cases by discussing potential interviewees with the village headman and other key informants. Because such households may not contain a member aged 15-44, they would not have been represented in the NMS individual sample (which must by design have included an individual in this age group). As mentioned above, these included elderly people whose children had all left the village; grandparents caring for grandchildren because their parents had migrated; and women with dependent children whose husbands were living elsewhere. In several cases the resulting interviews were unusable because they did

Table 1.4: **Number and Characteristics of Special Cases for In-Depth Interviews**

Type of case	Characteristics
Elderly with no children present in the village	4 females; age 56-78
Grandparents caring for grandchildren	4 females, 2 males, 1 couple; age 49-77 Caring for 1-3 grandchildren, ranging in age from 2-15
Women with children, husband working elsewhere	4 females; age 25-31 Caring for 1-2 children, ranging in age from 3-7

not provide sufficient detail on decision-making and opinions. This was especially true in the case of the women whose husbands were absent, which proved to be difficult interviews. Details on the successful interviews for the special cases are given in Table 1.4.

1.4 Conclusion

The results of the Northeast Follow-up to the National Migration Survey contain vital information for those concerned with migration and population distribution policies. The findings presented here are based on interviews with the most mobile segment of the Thai population, rural Northeasterners of working age. Great care has been taken in the research design to assure a balanced picture of the effect of migration on these households. Where necessary, we have noted where results are not representative of the region as a whole (due to the fact that migrants were over-sampled in the original 1992 survey). Since most of the results focus on migrants themselves, this fact is actually an advantage, as it assures that the sample contains a sufficient number of migrants of various characteristics.

Where possible, the report addresses specific policy issues of vital national concern. These include the overall distribution of the population, the high levels of seasonal and temporary mobility, and the dependence of rural residents on migration income. It is hoped that this information will provide policy-makers with the tools to design appropriately targeted programs to alleviate poverty and further socioeconomic development for the nation as a whole.

Chapter 2
General Patterns of Migration

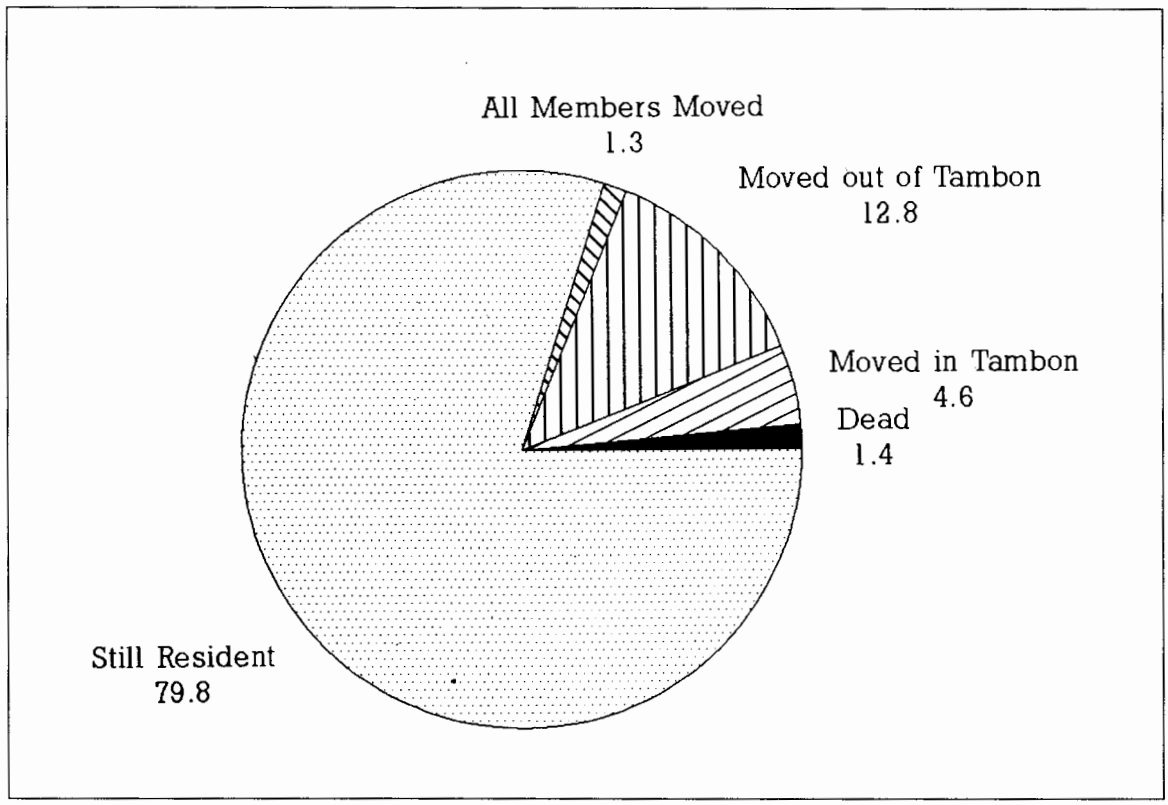
In this chapter levels and geographical patterns of migration are described. The aim is to provide a broad overview of migration patterns of members of households included in the Northeast Migration Follow-up Survey (NMS2). As described in Chapter 1, the households in the NMS2 survey were those households in rural Northeast Thailand that contained an individual selected for the National Migration Survey (NMS) in 1992, where migrants were oversampled. For this reason, no claim is made to the representativeness of the results presented. However, the data provides information on the mobility patterns of households across a diverse sample of provinces and households and hence the patterns described reflect migration behavior for large segments of the population of rural Northeast Thailand from 1992 to 1994. Moreover, since the sample is differentiated by migrant status throughout, the chapter provides an accurate picture of these groups. In accordance with the general objectives of this chapter, only household level data are used in the analysis.

2.1 Migration and Household Structure

Of the 2,639 members of sample households interviewed in rural Northeastern Thailand in 1992, approximately 80 percent remained usual household residents in 1994 (see Figure 2.1). A further 1 percent had either died or were missing (38 and 3 respondents respectively). In the two years intervening between the two surveys other people joined the household, either through birth (125 persons) or in-migration (274 persons), with the characteristics of this group discussed in a later section.

Migration was the main demographic force shaping the changing structure of households. Migration was selective mainly of individuals, with limited movement of complete households. Only 1 percent of respondents belonged to households where all household members moved away from the village where they were interviewed. In contrast, 17 percent of household members interviewed in 1992 had migrated individually out of the household by the time of the 1994 survey.

Figure 2.1: **Current Status of Household Members Resident at Time of First Survey**



For the purpose of most of the analysis in this section, migration is defined as a movement occurring between *tambols* (sub-districts). However, the data on current status of household members interviewed in 1992 also provide the opportunity to estimate levels of local (intra-*tambol*) movement. Only 5 percent of household members resident in 1992 were, in 1994, resident in another household in the same *tambol* , compared to 13 percent who were living in another *tambol*. It appears, therefore, that the bulk of out-migration from rural Northeastern households is not local.

2.2 General Migration Characteristics

Members of 1992 sampled households could have migrated between *tambols* in the two subsequent years and subsequently returned to their usual place of residence by the time of the 1994 survey. In order to obtain a gross estimate of inter-*tambol* moves, the question on movement in the two years between the surveys is analyzed. In this period, 25 percent of respondents moved between *tambols* for at least one month. This is almost double the proportion who at the time of the 1994 survey were living in another *tambol*. The differ-

ences between current status and movement within the previous two years suggests high levels of temporary movement.

There is a large gender differential in levels of migration, with 31 percent of the males and 18 percent of the females aged 2 years and above migrating in the two years after the NMS. Although the overall levels of movement reported for NMS2 are higher than those reported for the same population in NMS, suggesting that the incidence of migration could be increasing, the differential between males and females remained similar.

The age pattern of migration differs among men and women (see Figure 2.2). For both males and females the pattern up to ages 10-14 are the same, with levels of movement being relatively low and probably associated with the moves of parents. At ages where independent moves can be expected to commence (ages 15-19), males and female migration rates begin to diverge, with levels of male migration exceeding those of females. The largest absolute difference comes at ages 20-24, with almost 25 percentage points separating males and females. It is only at the ages of 50-54 that levels of female and male migration again intersect.

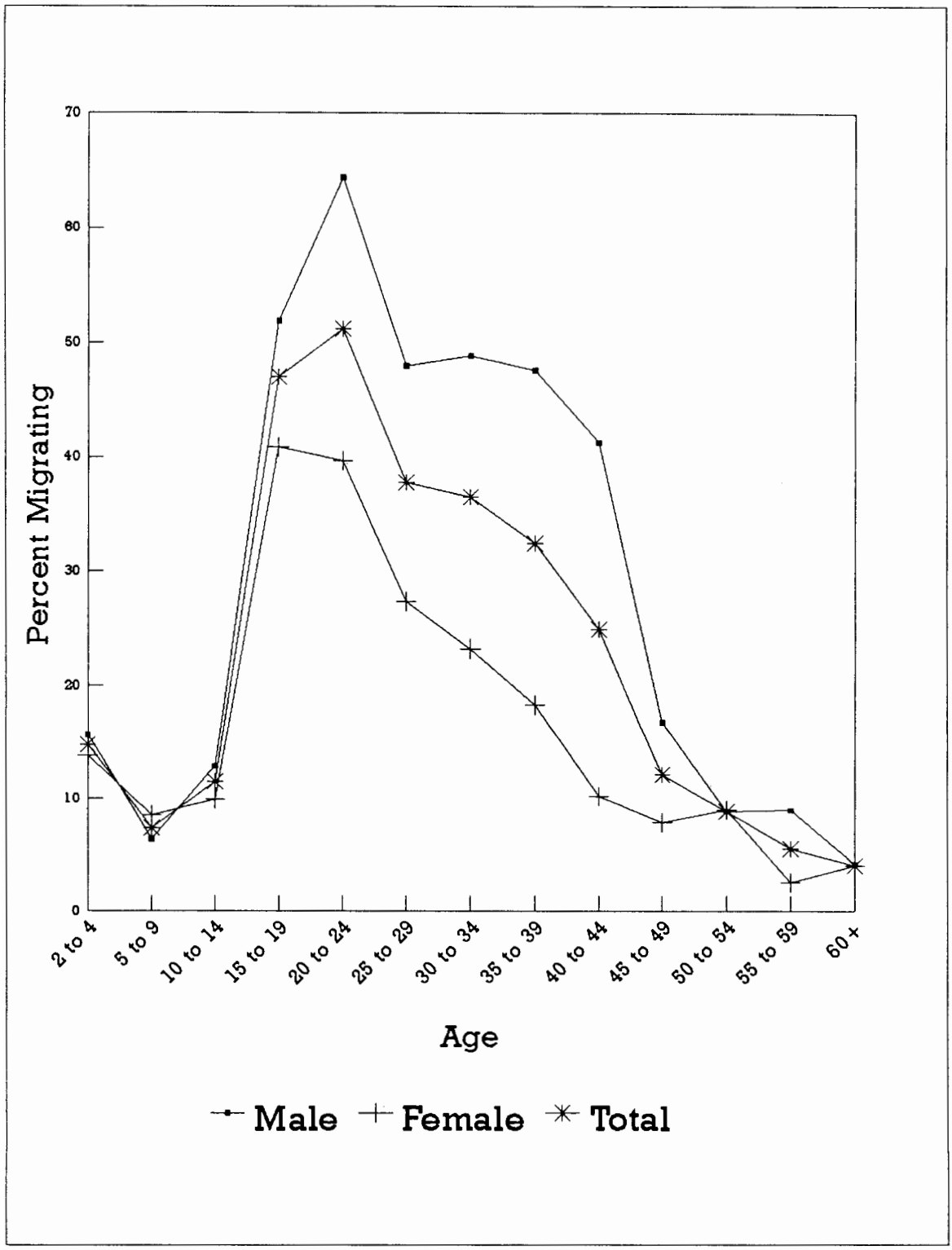
The data graphed in Figure 2.2 clearly demonstrates the high levels of migration among this population. From ages 15-19 to 40-44, over 40 percent of men in their respective age groups had migrated in the two years since the NMS. For those aged 20-24, the ages when military conscription occurs, almost 65 percent of males had moved in the two years before the survey. Almost 40 percent of women at ages 15-19 and 20-24 had migrated in the same period.

Apart from levels of migration, what clearly differentiates male and female age patterns of movement is the rapid decline in female migration after the ages of 20-24. For males there is an initial steep decline between the ages of 20-24 and 25-29, but subsequently relative stability in migration levels until ages in the early forties. While the female age pattern of migration is similar to that observed previously in Thailand, the male pattern, with sustained levels of migration through middle age, are very different; and this indicates that for rural Northeastern Thai males, migration is a common behavior throughout much of their adult life.

2.3 Type of Migration

A major finding from analysis of NMS data was the high levels of temporary migration in Thailand, and in particular in the Northeast. Moves are often made only for a period of a month or two, and in short periods of time repeated moves could be undertaken. In Figure 2.3 the distribution of the number of moves made in the two years preceding NMS2 are graphed. The height of the bars show the proportion of all migrants who had undertaken the specified number of moves. The bars are sub-divided by the relative pro-

Figure 2.2: **Percent Migrating in Two Years Prior to the Survey by Age and Gender**



portion of moves undertaken by males and females.

There is a high level of multiple moves, with only 36 percent of movers undertaking a single move in the two year period, a further 32 percent undertaking two moves, and 32 percent undertaking three or more moves. Males undertook the majority of all moves but, somewhat surprisingly, for each number of migrations specified, the relative proportion of males and females do not vary greatly. Only for two moves, or for five or more moves, were there substantially higher proportions of males than females compared to the average for all moves.

In addition to information obtained on the number of moves, questions were also asked in NMS2 about whether the last move out of the usual place of residence (place where the household was living in NMS) was associated with seasonal factors either in the origin or destination. Similar to the definitions employed in analysis of the 1992 NMS, information on the number of moves, and whether the moves involved seasonal factors, was used to define three migration groups. Single move migrants had moved once in the two years before the survey; seasonal migrants had moved two or more times in the two years before the survey, with the last move out of the place of interview being associated with seasonal factors; and repeat movers had moved two or more times, but the last move was not associated with seasonal factors.

In Table 2.1 the distribution of the population aged 2 years and above by migration type is shown for age groups and gender. Of the 2,571 persons for which data was available, 75 percent were non-migrants, with the remaining 25 percent being approximately equally divided between the three different types of migration.

A higher proportion of males than females were seasonal or repeat migrants, with approximately two-thirds of male migrants belonging to these two categories compared to 60 percent of females. Also, among the seasonal and repeat migrants, males were much more likely than females to be seasonal migrants. It appears that while most seasonal migration is undertaken by males, there are still high levels of temporary migration of females that is not associated with seasonal factors.

The age pattern of migration discussed in the previous section can be understood more clearly by examining the distribution within age groups of migration types. Both repeat and single move migration types display typical age patterns, with very high levels of movements in the late teens and through the twenties and then rapid declines. This is particularly noticeable for the repeat migrants, where 16 percent of the age group 20-24 had been repeat migrants in the previous two years, but only 5 percent of the 25-29 year age group had been repeat migrants. However, a similar decline did not occur for the seasonal migrants. The proportion of the respective age group who were seasonal

Figure 2.3: **Percentage Distribution of Number of Times Migrated in Last Two Years by Gender**

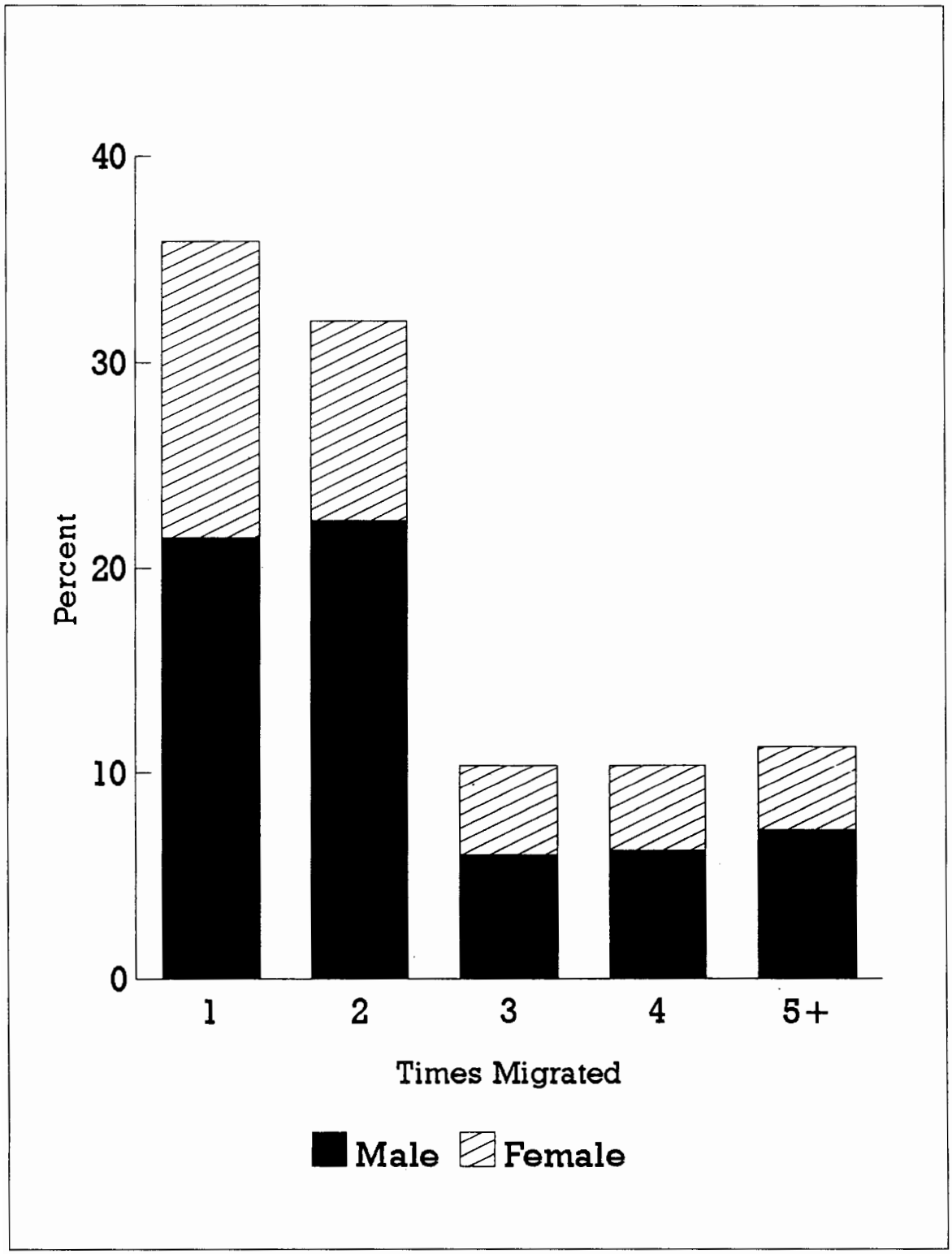


Table 2.1: **Percentage Distribution of Migrant Type by Age and Gender**

Age	Migration Type				Total	(N)
	Non-Migrant	Single	Seasonal	Repeat		
			TOTAL			
2-14	90.2	3.5	0.7	5.7	100.0	(723)
15-19	53.8	21.6	11.5	13.9	100.0	(287)
20-24	49.2	21.8	14.3	15.5	100.0	(252)
25-29	63.5	16.3	15.3	4.9	100.0	(288)
30-39	65.8	8.4	18.6	7.2	100.0	(345)
40-49	81.5	2.9	11.5	4.2	100.0	(313)
50-59	92.3	2.1	3.6	2.1	100.0	(194)
60 and above	95.9	0.0	1.2	3.8	100.0	(167)
Total	75.2	8.9	8.8	7.0	100.0	(2,571)
			MALE			
2-14	89.2	3.4	0.5	6.8	100.0	(380)
15-19	48.1	21.3	14.4	16.3	100.0	(160)
20-24	35.6	25.4	18.6	20.3	100.0	(118)
25-29	53.1	20.7	18.6	7.6	100.0	(145)
30-39	52.3	12.8	25.6	9.3	100.0	(172)
40-49	70.7	4.7	18.7	6.0	100.0	(150)
50-59	91.0	1.1	5.6	2.2	100.0	(89)
60 and above	95.8	0.0	2.8	1.4	100.0	(71)
Total	68.5	10.7	11.9	8.9	100.0	(1,285)
			FEMALE			
2-14	91.3	3.5	0.9	4.4	100.0	(343)
15-19	59.1	22.0	7.9	11.0	100.0	(127)
20-24	61.2	17.2	10.4	11.2	100.0	(134)
25-29	74.1	11.9	11.9	2.1	100.0	(143)
30-39	79.2	4.0	11.6	5.2	100.0	(173)
40-49	91.4	1.2	4.9	2.5	100.0	(163)
50-59	93.3	2.9	1.9	1.9	100.0	(105)
60 and above	95.9	0.0	0.0	4.1	100.0	(98)
Total	82.0	7.2	5.8	5.1	100.0	(1,286)

migrants is the same for age group 15-19 as it is for 40-49 (12 percent), while the highest proportion (19 percent) occurs for those aged 30-39. The proportion of all migrants classified as seasonal migrants linearly increases from 20 percent for age group 15-19 to 62 percent for those household members aged in their forties, before declining to 47 percent for those between ages 50-59 at the time of the survey. It appears that for rural Northeast Thais, seasonal migration is a form of movement that is especially associated with the middle stages of the family life cycle, in particular at those ages when children are growing up and when there are heavy burdens on household budgets. Repeat migration, on the other hand, is much more a phenomena of young adult life and may involve young men and women moving between different activities, for example schooling and the labor force.

Although levels of seasonal migration for females are much lower than those of males, the same pattern of an increasing contribution of seasonal migration to all migration with increasing age is shown for both genders. In fact, the percentage share of seasonal migration to all migration is greater at ages 25-29 and 30-39 for females compared to males. Therefore, while males are more likely than females to undertake seasonal migration, when females do migrate during their middle ages, migration is most likely to be associated with seasonal factors. At young ages, the relative share of single move migration is much higher for females than for males.

Further indicators of migration determinants are shown in Table 2.2 by differentiating the adult sample according to their characteristics at the time of the first survey in 1992. Many of the results suggested by age patterns are confirmed by those measuring the family life cycle. Those who were single at the time of the first survey were the most likely to have migrated in the subsequent two years; about one-quarter of them were single migrants, meaning that they were no longer residing in the household by the time of the second survey. Single men also had a high level of seasonal migration (20 percent). While those married and living with their spouse in 1992 were least likely to have migrated, as suggested above married men also had a high level of seasonal migration (17 percent). Women who were married but not living with their spouse were more likely to migrate than those co-residing with their spouse, indicating that they may have joined their husband living elsewhere. Formerly married people, who were mainly widowed, had low proportions migrating.

More information on migration and the family life cycle is revealed by examining migrant status by status within the household. Household heads and their spouses were the least likely to migrate in all categories, while unmarried children were most likely in all categories. The exception to this is that married daughters and their spouses had a high proportion migrating seasonally (13 and 19 percent

Table 2.2: Percentage Distribution of Migrant Type by Gender and Characteristics in 1992 (Age 15+)

Characteristics in 1992	Male						Female					
	Non	Sing	Seas	Rept	Tot	(N)	Non	Sing	Seas	Rept	Tot	(N)
Total	59.9	13.0	17.5	9.6	100.0	(798)	78.3	8.2	7.4	6.1	100.0	(868)
Marital Status:												
Single	40.1	23.9	19.8	16.2	100.0	(222)	56.3	23.5	8.8	12.5	100.0	(160)
Mar-spouse-pres.	68.2	8.4	16.9	6.5	100.0	(538)	83.5	4.5	7.7	4.3	100.0	(559)
Mar-spouse-abs.	*	*	*	*	*	(7)	69.6	13.0	6.5	10.9	100.0	(46)
Form.mar.	75.0	8.3	8.3	8.3	100.0	(24)	88.5	3.8	3.8	3.8	100.0	(104)
Relationship to head:												
Head/spouse	73.4	5.2	16.0	5.4	100.0	(406)	89.1	2.1	5.2	3.6	100.0	(477)
Unmar. child	38.0	23.5	21.0	17.5	100.0	(200)	55.6	18.5	11.3	14.5	100.0	(124)
Mar. child	51.3	20.5	17.9	10.3	100.0	(39)	70.4	9.4	13.2	6.9	100.0	(159)
Spouse of child	53.8	16.0	18.9	11.3	100.0	(106)	63.0	21.7	8.7	6.5	100.0	(46)
Other	60.0	20.0	13.3	10	100.0	(30)	80.4	15.2	-	4.3	100.0	(46)
Education:												
< Prim.	85.7	4.8	9.5	-	100.0	(42)	86.7	6.7	1.3	5.3	100.0	(75)
Prim.grad	59.5	12.4	19.4	8.7	100.0	(619)	78.8	7.8	8.6	4.8	100.0	(708)
Secondary	51.9	17.3	13.5	17.3	100.0	(104)	66.2	14.1	2.8	16.9	100.0	(71)
Higher ed.	60.7	21.4	3.6	14.3	100.0	(28)	71.4	7.1	-	21.4	100.0	(14)
Occupation:												
Agriculture	59.0	11.7	20.6	8.7	100.0	(631)	79.5	7.1	9.1	4.3	100.0	(658)
Non-agriculture	61.9	17.5	6.2	14.4	100.0	(97)	76.1	10.2	2.3	11.4	100.0	(88)
Not in lab.frc.	66.2	18.5	4.6	10.8	100.0	(65)	74.0	12.2	1.6	12.2	100.0	(123)
Previous migration:**												
Non-migrant	77.0	7.9	9.9	5.2	100.0	(496)	87.3	5.6	4.3	2.8	100.0	(675)
Single	37.3	29.4	17.6	15.7	100.0	(102)	55.2	20.7	9.2	14.9	100.0	(87)
Repeat	28.2	17.4	36.9	17.4	100.0	(195)	41.1	14.0	25.2	19.6	100.0	(107)

* Less than 10 cases.
** Migrant status in the two years prior to the 1992 survey.

respectively). Daughters-in-law also had a high rate of single migration as did married sons, indicating that these couples had left the household in the past two years. It should be remembered that if an older person was named as the head of the household, married children may have children of their own. Hence seasonal and temporary migration among these couples brings in needed supplementary income. Yet unmarried children, both sons and daughters, also have high rates of seasonal migration.

By educational level attained, those with less than the compulsory level of schooling, who are mainly older people, were less likely to migrate. Primary graduates, who represent the majority of the population, were most likely to make seasonal moves. Those with some secondary education were most likely to be migrants, but they were more likely to be single or repeat migrants than seasonal migrants. Finally those with more than a secondary education were slightly less likely to migrate than those at the secondary level, but again had a high proportion of single and repeat migration. Generally these patterns hold for both men and women, though women with a secondary education had low rates of seasonal migration (3 percent vs. 14 percent for men in that category). While migration is widely understood to be selective of the more highly educated, for this population seasonal migration is strongly related to completing the compulsory level of education only. This is mainly because those working in agriculture had the highest proportion of seasonal migrants (21 percent for men and 9 percent for women). Those in non-agricultural occupations were most likely to make single or repeat moves not related to the season.

Finally previous migration experience is found to be a strong predictor of subsequent migration. Those who had made more than one move in the two years before the 1992 survey were particularly likely to be seasonal or repeat migrants in the 1992-94 period. Also single movers in the previous previous had a high proportion making another single move between the two surveys.

2.4 Seasonal Factors Affecting Migration

Seasonal factors in migration can relate to factors at the origin and/or those at the destination. In Thailand, many of the seasonal factors are related to agricultural cycles. For much of the rural Northeast of Thailand, the agricultural factors that promote migration are those related to the lack of work in the season after harvest, or in the period between planting and harvest. Seasonal factors at destinations that can promote migration include both agricultural and non-agricultural factors. For example, the sugar cane cutting season in the Central region, and also in parts of the Northeast, requires a seasonal supply of labor, usually in the early months of the year. Occupational sectors such as con-

struction or the tourist industry also have seasonal demands for labor. In Table 2.3, the proportion of all migrants who responded "yes" to questions about whether their last migration from their home in the rural Northeast was due to seasonal factors at their place of origin, or seasonal factors at their place of destination, are shown by age and gender. It should be noted that respondents could answer yes to both questions.

Seasonal factors at the origin were a much more important determinant of out-migration from homes in the rural Northeast than were seasonal factors at the destination. Almost 40 percent of migrants reported that seasonal factors in their home area were involved in their decision to migrate. This can be compared to the 15 percent who cited seasonal factors in the destination as being important in their decision to migrate. As most of the rural households included in the sample engaged in rice farming, it can be concluded that seasonal cycles involved in rice farming are a major determinant of migration for rural residents of the Northeast.

As age increased, higher proportions of migrants cited origin and destination seasonal factors as being important in their decisions to migrate. For example, from ages 30 to 59 between 26 and 33 percent of migrants cited seasonal destination factors as having influence in their migra-

Table 2.3: **Percent of Migrants Responding "Yes" to Whether Last Migration from Home Area was Related to Seasonal Factors in Destination and/or Origin Areas by Gender and Age**

Age	Seasonal Factors in Destination			Seasonal Factors in Origin		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
2-14	2.4	3.3	2.8	2.4	13.3	7.0
15-19	3.6	1.9	3.0	32.5	28.8	31.1
20-24	5.3	11.5	7.8	31.6	34.6	32.8
25-29	14.7	29.7	20.0	45.6	43.2	44.8
30-39	30.5	34.3	31.6	53.7	51.4	53.0
40-49	25.0	28.6	25.9	68.2	57.1	65.5
50-59	37.5	28.6	33.3	50.0	28.6	40.0
60+	66.7	0.0	28.6	66.7	0.0	28.6
Total	14.6	16.0	15.1	40.2	35.1	38.4
(N)	(405)	(231)	(636)	(405)	(231)	(636)

tion decision, and 40 to 66 percent cited origin seasonal factors as having an influence. In general, destination seasonal factors appear to gain in relative importance compared to origin factors as age increases -- suggesting that older respondents are responding to both push and pull seasonal factors in migration while younger respondents are more likely to take the risk of migration when faced with only push factors.

Although both males and females were more likely to cite seasonal origin factors than seasonal destination factors as being important in their last decision to migrate, a higher proportion of females than males cited seasonal destination factors to be important, while a higher proportion of males cited origin seasonal factors to be important. Apart from ages 60 and above, where there are very few migrants, the gender differences are greatest at ages in the twenties, where twice the proportion of females than males cited seasonal destination factors as being involved in their decision to migrate, while roughly the same proportion of males and females responded "yes" to the question asking whether origin seasonal factors were important. This may reflect the increasing importance of destination seasonal factors with marriage and raising of children due to a lowering of the risk of movement where seasonal work opportunities are available. As women enter these family life cycle stages at younger ages than men, these factors become more important for women at earlier ages.

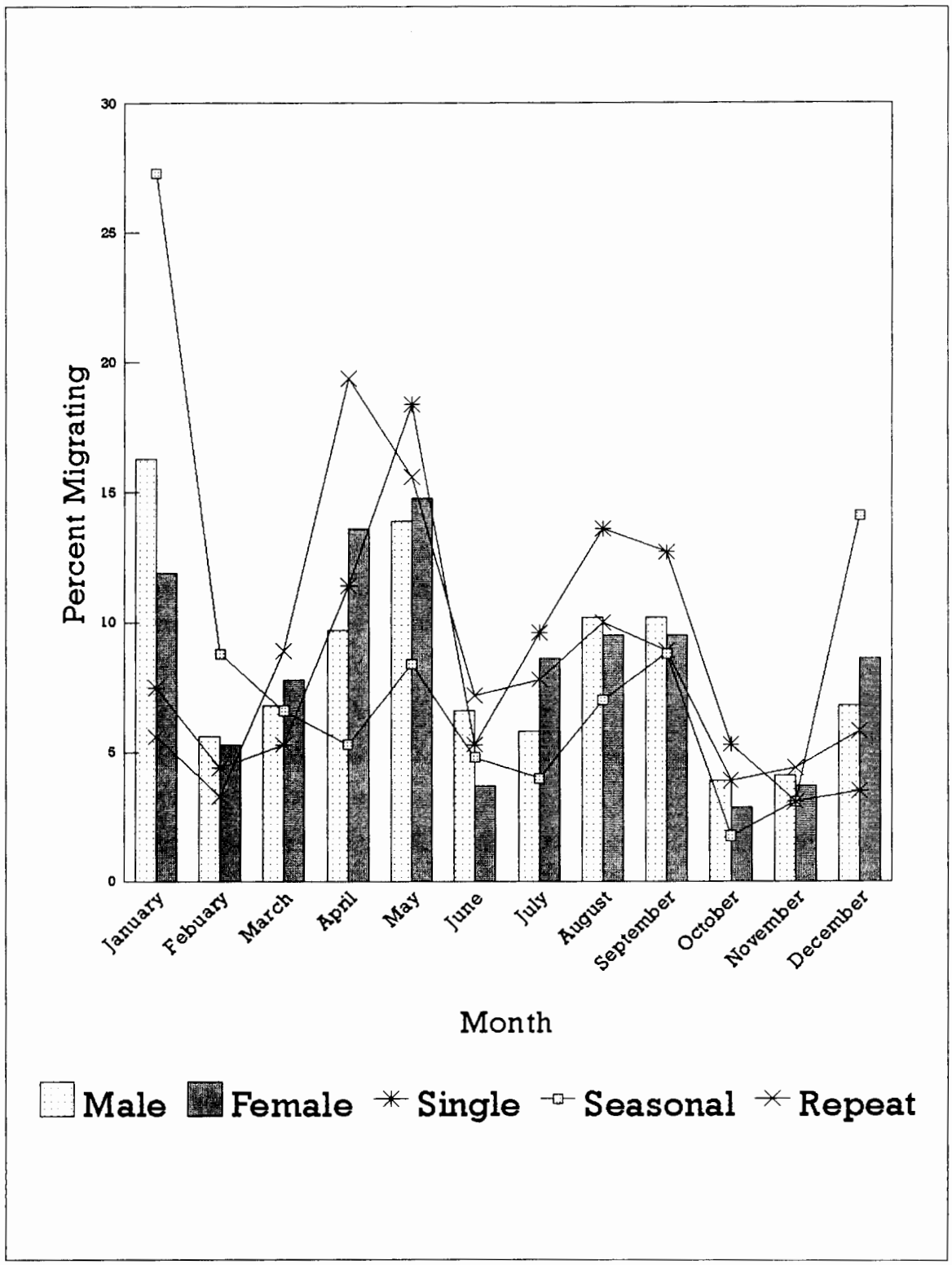
2.5 Timing of Migration

The large contribution of seasonal migration to overall levels of migration affects the timing of migration. However, both repeat and single move migration also have distinct timing profiles. In Figure 2.4, the monthly distribution of the last migration from the household is shown by gender and also for the three different types of migration identified.

Overall, there are three periods of the year when levels of out-migration from the rural Northeast are high. The first period is December/January, the second April/May and the third August/September. Levels of out-migration are very low in June and in October/November. Both males and females follow the same general patterns described above, although a slightly higher proportion of female migration take place in the April/May peak compared to the other two peak periods.

The gender difference in timing of out-migration is related to the different gender composition among types of migration. Although single move and repeat migrants have very similar monthly patterns of migration, with the pronounced peaks being April/May and August/September, the peak for seasonal migrants occurs in December/January. In fact, 41 percent of all seasonal migrants experienced their last move out of their home area during these two months, with 27 percent moving in the month of January alone. This compares to June/July when 9 percent of seasonal migrants left and October/November when

Figure 2.4: **Percentage Distribution of Month Migrated by Gender and Migration Type**



only 5 percent left. While the timing of seasonal out-migration patterns are clearly explicable in relation to agricultural seasons -- the main planting season being June and July, with the main harvest season being October and November -- the timing patterns of single and repeat movers require further explanation. The main peak in April/May is undoubtedly due to the finishing of the school year and subsequent migration in search for employment; this is also the period for military conscription. The secondary peak in August/September may be due to movements associated with civil service employment changes.

It is also possible to examine the timing of return of repeat and seasonal migrants back to their homes in the rural Northeast. Approximately 43 percent of migrants were living back at home at the time of NMS2. The distribution by month of return of these migrants is shown in Figure 2.5. The majority of migrants returned in the months of March, April and May, with 61 percent of seasonal migrants returning during these three months and 42 percent of repeat migrants. A higher than average amount of the two type of migrants also return in September -- before the harvest season in October. It appears that many of the seasonal migrants return home around the time of the Thai New Year and stay, perhaps awaiting the time when ground preparation can begin. Repeat migrants tend to return at a slightly later date, more often in May, and this may reflect high levels of movement back and forth of young persons who have finished school in March/April.

2.6 Direction of Migration

In Table 2.4 the urban/rural status of the place of destination for the last movement out of the migrant's usual place of residence in the rural Northeast is shown by migration type. The majority of migrants had moved to urban areas, but there are large differences in the proportions of the different migrant types who moved to urban areas, with three-quarters of single move migrants, two-thirds of repeat migrants, but less than one-half of seasonal migrants having an urban destination.

The relatively low proportion of seasonal migrants moving to urban areas is a result of high labor demand for seasonal migrants in commercial agriculture, especially in the Central region. Seasonal work in road building and other infrastructure projects is also available in rural areas. Employment growth in long-term positions, however, is more likely to occur in urban areas, attracting large proportions of single and repeat migrants.

Differences between males and females in the urban/rural status of their place of destination are generally small, although female single move and repeat migrants are more likely than their male counterparts to have migrated to an urban area, while female seasonal migrants are less likely to have migrated to an urban area. This corresponds with expectations, with

Figure 2.5: **Percentage Distribution of Month Migrant Returned by Gender and Migration Type**

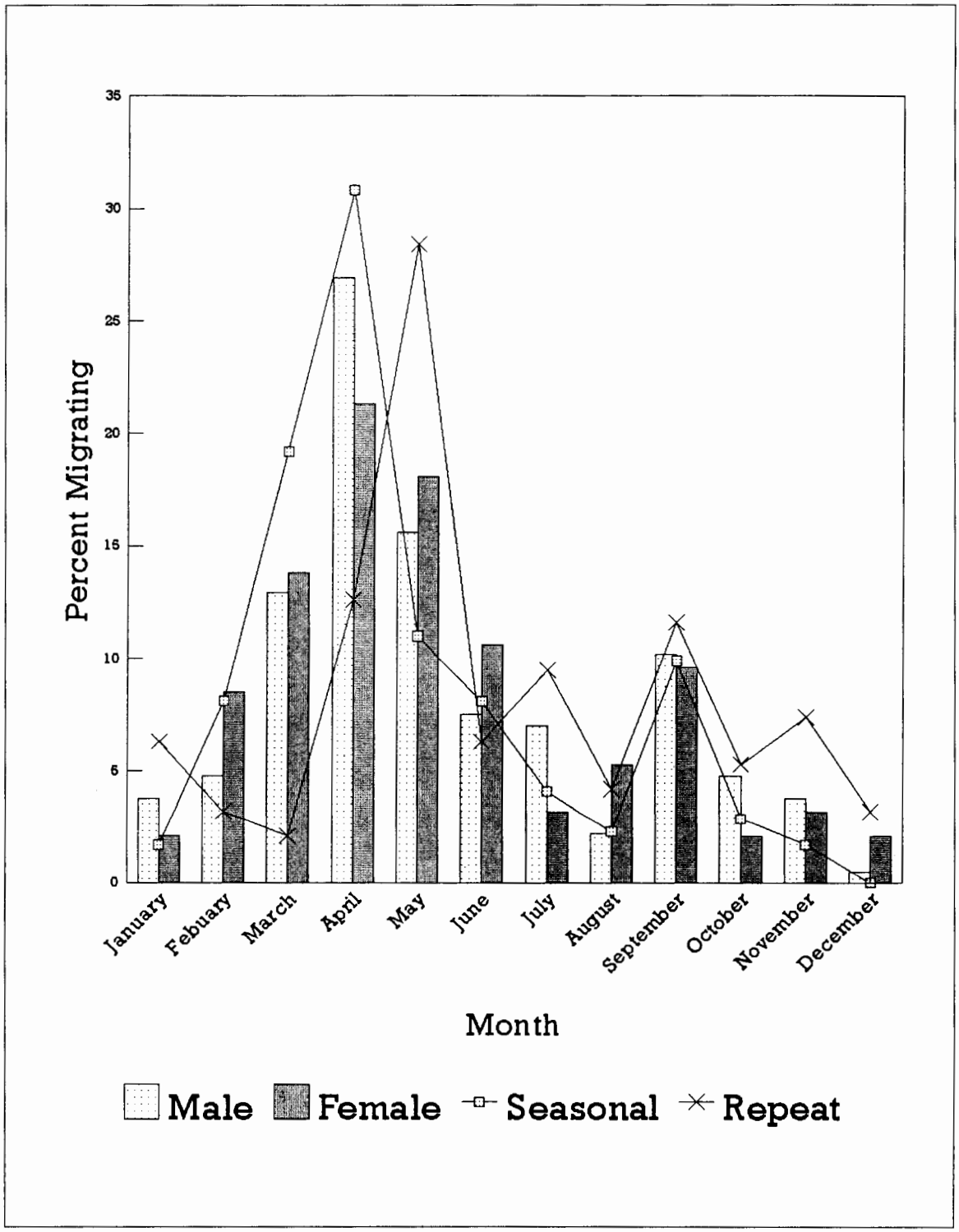


Table 2.4: **Percentage Distribution of Urban/Rural Status of Place of Last Migration from Rural Northeast by Migration Type and Gender**

Rural/Urban Status and Gender	Migration Type			
	Single Move	Seasonal	Repeat	(N)
Both Genders				
Urban	75.1	44.1	66.3	(384)
Rural	24.9	55.9	33.7	(242)
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	(626)
(N)	(221)	(227)	(178)	
Males				
Urban	72.3	45.8	64.3	(236)
Rural	27.7	54.2	35.7	(159)
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	(395)
(N)	(130)	(153)	(112)	
Females				
Urban	79.1	40.5	69.7	(148)
Rural	20.9	59.5	30.3	(83)
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	(231)
(N)	(91)	(74)	(66)	

female seasonal work often involved in agricultural work, or the processing of agricultural products, while permanent positions, particularly factory employment, for women most likely to be urban-based.

High proportions of all types of migration from villages in the Northeast are directed towards Bangkok (see Table 2.5), with approximately 32 percent of all migrants having moved to Bangkok in their last move from their usual place of residence in the Northeast. The attraction of the Bangkok area, however, is even greater than this percentage suggests, with almost 14 percent migrating to the five provinces surrounding Bangkok, and of the other 12 percent who migrated to other parts of the Central region, the majority moved to either Saraburi or Chonburi -- both close to Bangkok.

Table 2.5: Percentage Distribution of Place of Destination of Last Migration From Rural Northeast Thailand by Migration Type and Gender

Place of Destination of Migration and Gender	Migration Type			
	Single Move	Seasonal	Repeat	(N)
Both Genders				
Bangkok	35.7	26.4	35.9	206
Five provinces around Bangkok	11.5	14.1	16.6	88
Other Central region	9.7	19.4	6.1	77
Within home province	22.9	13.2	17.7	114
Other Northeast region	13.2	14.5	19.3	98
North region	0.9	7.9	0.6	21
South region	4.4	4.4	2.2	24
Foreign destination	1.8	0.0	1.7	7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	(635)
(N)	(227)	(227)	(181)	
Male				
Bangkok	35.6	25.5	33.9	126
Five provinces around Bangkok	10.4	16.3	14.8	56
Other Central region	11.9	17.6	6.1	50
Within home province	21.5	15.7	20.9	77
Other Northeast region	13.3	12.4	18.3	58
North region	0.0	6.5	0.0	10
South region	4.4	5.9	3.5	19
Foreign destination	3.0	0.0	2.6	7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	(403)
(N)	(135)	(153)	(115)	
Female				
Bangkok	35.9	28.4	39.4	80
Five provinces around Bangkok	13.0	9.5	19.7	32
Other Central region	6.5	23.0	6.1	27
Within home province	25.0	8.1	12.1	37
Other Northeast region	13.0	18.9	21.2	40
North region	2.2	10.8	1.5	11
South region	4.3	1.4	0.0	5
Foreign destination	0.0	0.0	0.0	0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	(232)
(N)	(92)	(74)	(66)	

Almost one-third of migrants moved within the Northeast, with almost equal numbers moving within their home provinces as there were of those moving to other provinces within the Northeast. Hence much of intra-regional movement is short-distance with, it appears, limited attraction from other areas in the region. Apart from Bangkok, the Central region and the Northeast itself, there was a very small amount of movement to other regions or to foreign destinations.

There are two distinct destinations for single move and repeat migrants, with over 83 percent of single move migrants, and almost 90 percent of repeat migrants moving to either Bangkok and the five surrounding provinces, or moving to destinations in the Northeast. These two destinations, however, only account for two-thirds of seasonal movers, with almost 20 percent going to other provinces in the Central region.

A higher proportion of female than male seasonal migrants had as their destination Central region provinces outside Bangkok or in the immediate vicinity of Bangkok. Similarly, while a higher proportion of male seasonal migrants move within their home provinces, a higher proportion of female seasonal migrants (almost 20 percent) move to other provinces in the Northeast. These patterns may reflect greater levels of participation of women in agricultural employment, while men have greater seasonal employment opportunities in the Bangkok Metropolitan region, or take employment opportunities close to their homes.

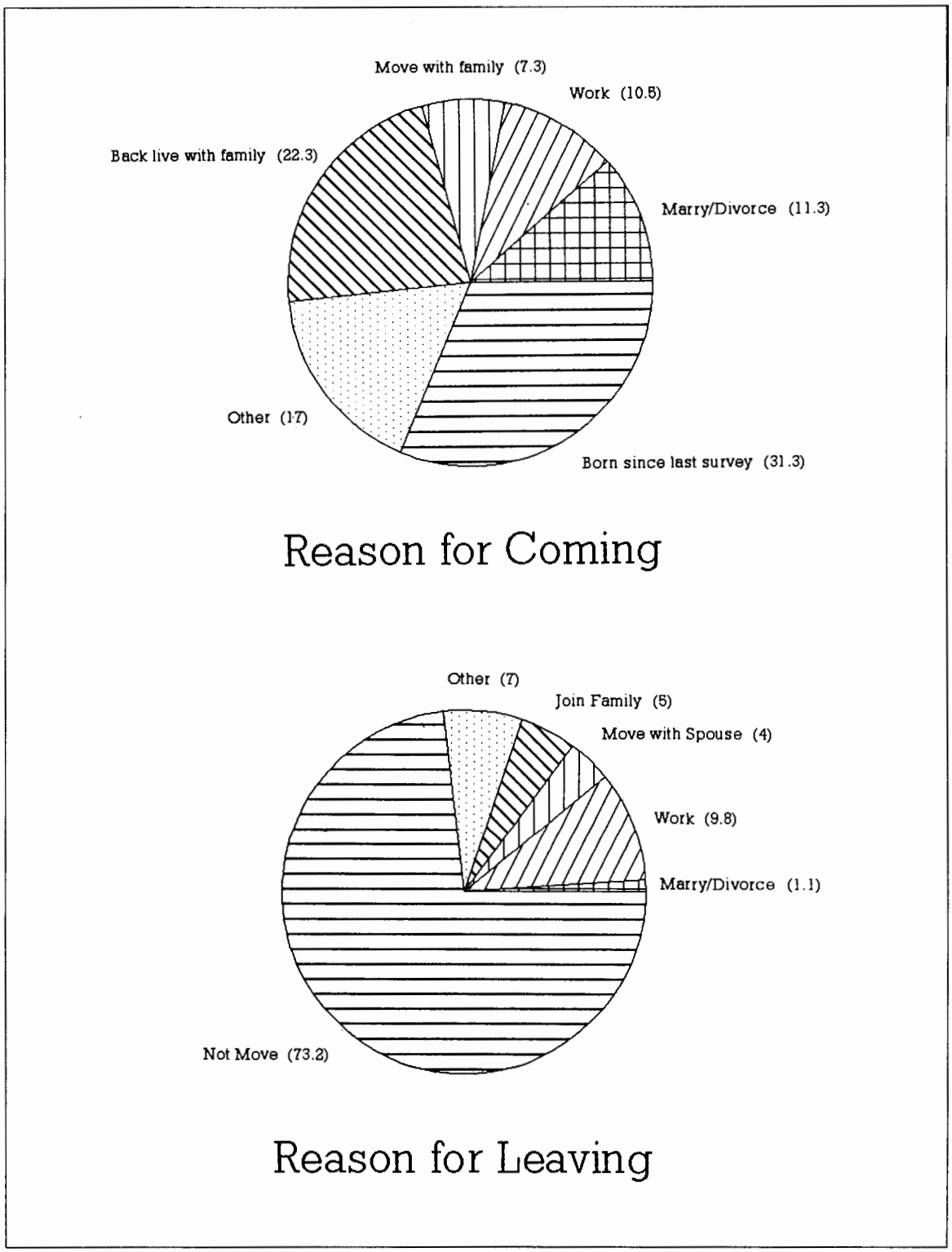
The situation for single move and repeat migrants is very different from that of seasonal migrants, with higher proportions of female single move and repeat migrants, compared to their male counterparts, moving to Bangkok and the five surrounding provinces. The distribution of destinations of male single move and repeat migrants, while still heavily weighted towards Bangkok and its surrounds, is more evenly distributed among other regions. It is apparent that most of the employment opportunities that female single and repeat moves can access are located in and around Bangkok.

2.7 Additions to the Household

In the period between the NMS and the NMS2 surveys, 399 individuals became regular household members (resided in the household for at least one month) of the rural households surveyed in NMS. Of these, 107 were not living in the household at the time of NMS2. The distribution of reasons for entering and exiting the households are shown in Figure 2.6.

Almost one-third of the additions to the households occurred through new births to household members. Of the remaining persons who migrated into the households, the main reasons for entry were return to live with family members, marriage or divorce, and come to work. It appears that

Figure 2.6: **Reason for New Members Joining Household and New Members Leaving Household**



substantial numbers of household members who had migrated for at least two years moved back to live with family in the period before the survey.

The majority of those who moved out did so to work. However, substantial proportions also moved for family reasons -- either to join other family members, move with spouse, or because of marriage and divorce. The data suggest high levels of turnover of household members, with many persons moving into households, staying for a short period of time, then moving out.

2.8 Conclusion

Levels of migration out of the rural Northeast of Thailand are high. The majority of the movement appears to be outside of the *tambol* of residence. Overall, slightly over 25 percent of household members enumerated in 1992 had spent at least one month outside of the *tambol* of their usual place of residence in the two years before the 1994 survey.

Although males were much more likely than females to have undertaken a migration, levels of female movement were substantial. There was a striking differential in the age pattern of migration between males and females, with high levels of migration of males being sustained into middle age, while migration rates of females rapidly declined after early adult ages. These age patterns can be explained by the higher levels of seasonal migration among males than females. It is seasonal migration, both for males and females, that is characterized by sustained levels into middle age. It is probable that this pattern is a result of seasonal migration being a strategy mainly employed by households in the family building stage of the life cycle. Parents with growing children require additional income during periods of the year when agricultural work is not available.

Most of the seasonal migrants leave their home areas after the harvest seasons of October/November; they stay away for relatively short periods of time, returning in April/May. There is heavy out-migration of all types of migrants during the months of April/May. Migration of rural Northeast residents is directed primarily to Bangkok and the five surrounding provinces. A higher proportion of seasonal migrants, however, migrate to other Central region provinces and within the Northeast itself. This probably reflects the importance of agricultural work at places of destinations for seasonal migrants.

Rural Northeastern Thai households experienced substantial turnover of residents. While much of the movement in and out of the household is temporary, with members coming and going throughout the year, implications for family relations, the household economy and community structure are substantial.

Chapter 3
Migration Decision-making

In this chapter, further insight into the migration process for Northeastern residents is presented through a discussion of decision-making, which includes findings both from qualitative and quantitative data. Decision-making was a major focus of attention in this study. Part of the questionnaire was focused on questions on decision-making for the last move during the past two years, for both return migrants and out-migrants. As mentioned in earlier chapters, the latter group was not present in the household at the time of the survey, and so other household members were asked about the specifics of their move. The objective was to gain insight into influences on the migration process. Besides the survey questions, in-depth interviews of migrants included a great deal of discussion of the decision-making process, both regarding recent moves and those in the past. Both individual and household factors will be considered in the presentation, in order to draw a clear picture of migration decision-making among Northeastern residents.

3.1 Family Influences on the Decision-Making Process

The survey asked several questions to investigate who influenced or took part in migrants' decision-making. Table 3.1 investigates whether respondents made the decision to move on their own and whether their characteristics differ from those who made their decision in conjunction with other people. The results show that 43 percent made their decision by themselves without any influence from other persons. The other 57 percent of migrants did not make the decision completely on their own; this group had other significant persons taking part in their decision-making, such as their spouse (33 percent), parents (26 percent), and others (16 percent), including offspring, siblings and friends. It is found that males were more likely to make their own decision than females, especially in regards to consulting parents (21 percent for males vs. 34 percent for females) and the spouse (29 vs. 39 percent). The same is true for those over 35 years old, those educated higher than the primary level, and those

Table 3.1: **Persons Involved in the Decision to Migrate by Various Characteristics***

Respondent's Characteristics	Self only	Parents	Spouse	Others	(N)
Total	42.5	26.0	33.1	15.7	(254)
Sex:					
Male	49.0	20.9	29.4	17.0	(153)
Female	32.7	33.7	38.6	13.9	(101)
Age:					
17-24	42.2	43.1	13.7	14.7	(102)
25-34	40.0	21.1	44.4	14.4	(90)
35-47	46.8	4.8	48.4	19.4	(62)
Education:					
Primry	41.4	25.6	35.3	14.9	(215)
>Primry	48.7	28.2	20.5	20.5	(39)
Marital Status:					
Single	49.4	43.2	-	11.1	(81)
Married	37.5	16.9	51.9	19.4	(160)
Form.Married	61.5	30.8	7.7	-	(13)

* Because more than one family member could be involved in the decision, percentages do not sum to 100.

who were widowed, divorced or separated. Conversely, females, those in the middle age group (25-34), those with a primary education and married people were more likely to make their decision in consultation with others. Not surprisingly, younger people were most likely to consult parents, and over half (52 percent) of married people did consult their spouse.

The survey also asked non-migrants about family members who may have encouraged or discouraged them from moving in the past two years; for return migrants, we asked about the family's reaction to their last move (Table 3.2). In general non-migrants were more likely to have family members who discouraged them from moving or were neutral than were migrants. This implies that family member's opinions did have a large impact on migration decision-making. There was little difference between mother's and father's reaction to the respondent's move, except that mothers were slightly more likely to discourage the return migrant's move. More than half of spouses (51 percent) had encouraged a return migrants move out of the household, though a large proportion (28 percent) were neutral. While the majority of children of non-migrants did not have an opinion about their move (58 percent), children of return migrants were about evenly split between encouragement, indifference or neutrality, and discouragement.

Interesting patterns are found based on the gender of the respondent. Mothers were more likely to have discouraged non-migrant daughters from moving than sons (40 vs. 28 percent); however, they were also more likely to have encouraged those daughters who *did* migrate than sons. This may be because mothers feel they have less influence over their sons. The pattern among fathers is similar, except that fathers are more likely than mothers to be indifferent/neutral, both in regards to daughters and to sons. Wives of non-migrant respondents were much more likely to have encouraged a non-migrant male to move (27 vs. 9 percent), while husbands were more likely to have discouraged both migrant and non-migrant female respondents. Finally children were more likely to discourage mothers to leave than fathers, but a high proportion of both male and female non-migrants said that their children had discouraged them from migrating (32 percent for fathers and 42 percent for mothers). In sum, women were more likely to be discouraged from moving by family members than men, whether they did in fact migrate or not; at the same time, female migrants were more likely to report that they had been encouraged to move than male migrants. This corresponds to the finding above that female migrants were more likely to consult others about their move, and to the fact that women are more likely than men to have family responsibilities in addition to their economic responsibilities.

The in-depth interviews also discussed family members' reactions to migration. Several discussed their parents' reaction

Table 3.2: **Responses on the Reactions of Specific Family Members to the Idea of the Respondent's Migration for Non-Migrants (N=334) and to the Actual Move for Return Migrants (N=120)**

a. Total

Family Member	Non-migrants				Return migrants			
	Encurg.	So-so	Discrg.	Total	Encurg.	So-so	Discrg.	Total
Mother	13	51	36	100	39	37	24	100
Father	13	52	35	100	38	42	19	100
Spouse	15	46	38	100	51	28	21	100
Chldren	5	58	36	100	29	35	35	100

B. By Gender

Family Member	Non-migrants				Return migrants			
	Encurg.	So-so	Discrg.	Total	Encrg.	So-so	Discrg.	Total
Mother								
-M	15	57	28	100	32	45	23	100
-F	13	48	40	100	49	24	27	100
Father								
-M	20	54	27	100	33	51	16	100
-F	9	51	40	100	46	30	24	100
Spouse								
-M	27	47	26	100	50	32	18	100
-F	9	46	45	100	53	20	27	100
Chldren								
-M	8	70	23	100	21	47	32	100
-F	4	52	44	100	42	17	42	100

the first time that they migrated, which ranged from active support to tacit approval to discouragement.

Q: Did your parents want you to come to Bangkok or was it your own decision?
A: It was my own decision.
Q: Did they support your decision, though?
A: They said the plan sounded good and if I wanted to follow up on that plan they were going to back me all the way. They liked the idea of taking that [sewing] course. If they hadn't they would have tried to stop me. (Single female Bangkok migrant)

Q: [Referring to first migration] Did you know a job was waiting for you when you first packed your bag to go?
A: Yes I did. I knew there was a job waiting for me.
Q: Who told you that?
A: The father of a friend. He was a supervisor there.
Q: So then you decided to go. Did you talk to anyone about it?
A: Yes, my mother. She said it was OK. (Married male return migrant)

Q: Did your parents agree with the idea of your leaving home to work? Did they ever say, don't leave home, stay and help your mom and dad?
A: Yes, my father wanted me to learn to cut hair. He didn't want me to leave home.
Q: But you made the final decision?
A: Yes, I thought going to Bangkok would be better.
Q: What did your parents say?
A: After a while they stopped complaining, as long as I send money regularly. (Single male Bangkok migrant)

Q: When you first went to Bangkok at the age of 19, was there a job waiting for you there?
A: No there wasn't.
Q: Then why did you decide to go?
A: My husband was in (high) school. We had money problems so I decided to go.
Q: Did your family back your idea of working in Bangkok?
A: My mother let me go but my father said no. He said Bangkok is a tough city to live in. He had worked there before. He wanted me to finish school. (Married female return migrant)

Both men and women reported consulting with their parents about their first move; this included the female respondent above who was married at the time. Married respondents were asked about their spouse's role in their decision-making about migration. Similar to the survey responses reported above, many of the male respondents said that they did not consult their wives.

Q: Did you make the decision all by yourself?
A: Yes, I did.
Q: Did you talk to your wife about it?

A: Yes, I did.
Q: Did she agree with your decision or did she try to stop you?
A: She was not too happy about me going.
Q: Why?
A: She worried about me. She was afraid for me, that it wouldn't be safe. (Married male return migrant)

Q: Who made the decision for you to go [to cut sugar cane]? Did you consult with your wife?
A: No. I made the decision all by myself.
Q: Did your wife try to stop you?
A: She didn't say anything when I told her I'd go.
[His wife]: I more or less tried to stop him because it was hard work. But we needed the money. (Married male return migrant)

The latter response interjected by the wife implies that men may be reluctant to report their spouse's resistance to their plans, and/or that they play a part in decision-making. But some female respondents also reported that the decision was mainly made by the husband.

Q: When you finish with the planting, are you considering getting a job somewhere?
A: Yes, I am.
Q: Do you leave home to seek work every year?
A: It depends. If my husband says there's a good job, I go. If not, I don't. My husband goes every year and I wait for him to send word about a job. (Married female return migrant)

But in other cases women reported that they made their own decisions about migrating.

Q: Have you ever planned about the future with your husband?
A: He wants to raise chickens here, but we have no money to start the project.
Q: He doesn't talk about going anywhere else [for work]?
A: We have been [migrating seasonally] a lot. I'm sick of exhaust fumes and the tight economy. We had to work all the time to survive....I don't want to go anywhere [anymore], but if the financial situation forces me, I might have to go. (Married female return migrant)

Both the quantitative and qualitative data illustrate how migration decision-making may involve the individual, the family or both, and that many conflicting forces may be at work. These issues are raised again later in the chapter.

3.2 Sources of Knowledge and Social Networks at the Destination

The survey also investigated aspects of the decision-making process such as the selection of the destination and existing

social networks at that destination. Sources of information and prior experiences used to select the destination of the last move for return migrants and out-migrants are presented in Table 3.3, in order to examine the most influential source of information affecting migrants. It is found that for male return migrants, 54 percent of them had friends at the destination place, 32 percent had close relatives, and 29 percent had lived there before. Other frequent sources of information were having stayed overnight there before (25 percent) or having other relatives there (21 percent). Some male respondents said that they had found work through a broker (17 percent), but very few through a government organization (4 percent). For female return migrants, the highest proportion of them (35 percent) had lived in the destination before, followed by those who had close relatives there (31 percent). A much higher percentage of female return migrants than males had found work through a broker (29 percent); while for both men and women a large proportion finding work through a broker were agricultural workers, a substantial proportion of women in this position had been domestic workers (21 percent). A high proportion of females also had friends there (25 percent), or had ever stayed overnight (23 percent).

For out-migrants, it is found that for the male group, about 42-43 percent had lived at the destination area before, had close relatives and/or close friends living there, or had ever stayed overnight there. For female out-migrants, an even higher proportion (49 percent) went to a place where they had lived before, and about one-third had close relatives or friends or had ever stayed overnight there. These findings indicate that most of the migrants obtained information about their destination area, at least for their last move, through their own experience, working there before, or through friends, relatives, and brokers, rather than through government agencies or mass media. Therefore, to effectively direct migrants to alternative destinations, government organizations and mass media should be encouraged to be more involved in providing effective sources of information for migrants rather than letting them find their own information through personal experience and contacts.

Besides asking the source of information for their last destination, migrants were also asked for specific information on whether they had relatives, friends or acquaintances at the place of their last move. Migrant networks are assumed to facilitate the move of newcomers from the same home village, whether the relative, friend, or acquaintance is living at the destination place permanently or temporarily. At the same time, these newcomers will be provided with a better chance of finding work and other resources than migrants who have no network at the destination.

It is seen in Table 3.4 that among male return migrants, 44 percent had friends and

Table 3.3: **Source of Knowledge About the Place of the Last Move Among Migrants by Type of Migration and Gender**

Source of knowledge	Return mig.		Out-mig.	
	M	F	M	F
Ever lived there	29.2	35.4	43.2	49.1
Ever visited there overnight	25.0	22.9	42.0	34.0
Have a close relative there	31.9	31.3	43.2	35.8
Have another relative there	20.8	14.6	14.8	18.9
Have a friend there	54.2	25.0	43.2	32.1
Found work through a broker	16.7	29.2	7.4	9.4
Through the mass media	0.0	0.0	1.2*	0.0
Through a government organization	4.2*	2.1*	7.4	5.7
(N)	(72)	(48)	(81)	(53)

* Number of cases less than 5

acquaintances living at the destination place and 35 percent had relatives; yet nearly one-third (32 percent) had nobody at all. For female return migrants, 38 percent had a relative and 33 percent had friends and acquaintances; 27 percent had none of these persons. A much higher proportion of female than male return migrants had a spouse (21 vs. 3 percent) or siblings (25 vs. 11 percent). Male out-migrants also included a substantial proportion with a relative, friend or acquaintance at the destination place (37 percent); also, 31 percent had siblings, 11 percent had parents, and 10 percent had a spouse awaiting. For the female out-migrants, 51 percent had a relative, 34 percent a friend or acquaintance, 26 percent a sibling and another 23 percent have spouse. While 27 percent of male out-migrants knew no one at the destination, only 9 percent of females were in this position.

The NMS2 data further provide evidence that social networks at the area of destination act as information sources and facilitators for migrant adjustment. Friends/acquaintances and other relatives at the destination are more likely to serve as the migrants' social connection rather than close members of their family, i.e., spouse, children, siblings and parents (see

Table 3.5). One possible explanation for this is that many of the return migrants are seasonal migrants and therefore have their families in the villages to which they return to. The members of their social networks are also more likely to be recent migrants from the same *tambol*, having been in the destination for five years or less, on average. If the social link at the destination is the migrant's sibling, other relatives, friend or acquaintance, the migrant is more likely to receive assistance in finding work at the destination. The migrants are also very likely to stay with the person who served as his/her social link at the destination, except when the social link is one of his/her children. The social linkages at the destination, however, are not likely to provide monetary assistance at the destination. If they did, the migrant's siblings, spouse and parents at the destination were most likely to extend monetary assistance.

It is clearly indicated from these findings that migrants from the Northeastern region have well-developed social networks in their destination area. For no matter what type of migrant they were, a substantial proportion of male and female migrants have relatives, friends, and acquaintances

***Table 3.4:* Percent of Migrants Having Relative or Friend Staying at the Place of the Last Move Before Move by Type of Migration and Gender**

Relative/Friend at Place of the Last Move	Return mig.		Out-mig.	
	M	F	M	F
Spouse	2.8*	20.8	9.9	22.6
Children	2.8*	2.1*	2.5*	0.0
Siblings	11.1	25.0	30.9	26.4
Parents	4.2*	4.2*	11.1	9.4
Other relative	34.7	37.5	37.0	50.9
Friend/acquaintance	44.4	33.3	37.0	34.0
None	31.9	27.1	27.2	9.4
(N)	(72)	(48)	(81)	(53)

* Number of cases less than 5

Table 3.5: Percent of Return Migrants who Availed of Existing Social Networks in the Area of Destination

Characteristics of Person in the Area of Destination	Person who served as the migrant's social link at the area of destination					
	Spouse	Children	Siblings	Parents	Other relatives	Friend or Acquaintance
Person is already at the area of destination when the migrant moved	10.0 (120)	25 (120)	16.7 (120)	4.2 (120)	35.8 (120)	40.0 (120)
Person is from this tambon	50.0 (12)	100.0 (3)	75.0 (20)	20.0 (5)	67.4 (43)	62.5 (48)
No. of years the person has been living there						
Less than 1	41.7	66.7	5.0	20.0	15.0	13.6
1 to 2	8.3	33.3	25.0	0.0	25.0	27.3
3 to 4	8.3	0.0	15.0	0.0	7.5	20.5
5 to 7	8.3	0.0	25.0	0.0	5.0	11.4
8 to 10	0.0	0.0	15.0	20.0	15.0	6.8
11 to 20	8.3	0.0	5.0	0.0	15.0	9.1
21 or more	8.3	0.0	5.0	20.0	12.5	6.8
Since birth	16.7	0.0	5.0	40.0	5.0	4.5
Average duration (in months)	84.4*	4.7	94.8	320.3	131.8*	92.0*
Migrant stayed with this person	83.3	33.3	75.0	60.0	55.8	68.8
Person helped migrant to find work	41.7	33.3	70.0	0.0	58.1	75.0
Person lent money to the migrant	41.7	33.3	45.0	40.0	39.5	33.3

* Estimated mean is based on numeric responses only.
Note: Figures in parentheses refer to the number of cases.

at the destination place. Therefore these migrants gain facilities, security, and may have jobs waiting for them. On the contrary, for those migrants who have no network at all, moving is more risky than for the former group; though some of these migrants may have gone along with friends or relatives who do have networks. There are both males and females in this position, but the number of males is larger. For this group of migrants, there should be some government organization or mass media working as a core agent to provide them with correct and pertinent information so that they will be protected from being exploited, discouraged and maltreated if they cannot find work after their migration.

3.3 Reasons for Moving and Other Aspects of the Decision-Making Process

When asked the reason for their last move in a survey question, the great majority of migrants said that they moved to work and earn money for the household (63 percent). Another 10 percent said that they moved for family reasons, 3 percent for pleasure, and 24 percent had a combination of reasons. It is difficult to learn much about the complexity of the decision-making process from these questions, as rural residents are usually influenced by a variety of factors. For example, why do some members of one family move while others stay? Why do some return for the planting season while others do not? Are migrants really motivated purely by economic reasons or, especially for young people, are they attracted by the excitement of city life? To explore these issues in depth, we asked both return and out-migrants to describe the factors that went into their decisions and their reactions to the migration process.

As with most decisions, migrants weigh the costs and benefits of making a move. These may include an assessment of the cost of living in the destination vs. the origin community.

Q: Then why did you decide to come home?

A: It was getting expensive. We had to pay the rent. And my husband wasn't working. We were also paying for a TV set and a fan.

Q: Was your child born in Bangkok?

A: No, he was born at home here. I had planned it that way. It would have cost at least 10,000 baht to have a baby in Bangkok. Here it only cost 1,000-2,000.

Q: Did you come home around the time you were going to have the baby?

A: No, I came back when I was one month pregnant.

Q: So you had anticipated the cost before and you though you'd probably not be able to manage.

A: Yes, because we had to set aside money for our motorcycle too....

Q: Then why did you go [back] to Bangkok, taking your child with you?

A: We were not doing well financially. I thought going to Bangkok would help in terms of food, but I was wrong because my husband was the only breadwinner. We also had to pay rent.

Q: Did you plan to get a job there?

A: Yes but I couldn't because I had to look after the baby. I had planned to bring home work, but there wasn't any. (Married female return migrant)

Other migrants we interviewed weighed the possibility of making money in an urban area against the amount that they would make by farming. Thus they compared both the amount of money and type of work they would be doing.

Q: Do some people decide against going to Bangkok because they're concerned about their families?

A: There are a few people like that, but not many. Most people go now. They don't grow potatoes or hemp any more.

Q: Why don't they?

A: Because it is a hard job. You have to weed 2 to 3 times before you can get a crop. Going to Bangkok you can make 4,000-5,000 baht a month.

Q: Do people compare the advantages and disadvantages between staying and working on the land and going to Bangkok?

A: They do. They make more money going to Bangkok. (Married-spouse-absent female non-migrant)

Q: Are you going to go home and help your parents grow rice?

A: I'm thinking about that too.

Q: If they need people, are you going to go back and help?

A: We don't have much land. We don't need other people to help; we can manage with those we have.

Q: Tell me honestly, can you farm?

A: No, I can't.

Q: You're a new generation (who didn't get farming experience); would you like to farm?

A: I'd like to but I'm not able to; it's hard work. (Single male Bangkok migrant)

For these two migrants, working in an urban area clearly produced higher income, and in their opinion the work was less hard. For others, the household at home may have a need for their labor. Besides this, they may prefer farming and/or life in the rural community.'

Q: You think you'll leave the village again if you're still single, but not when you're married. Could you tell us why?

A: It's like if I leave my family behind, nobody will help with the work at home. But I want to make more money....I wish I had an income.

Q: In fact, deep down in you heart you don't want to leave the village at all.

A: Nobody does, really, if there was work in the village. (Single male return migrant)

This migrant's feelings were expressed by many others, who compared the lifestyle in Bangkok with that at home in the village. Many mentioned the closeness of family and friends at home; but an equally important issue seemed to be personal freedom.

Q: Did you have any trouble with your job?

A: No; the only trouble is that every time I have to leave home, I miss it a lot.

Q: Can you tell us how this feels- why are you so attached to home?

A: It's like here I'm free to go wherever I want. Over there if I want to go some place for a day I think I'm going to lose a day's wages.

Q: Any other problems besides homesickness? How about adjustment problems?

A: I had to try to be considerate of other people because I worked with a lot of people. I had to try to share. (Single male return migrant)

Q: Do you think you will go find work somewhere again?

A: I don't want to anymore. I don't like working for someone because you have to do as they tell you to do. It's like going to school. When you work for someone you only get Sundays off....

Q: You mean you have no freedom.

A: It's like I have no time to myself. No time to rest. (Married female return migrant)

Q: Which would you choose- a life in Bangkok or a life upcountry?

A: It's hard to say. If there was a regular job here that pays regular money, it's nice to be here. It's easier to get jobs in Bangkok, but the cost of living is high, the traffic is bad, and there are a lot of accidents.

Q: If we don't consider the money aspect, only the environment, which do you like better?

A: I like our home. The air is clean. I can grow vegetables or raise animals. It's impossible to do that in Bangkok, it's too crowded. (Married female return migrant)

But many interviewees, especially the young people, were able to name positive aspects of their migration to Bangkok. There was an attraction to the city, to seeing new things and gaining work experience, even if they ultimately preferred the rural lifestyle.

Q: What was the purpose of coming to Bangkok for the first time?

A: To make money.

Q: Were there any other reasons for leaving home, like getting bored with life in the country?

A: I didn't want to go. I just wanted to make more money so my father would have a better, easier life....All my friends are at home though.

Q: Then why did you leave?

A: I wanted to get some experience working far away from home. I wanted to learn about things, about what the [central] Thai people were like; about the society.

Q: So what did you find out?

A: Oh, it was not too exciting. I was disappointed. I found that the people are selfish. They take advantage of you...

Q: Did you get good experience in what you do? Have you learned your trade?

A: Yes, Bangkok's a good place for that. I didn't know about anything when I was home.

Q: Do you enjoy the Bangkok lifestyle?

A: I like the upcountry lifestyle. Like when you're sick people take care of you, my parents are concerned about me, while in Bangkok you have to care for yourself. (Single male Bangkok migrant)

Q: What's good about living in Bangkok?

A: It's taught me to look out for myself, to earn a living because it's different from home. Here one doesn't have to work to survive, but you have to work in Bangkok.

Q: So Bangkok's taught you to work.

A: It's not a fun place to live though. You can't find as good friends as you can upcountry.

Q: Does living in Bangkok help you to meet more people? Is this working to your benefit?

A: Yes, it's good for work. It helps me communicate and it puts you at ease. (Single female Bangkok migrant)

Q: What was the purpose of your first trip- to find work or to find experience in life?

A: I saw people go [to Bangkok] and they were nice-looking young women when they came back. They looked nice and white and wore nice clothes. I was very dark when I was young. I wanted nice clothes too for the Songkran festival or for the Kathin. I though if I went to Bangkok my skin would be nice and smooth. My friends had all turned out to be pretty young women; I was like a late bloomer. I saw them come back in beautiful, fashionable clothes. I thought one day I'd learn how to sew, and learn about high fashion. I'd design for poor girls so they'd look good too....

Q: Which place is a better place to live?

A: Well, home is nice. I have lots of friends. It's a warm environment. My parents and relatives are all here. Only it lacks all the conveniences of the city. It doesn't have all you need like Bangkok, but Bangkok is a lonely place. (Divorced female return migrant)

Several younger migrants mentioned that they would prefer to stay home once they married and had children. Yet as we have seen in Chapter 2, many married respondents with children migrate seasonally to supplement family income. Many reported that they were motivated by economic factors alone.

Q: When you last went to [another district] to get a job planting rice, what made you decide to go there?

A: The crop here was not enough to feed the family. We needed to grow more. (Married female return migrant)

Q: So you went to cut sugar cane at Nakorn Pathom just to make some money?

A: That's right.

Q: Not because you were bored with home?

A: No, I'm never bored with home. (Married male return migrant)

Q: Do you plan to go again?

A: Yes, every year.

Q: How long are you going to keep doing this before you settle down at home for good?

A: A long time. Not now.

Q: Until when?

A: When I have everything; when I have enough money....

Q: Can you give me some examples of things you'd like to own? Things that will help you decide to stay home for good?

A: A job here, enough money to spend, rice to eat, some land to work on. If I had all these, I'd never leave. (Married male return migrant)

But some older return migrants said that they did enjoy their experiences migrating.

Q: Why did you decide to be a taxi driver?

A: Well, I wanted to see what it was like when they first had the meters installed.

Q: You had been driving a regular taxi before?

A: Yes.

Q: Any other reasons?

A: I wanted to make some money.

Q: Did you really want to go?

A: At first I wanted to try it for two months, but when I got there I stayed for almost a year.

Q: Why?

A: It was fun.

Q: What was your income like?

A: Very good. Much better than it used to be.

Q: What did you mean by "fun"?

A: Oh, I had fun with my fellow taxi drivers. (Married male return migrant)

These interviews help to show how rural residents are often torn between their ability to make money in the city, the curiosity about seeing new things, and the warmth and security of rural life. Thus though most respond to a survey questionnaire that they migrated "to work", in reality they are pushed and pulled by competing forces, not all of which are economic.

3.4 Conclusion

This chapter reviewed the factors that contribute to the decision to migrate. The family has a strong influence on the decision-making process, particularly parents (for young people) and spouses (for married people); but wives were more likely to report that they consulted their spouse about the decision than husbands. Non-migrants were found to have faced discouragement from family members, which appear to have had an influence on their decision. As found in previous studies, migrants have strong social networks at the destination, particularly in regards to friends.

Many factors go into the decision to migrate, including the costs and benefits of moving, the type of work at the origin and the destination, family ties, personal freedom, and life experience. Even when economic reasons are the overriding factor, migrants vary in the degree to which they have other reasons for moving. For many young people, migration seems to be a rite of passage through which they gain life experiences. Many expressed the desire to settle down at home once they marry and have a family, yet many continue to migrate seasonally to bring in extra income. These older return migrants often expressed negative feelings about their need to migrate. Since the group of respondents interviewed were all recent or return migrants (having been resident in rural Isan in 1992), they may have strong attachments to home that more long-term migrants do not. Still the desire to stay home expressed by most respondents is likely to be felt by many rural Northeasterners, and many stated that they would not migrate if they could make enough income at home. The policy implications of this finding are discussed in later chapters.

Chapter 4
Remittances and Dependence on Migrant Earnings

One of the major goals of the Northeast follow-up project was to collect detailed information on the remittance process. The rural Northeast has had high mobility levels for some time; and as we have discussed, much of this mobility is temporary. This implies that a significant proportion of household support over the course of the year is earned by migrants, particularly in regards to cash income. However, it has been difficult to obtain reliable estimates of the amount of remittances received and/or sent, and of the degree of dependence of families on resources earned outside of the household. One reason for this is that the wording of the questions most commonly asked in surveys do not address the ways that households actually receive remittances. Most often, questions on remittances ask about money (and sometimes goods) that are *sent* to the household from someone living somewhere else. There are several problems with this form of the question. Often remittances are not actually sent by a migrant from another place, but brought back when he or she returns home from working elsewhere. This is particularly true for seasonal migrants, but also holds for longer term migrants who bring money home when they come for a visit. Second, survey questions often ask respondents to estimate the average amount they receive from all remittance sources over a specified time period (often one year). This is a particularly difficult task when mobility levels are high; for more accurate recall the question should be based on actual migration spells for household members, or on a shorter time period such as a season. Finally, when survey questions refer only to those living outside the household, they often miss remittances from current household members who had migrated at some point but subsequently returned to live in the household.

To address this potential underestimation of remittance income, the NMS2 survey was designed to address the actual and varied methods that households received remittances. The design incorporated three possible ways that households received income from outside, with the questions phrased as follows:

In the past 2 years has your household:

> [ ] *Received anything from someone who came to visit*
> [ ] *Received anything sent from somewhere else, through the mail, bank, or another person bringing it*
> [ ] *Received anything that someone from the household brought back with them when they returned from living somewhere else*

The survey used the two years since the previous survey as the frame of reference for remittances. This aided the respondent's recollection because this time period was fresh in their mind, as they had just outlined events since the previous survey. Remittance questions were asked just after respondents had outlined the migration status of each household member in the household questionnaire; or had just given detail on their own life history events in the individual questionnaire. Hence migration of household members of the past two years could be directly referred to by the interviewer.

Questions on remittances were asked in both the household questionnaire and the individual questionnaire. The household questionnaire asked about all remittances received by the household, while the individual questionnaire asked about remittances contributed by the individual selected for the 1992 survey only. If the individual respondent from the NMS was no longer living in the household, family members were asked about remittances received from that person. In the discussion of results that follows, data from the household survey is analyzed to report results on total remittances received and the degree of dependence on remittance income. Data from the individual survey is used to gain an understanding of which migrants are more likely to remit and the amount that they remit. Besides presenting results from the household and individual surveys, insight into the remittance process is gained through presentation of qualitative evidence provided by the in-depth interviews.

4.1 Remittances Received by Households and Method of Transference

Overall, the survey found that fully 80 percent of households received some form of remittance (whether in the form of goods, cash or both) in the past two years, and all three methods of receiving remittances were important (Table 4.1). Two-thirds of the households received money or goods from family members when they came to visit, while over 40 percent of households received support from those who sent remittances from another place (44 percent) and/or had a household member who brought back money or goods when they returned from living in another place (42 percent). This finding underscores the importance of asking detailed

and complete questions about the remittance process. For the most part, non-cash remittances were mainly given to the household by visitors; only a few households received goods that were sent from another place or brought back by a family member. The most common gifts brought by visitors other than cash were food (received by 42 percent of households) and clothing (34 percent); other types of goods were received by only a few households. Fully 71 percent of households received some form of cash remittance in the past two years, and cash remittances had far more significant value than that of goods. It is interesting that the amount of cash brought back by household members was lower on average (3,900 baht) than that received from visitors (4,000) or sent from elsewhere (5,000). Presumably this is because return migrants, who migrate for a shorter period and are more likely to migrate to rural areas, make less income than out-migrants; as outlined in Chapter 2, seasonal migrants are more likely to move to rural areas to do agricultural work, while out-migrants are more likely to move to urban areas (particularly Bangkok).

The likelihood that a household received remittances increased greatly if household members migrated in the past two years. As seen in Figure 4.1, about half of the households with no migrants received money or goods, mainly from visitors, with about one-fifth receiving them sent from another place. Households with migrants were much more likely to receive remittances (over 90 percent), but the method varied by whether the household had return migrants or out-migrants. Those with return migrants had the highest proportion receiving remittances through a household member bringing them back when they returned home (nearly 80 percent). However they often received them when a family member came to visit also; this could have been through a visit by the migrant while they were still living in another place. Households with out-migrants most often received remittances from visitors, again likely because the out-migrant returned for a visit; but a large proportion also received remittances sent from another place.

As seen in Figure 4.2, the average amount of remittances differed by the method of transfer, whether there were migrants in the household and the type of migrants. Households with no migrants only received remittances from visitors to any substantial degree, and the amount was less than 2,000 baht on average over the two-year period. Households with return migrants received on average about half of the total remittances when the household member returned home, though a substantial amount came from visitors as well (about 2,150 baht); this could be from the return migrant themselves when they were home for a visit. In contrast the bulk of remittances for households with out-migrants came from visitors. This is likely to be the out-migrant themselves when they came home for a visit, and it is interesting that a much lower proportion was

Table 4.1: **Percentage of Households Reporting Receiving Remittances from Family Members Living Outside the Household in the Past Two Years and Median Value, by Type of Remittance and Method (N=516)**

Type of Remittance	Visit	Sent	Brought	By any method
Total	67	44	42	80
Median total value**	4575	4000	4000	9950
Food	42	7	12	48
Clothes	34	6	11	41
Household goods	16	2	4	29
Appliances	14	<1	8	21
Motorcycle	<1	*	<1	1
Building materials	4	<1	2	5
Gold	9	<1	2	11
Median value of goods**	1000	500	600	1240
Cash	55	41	40	71
Median value of cash**	4000	5000	3900	9050

* Not asked
** Of those receiving remittance.

Figure 4.1 **Households Receiving Remittances by Method and Migrant Status**

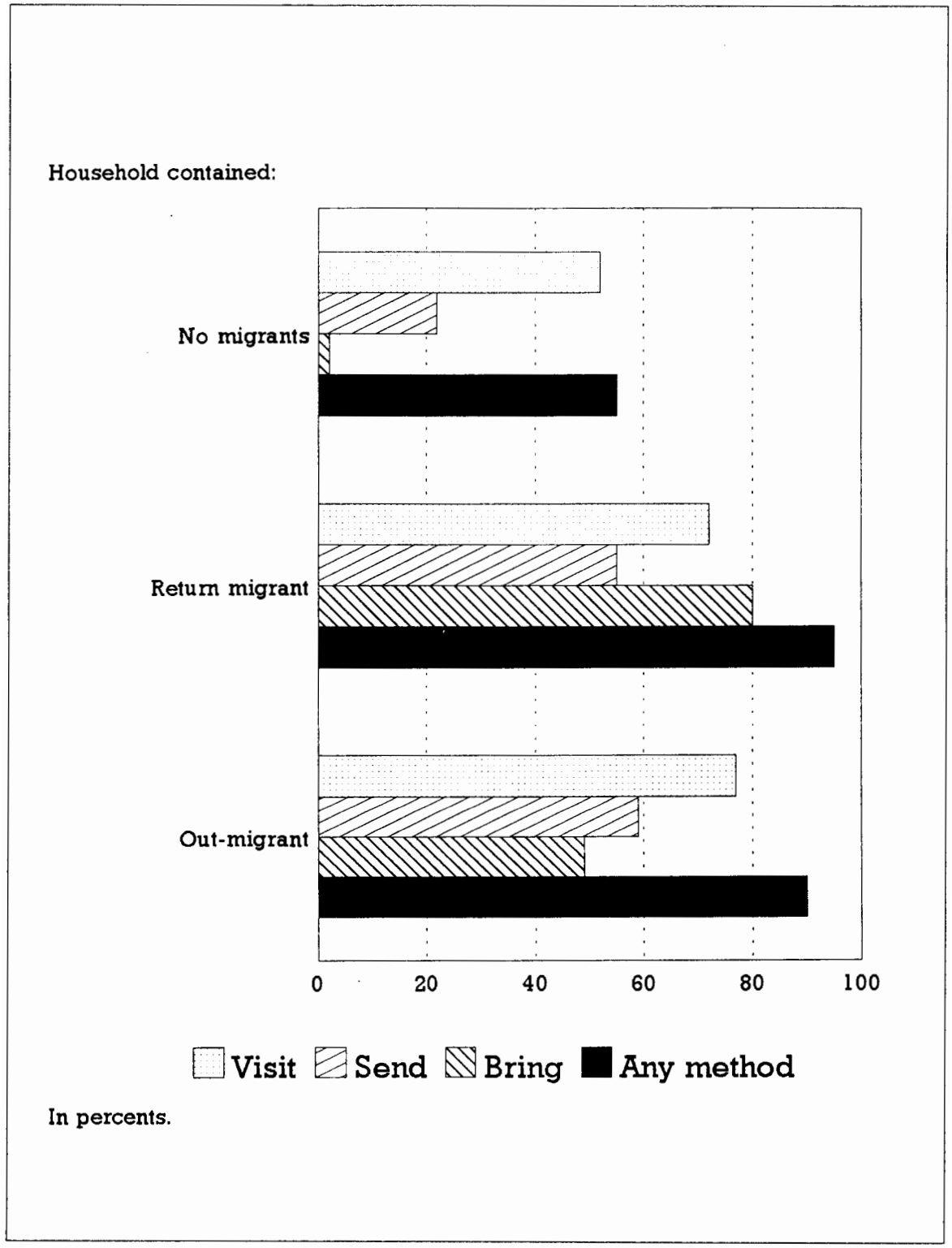
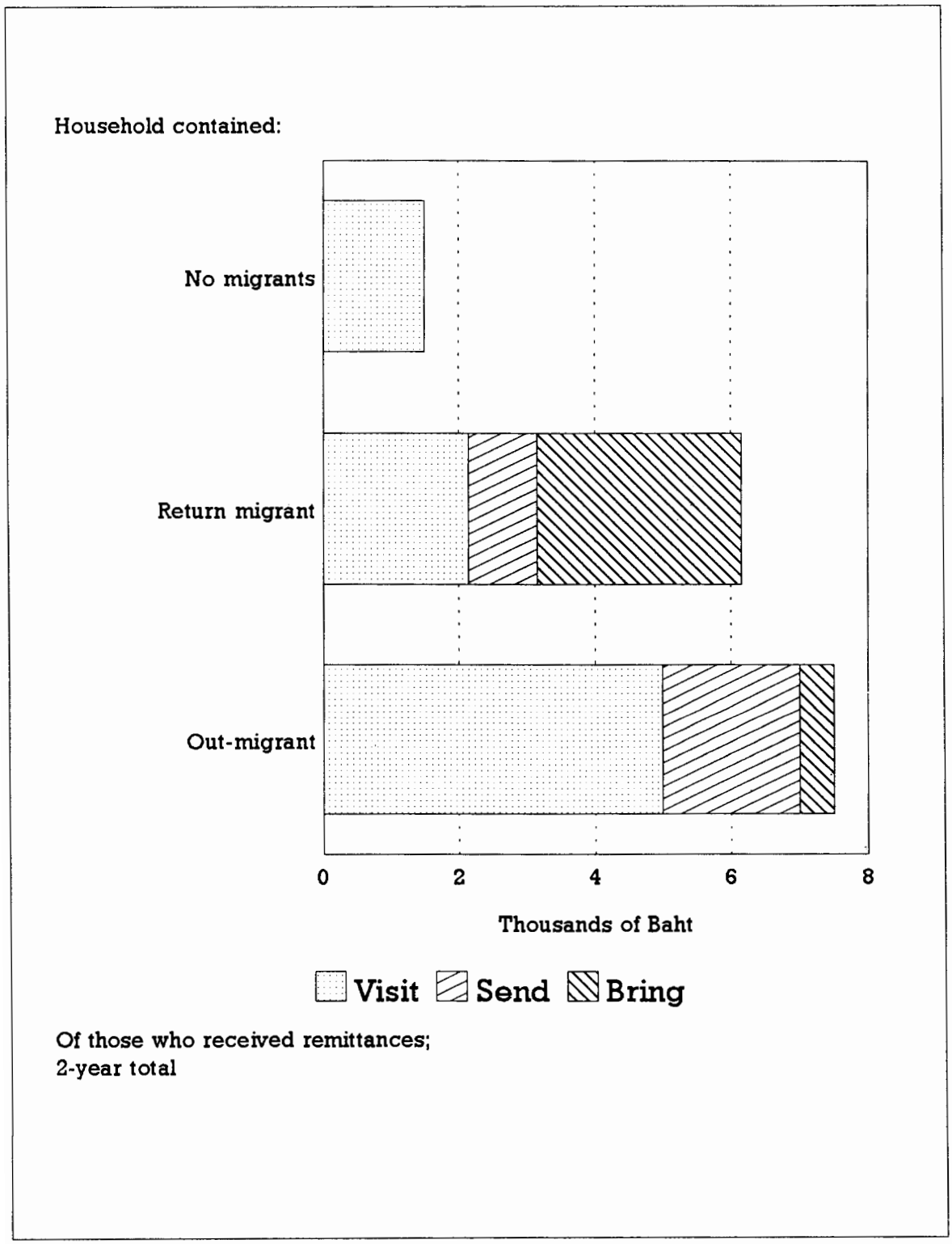


Figure 4.2: **Median Amount of Remittances by Method and Migrant Status**



sent from elsewhere. This finding reinforces the likelihood of underestimation of remittances based on questions about money sent from elsewhere only.

4.2 Migrant Remittance Patterns

Besides asking about households' total remittances received over the past two years, the survey also asked about remittances sent by the individual respondents who had migrated. As mentioned above, if the individual was a return migrant, they themselves reported on their remittances; if they were an out-migrant, family members were asked about that person's remittances. Differences in remittance patterns between the two groups may thus be due either to the type of migration or to the source of the information.

As seen in Table 4.2, a high proportion of return migrants (89 percent) and out-migrants (94 percent) remitted to the household. The method of remittance varied by migration type: nearly all of the return migrants who remitted brought back cash or goods when they returned home, and about one-third sent remittances from where they were living or brought them home on a visit. Out-migrants used a greater variety of methods, with visits being the most frequent. The gender difference, in that a higher percentage of male return migrants remitted than females (92 vs. 85 percent), is of interest since previous research has found that Thai women are more likely to remit than men (Guest, Richter and Archavanitkul 1993). This gender gap disappears however when only those who migrated for work are considered; as we have seen earlier a higher proportion of women migrate for non-work-related reasons. Still, the remittance levels for men, and particularly for out-migrants (92 percent), are much higher than those found by previous research. Male out-migrants were much more likely to send remittances from elsewhere than females (43 vs. 24 percent), perhaps indicating a greater dependency by households on their support and/or a lower frequency for males returning to visit.

As mentioned above, those who migrated for work reasons were generally more likely to remit, though the difference is strongly related to gender; a high proportion of males who said they migrated for family or other reasons also remitted. As regards to the position of the migrant in the household, return migrants generally remitted no matter what their relationship to the head. Children were less likely to remit if they out-migrated, particularly if they were married; daughters who had left the household were more likely to remit than sons however. Perhaps surprisingly, Bangkok migrants were more likely to remit than those to other destinations, and the gap is particularly great for out-migrants. Though this may be related to higher earnings in Bangkok, expenses there are also assuredly higher, as is the distance from the home community in most cases. This finding may be related to

Table 4.2: **Percent of Individuals Remitting by Type of Migration, Gender and Other Characteristics**

Selected Characteristics	Return migrants			Out-migrants		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Total	92	85	89	92	96	94
Method of remittance:						
Visit	28	33	30	58	54	56
Send	22	38	28	43	24	35
Bring	92	81	88	24	13	19
Reason for migration:						
Work	96	97	96	76	80	73
Family	67	0	33	67	53	58
Other	93	73	79	62	44	61
Position in household:						
Head/spouse	98	82	93	100	-	100
Unmarried child	87	83	86	67	77	69
Married child	100	86	91	56	67	58
Destination:						
Bangkok	100	89	94	86	76	82
Other urban	92	75	88	60	81	69
Rural	92	76	86	72	53	65
(N)	(72)	(48)	(120)	(80)	(54)	(134)

the fact that a higher proportion of Bangkok migrants went there specifically to work.

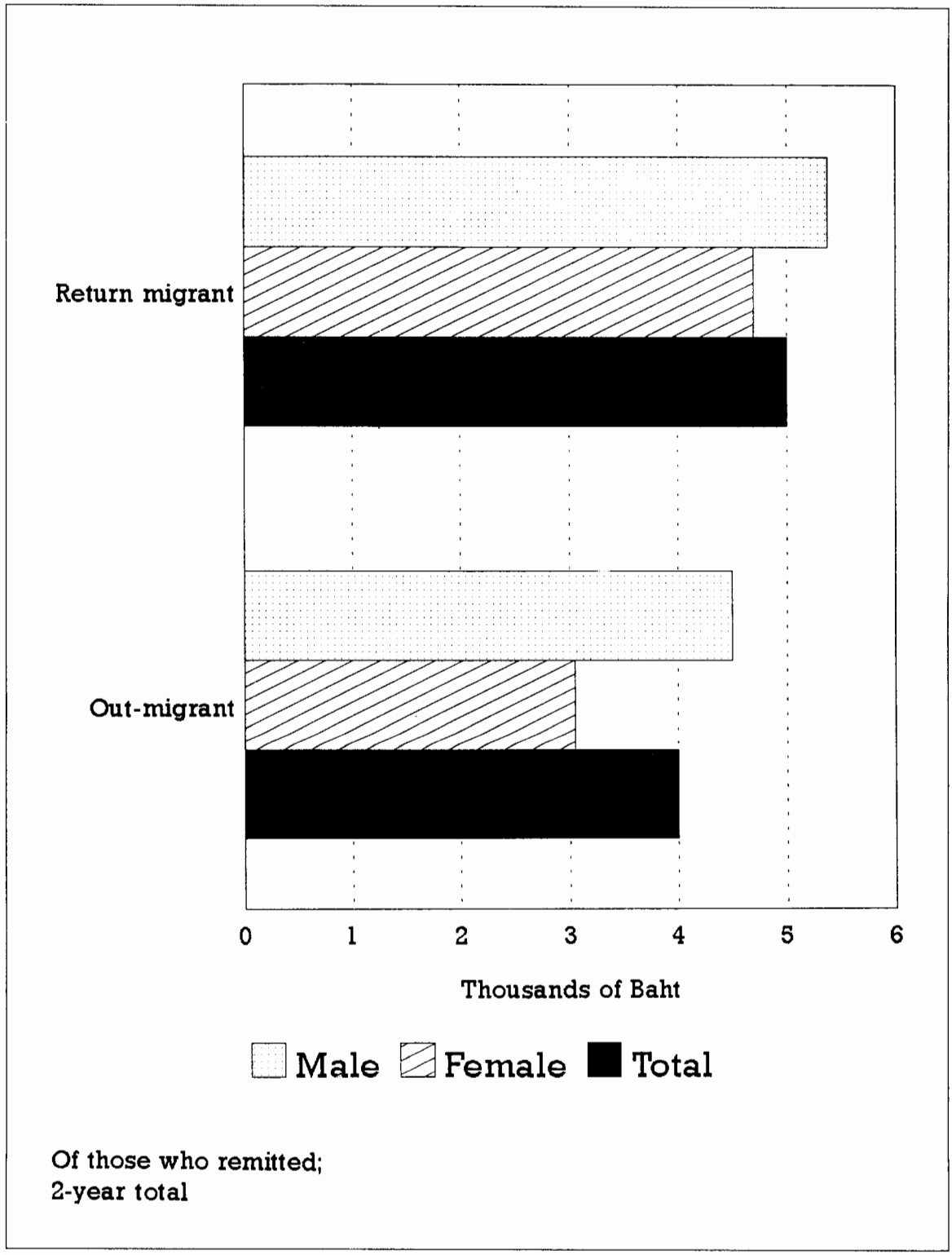
If the individual return migrant or the family of the out-migrant stated that they had not remitted in the past two years by any method, they were asked the reasons for not remitting (Table 4.3). The number of cases in each category is small. Female return migrants who did not remit mainly said that they did not migrate for work reasons (78 percent), as did about one-third of female out-migrants. A considerable proportion of both male and female out-migrants also said that they did not have enough earnings in the place where they migrated. Many gave an unspecified reason for not remitting, indicating that the reason was particular to the situation.

Figure 4.3 shows the median amount remitted by gender and migrant status. Unfortunately the small number of cases in each category do not allow breaking this down any further. As expected men's remittances are greater than women due to their greater earning power, and though we have seen that a greater percentage of out-migrants remit, the amounts over a two-year period are generally smaller. Further analysis will relate the amount of remittances to the number of months that household members were away.

Table 4.3: Reason Given for Not Remitting by Migrant Status and Gender

Reason	Return migrant		Out-migrant	
	M	F	M	F
Not enough earnings in that place	25	0	30	25
Problem in that place	0	11	5	0
Did not migrate for work	25	78	15	31
Family doesn't need remittances	0	0	20	0
Other	50	11	30	44
(N)	(4)	(9)	(20)	(16)

Figure 4.3: **Median Amount Remitted by Gender and Migrant Status**



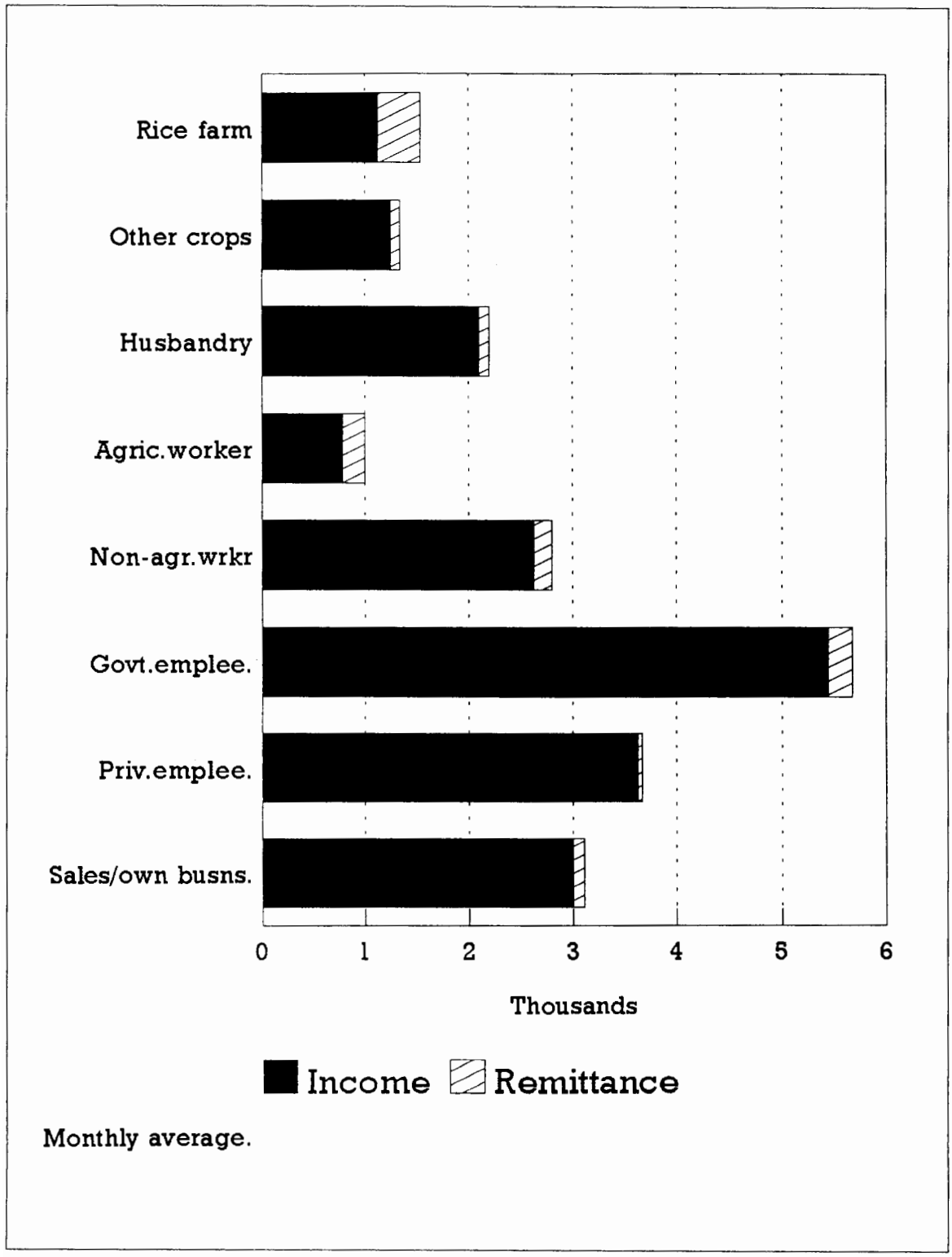
4.3 Dependence on Remittances

Most critical to the study of remittances in a community with high out-migration is an understanding of the degree to which households are dependent upon earnings from outside the home community for their livelihood. Care was taken in the NMS2 survey to estimate household income, often a difficult prospect in agricultural households which do not have a regular source of cash income. Interviewers asked about the amount of agricultural product sold over the past year and the price obtained. This was added to estimates of income earned from other sources to calculate average monthly income. No attempt was made however to estimate income in-kind, for example the amount of agricultural product consumed by the household. It should be noted also that the income estimates represent gross income, as the cost of agricultural inputs is not deducted from the total. In the following presentation on the degree of support provided by remittances, two-year remittance data have been converted to a monthly average as well.

Dependence on remittances varies greatly based on the source of income in the household. As seen in Figure 4.4, households that receive most of their earnings from non-agricultural work have much higher monthly income levels. Thus though the average amount of monthly remittance is nearly as high as that in agricultural households, the proportion of total income received through remittances is much lower. Rice farming households have the highest levels of remittance income, followed by agricultural worker households; these two types also have the lowest base levels of household income. It is interesting that although households which farm crops other than rice have higher incomes than rice-farming households, their lower levels of remittances result in lower total income. This may be because other types of farming require year-round work and do not allow household members to migrate elsewhere on a seasonal basis.

Dependence on remittances also varies by the number and type of migrants in the household. As seen in Figure 4.5, households who did not have a household member migrate elsewhere and return in the past two years actually have higher base incomes than those who did; they also received only a small amount of income from remittances. In other words, higher income households did not use temporary migration as an economic strategy, presumably because they did not have the need to do so. Those who had one return migrant gained substantially from remittances, but not enough to "catch up" to households with no return migrants. If there were two adult return migrants in the household, the level of remittances was high; and these households had higher total incomes than those with no migrants. However, these households also had higher base incomes than those with only one return migrant. This implies that

Figure 4.4: **Monthly Income and Remittances by Main Source of Household Income**



households with two migrants also had greater resources, such as land and adults to provide labor. Finally, households with three or more adult return migrants do not receive greater amounts of remittance income than those with two; they also have lower base incomes, possibly indicating a lesser degree of connection between the household and the migrants (who may be a sub-family or several adult children).

In Figure 4.6 the degree of support from remittances for households by the number of out-migrants in the past two years is shown. As with the finding for return migrants, households with no out-migrants have the highest base incomes. But there is little difference between having one out-migrant and two out-migrants: those with two out-migrants start out with slightly lower income, but remittance income is slightly higher so that these households end up slightly ahead. But households with three out-migrants have very low incomes, and though they receive the highest levels of remittances it is not enough to "catch up" to those with fewer out-migrants.

If Figure 4.5 and 4.6 are compared, it is seen that households with two or more out-migrants have lower base incomes than those with two or more return migrants; they also have lower levels of remittances. Households with one out-migrant however do slightly better than those with one return migrant, but mainly because they have higher base incomes. Overall, the highest income households are those with no out-migrants and those with two or more return migrants. These findings provide evidence that households who have enough resources to provide a basic level of income are often able to successfully supplement it through seasonal and temporary migration. Lower income households, who may be landless and/or lack other resources, may be more likely to have members migrate out of the household on a more long-term basis; and these same households do not receive remittances at a level that would lift them out of poverty. This issue will be explored further with more extensive analysis of the factors that drive both migration and remittances. This analysis will include refining the calculations for household income by estimating per capita income, and controlling for the number of migrants in the household and the length of time they were away.

4.4 Use of Remittances

Both the household and the individual survey asked about how remittances were used by the household. The goal of these questions was to see how remittance income fit into a continuum of need. At the extreme end of this continuum would be households who could not have survived without remittance income: who could not have bought food and other household necessities without them. Other households may have produced enough food for their own use, but needed remittances for items that required cash: to

Figure 4.5: **Monthly Income and Remittances by Number of Return Migrants**

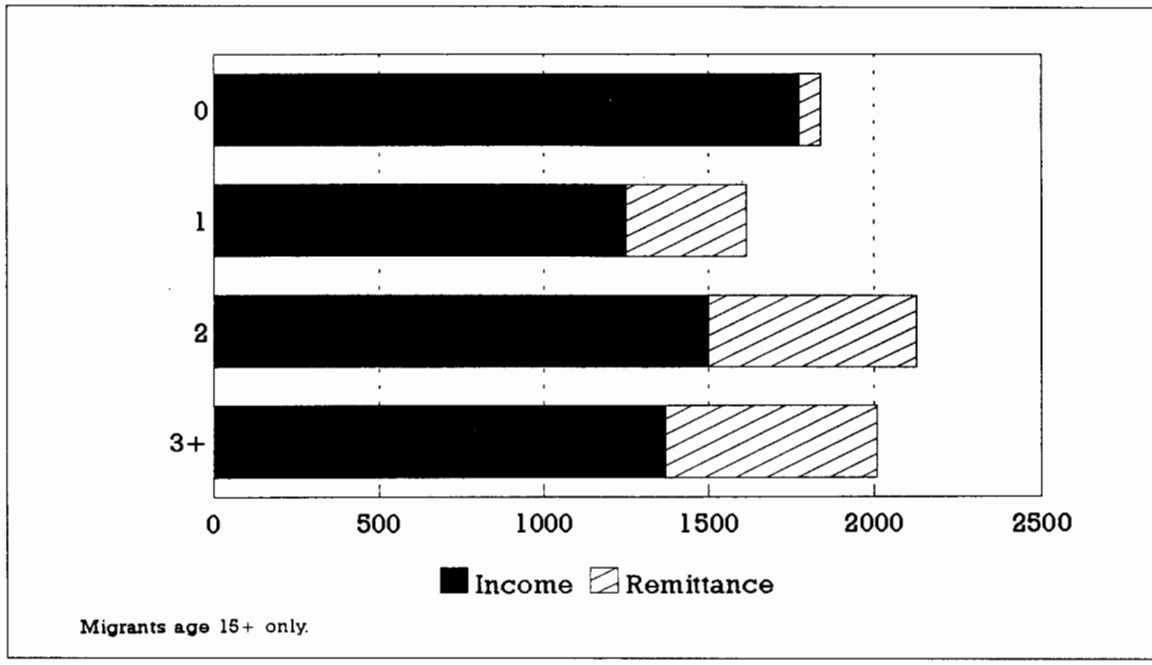
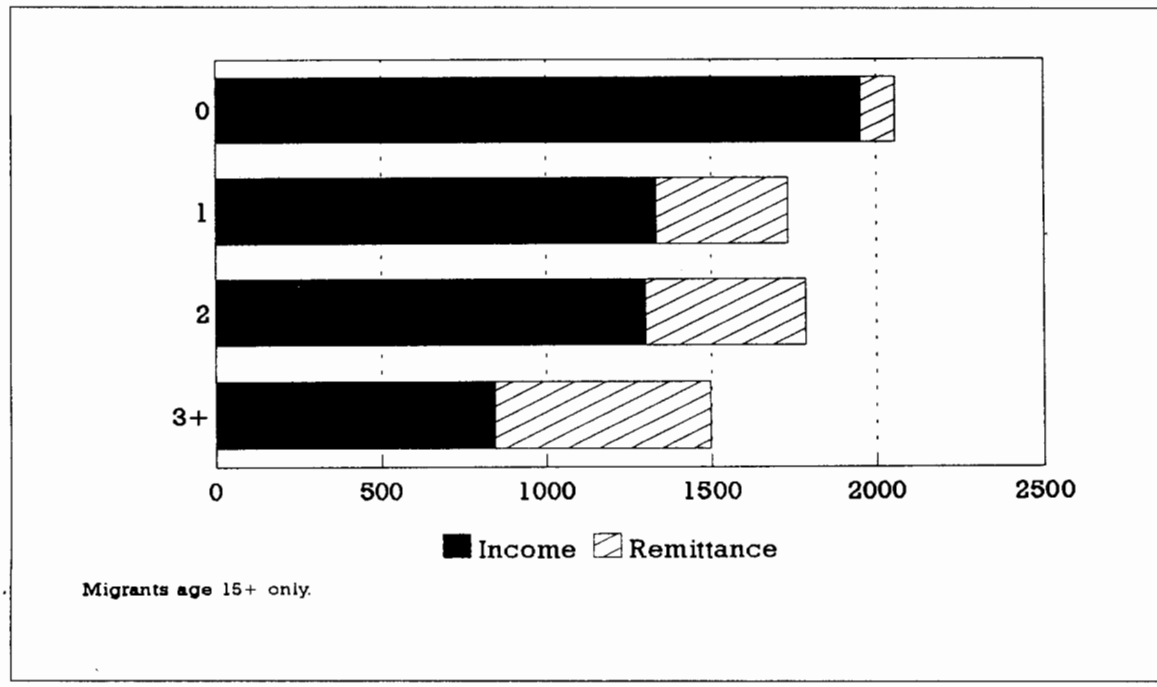


Figure 4.6: **Monthly Income and Remittances by Number of Out-Migrants**



purchase agricultural inputs, to pay off a debt, pay medical expenses, or make an investment in their children's future by sending them to school. Still others may substantially improve their quality of life through remittances, by improving housing quality or buying a vehicle. Finally some households may only use remittances for recreation, ceremonies, and other non-essential items.

Respondents to the household questionnaire were read a list of possible uses for the remittances they had just reported receiving in the past two years, and asked whether they were used for this purpose or not. In the individual questionnaire, respondents were asked about the uses for their own remittances only; in the case of return migrants, individuals were asked about the way that the household used their remittances, while for out-migrants other family members were asked how they used remittances from that person. In the individual questionnaire respondents were also asked whether they would have been able to buy the specific item if they had *not* received the remittances; and they were also asked the three most important uses of the remittance income.

As seen in Figure 4.7, use of remittance income by households is heavily weighted towards household necessities, including food, clothing, household goods, and seeing a doctor or buying medicine. Over 70 percent said that they used remittance income to buy food. Other frequently stated uses were for their own or their children's education; to buy fertilizer or seeds; or to pay off a debt. These are all expenses that require cash income, and in the case of the latter two uses, may be essential to the maintenance of the farm enterprise. Making merit by giving money to the temple was another frequently reported use of remittance income; this is another expense requiring cash, and many may feel an obligation to give some proportion of remittances as a way of making merit. More than 20 percent of households responded that they used remittance income to play the lottery or to buy whiskey or cigarettes; yet few reported making purchases of such non-essential items as appliances or furniture.

Table 4.4 shows reports of the use by households of remittances received by individual migrants. Results are similar to that found for household reports of remittance use except that higher levels of use are reported for several of the items. Also, return migrants were significantly more likely to report that their remittances were used to buy certain items than were the families of out-migrants. These were clothing, household goods, education, housing improvements, paying off a debt, making merit, playing the lottery or buying whiskey or cigarettes. This may be because return migrants' income provides a more significant level of support than that sent by out-migrants, or because migrants themselves are more likely to stress the importance of remittances than the families that receive them. In some cases, such as clothing or household

Figure 4.7: **Use of Remittances as Reported by Households**

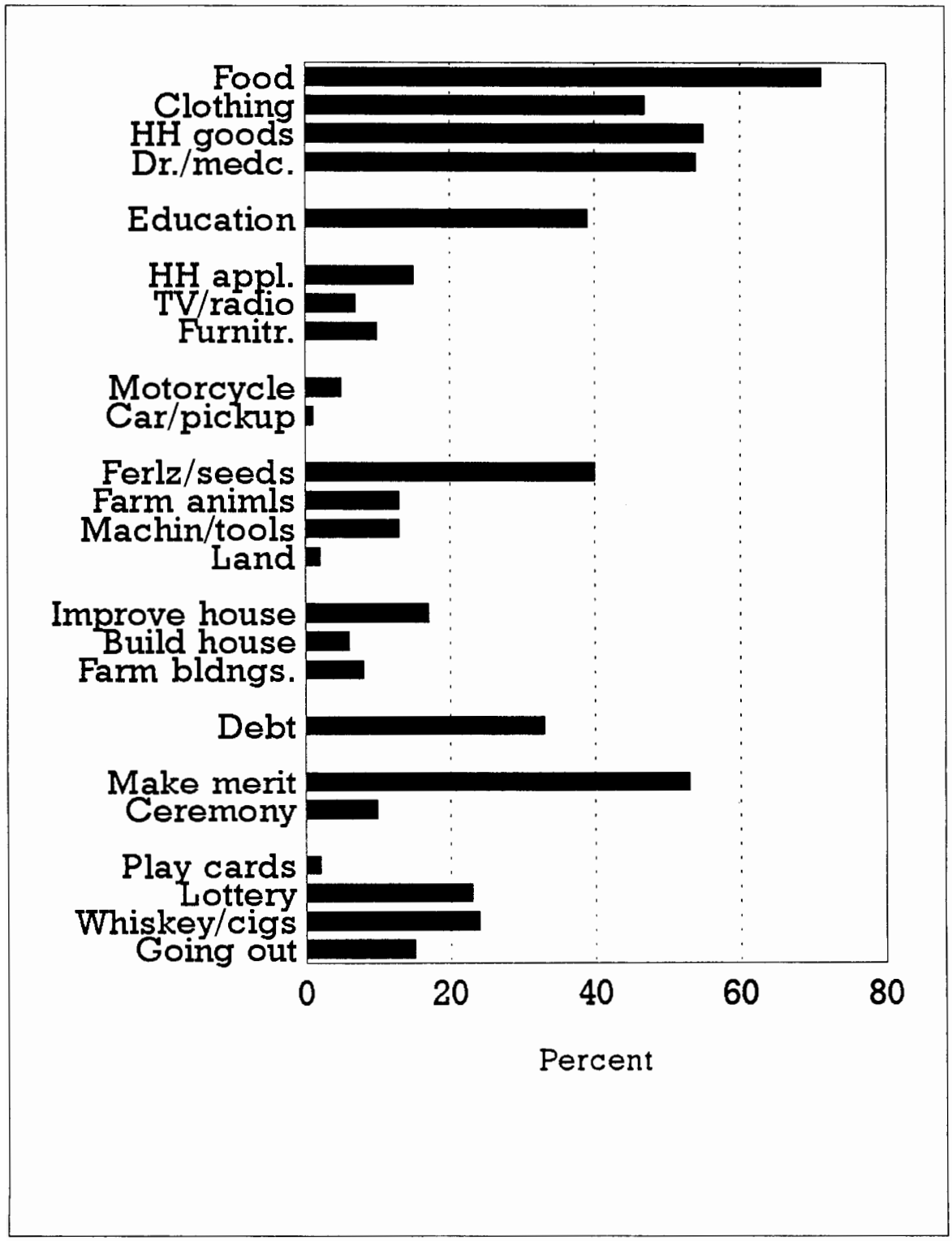


Table 4.4: **Uses of Remittance Income as Reported by Return Migrants (N=107) and by the Families of Out-Migrants (N=92), for Those Receiving Remittances Only**

Uses of Remittance	Used remittances for		Could not have bought without			
			Total		Of those who used	
	Ret	Out	Ret	Out	Ret	Out
Necessities:						
Food	94	88	12	18	13	20
Clothing	68*	53*	14	12	21	23
Household goods	79*	65*	12	12	16	19
Doctor/medicine	68	65	12	14	18	22
Education	56**	39**	10*	13*	18	34
Non-essential items:						
Appliances	20	15	9	8	48	50
TV/Radio	9	9	4	6	40	63
Furniture	13	8	6	4	46	43
Vehicle:						
Motorcycle	7	5	5	3	63	75
Car/pick-up	2	1	1	0	50	0
Agricultural inputs:						
Fertilizer/seeds	49	39	13	17	27	44
Farm animals	16	13	7	3	41	25
Land	1	3	1	0	100*	0*
Labor costs	6	9	0	1	0	13
Farm buildings	8	10	0	2	0	22
Housing:						
Improvements	27**	10**	14**	4**	52	50
New house	3	5	2	1	67	25
Debt	50*	32*	15*	11*	31	36
Ceremonial:						
Making merit	73*	59*	8	9	10	15
Wedding/funeral	8	12	1	6	13	46
Recreational:						
Playing cards	5	1	5	1	80	100
Playing lottery	36	24	7*	10*	18	41
Whiskey/cigts.	40*	21*	10*	7*	26	32
Going out for fun	22	17	5	3	21	20

Significance of chi-square measuring difference between return migrants and out-migrants:
** .01 * .05

goods, the migrant may be referring to gifts that they brought back to the household.

Even though a high proportion reported using remittances for household expenditures, only a small proportion said they could not have made these purchases without this income. This may be because in the case of necessities such as food, the household would have managed somehow without remittances, even if it was extremely difficult. For this reason, while food (94 percent), household goods (79 percent) and making merit (73 percent) were uses for return migrants' remittances for a substantial proportion of households, the percentage who could not have purchased essential household items is much lower (12 to 14 percent). The most frequent items that respondents from return migrants' households said that they could not have afforded without this income were paying off a debt (15 percent), improving their house (14 percent), buying clothing (14 percent) or buying fertilizer/seeds (13 percent); education was also frequently mentioned (10 percent). In other words, these were the uses which were at the margin for these households, where remittances made a significant difference between being able to do them or not. For return migrants then, it can be said that while remittances aided most households' survival, they made the difference for the greatest proportion of households in uses that required cash, particularly those which sustained the farm enterprise. For households of out-migrants, the findings are similar, except that a higher proportion said that remittances were essential to buy food (18 percent) and medical expenses (13 percent). Since we have seen above that households with out-migrants also tend to have lower incomes, it is not surprising that they are more likely to be dependent on remittances for their survival.

To look at it another way, the last two columns in Table 4.4 show the proportion of those using remittances for the item who said this income was essential. For example while few households of return migrants bought a motorcycle with remittance income (5 percent), nearly two-thirds of them (63 percent) could not have done so without this income. When analyzed this way, many of the non-essential items that were only reported as purchased with remittances by a few were nevertheless only possible with this income, such as buying a vehicle, buying land, building a new house or playing cards. But fully one-third of out-migrant households who used remittances for educational expenses could not have continued education for themselves or their children without them; nearly half could not have bought fertilizer/seeds, and about one-third could not have paid off a debt.

Finally, when asked to prioritize the uses of remittance income respondents (Table 4.5), it is seen that those receiving remittances from out-migrants were more likely to say that household necessities were the

top priority than return migrants (62 vs. 48 percent). However, the proportion who placed necessities in the top three were about the same for the two groups. Agricultural inputs such as fertilizer were also often mentioned as a priority, but in this case the proportion was higher for return migrants, who may be more likely to be farming than out-migrants. Education, housing, and paying off a debt were the next most frequent priorities.

4.5 Qualitative Findings on Remittance Use and Dependence

These findings are given background through our in-depth interviews with migrants and with households who received a substantial amount of support from outside their household. When migrants were asked in in-depth interviews about their family's need for remittances,

Table 4.5: **Priority of Remittance Use for Major Categories by Migrant Status**

Uses of Remittance	First priority		In top three	
	Return migrant	Out-migrant	Return migrant	Out-migrant
Necessities	48	62	89	84
Education	4	4	14	19
Non-essential goods	1	0	6	2
Vehicle	4	2	6	5
Agricultural inputs	20	14	43	28
Housing	9	8	14	13
Debt	8	6	18	11
Ceremonial	3	2	8	12
Recreational	4	1	6	4
Total	100	100	*	*
(N)	106	84	107	92

and the uses that were made of them, there were a wide range of answers. The following illustrations show the continuum of need for remittances as reported by the migrants interviewed. At one end of the continuum are households who did not depend on remittances from the respondent at all. These migrants reported that their family did not need their income, and that earnings made from migration were mainly for their own use. In some cases this was because other household members were mainly responsible for the household's support. Often these were young, single migrants on their first trip away from home.

Q: When you were away in both Saudi Arabia and in Bangkok, did you worry about the family here?

A: No.

Q: Why not?

A: I was busy making money for my survival. I didn't even have money to send home. I thought my oldest brother was taking good care of them.

Q: You thought they were in good hands.

A: I thought they worried about me. I was a weak kid and was also extravagant. They were afraid the work would be too hard for me.

Q: Did you send any money home from Saudi Arabia or from Bangkok?

A: Yes, when I was in Saudi Arabia I sent all my money. My parents would keep it for me though. They saved it for my house. During my two years in Bangkok I sent less than 4,000 baht.

Q: Did you send that money to them by mail?

A: Yes, but they didn't use it for anything. They used the money to buy furniture for me. They bought me a living room set. They sometimes have problems with money, but they have several kids to help them. That's why I'm not too worried about them. (Divorced female return migrant)

Q: Did you send as much money home as you had planned to?

A: Sometimes.

Q: What did your father do with the money you sent him?

A: He hardly ever used it.

Q: Is that so?

A: Yes, he saved it.

Q: (to father) What have you been using to buy food for the family?

A: (Father) Around here I don't need much, only 10-20 baht per day is enough. (Single male return migrant)

Other migrants did remit but were earning money elsewhere for a specific goal: to start a business, in Bangkok or their hometown; to re-build the family home; or to build a house for themselves in their hometown. Sometimes these were personal goals, and sometimes they were for the family.

A: I send it [money] to my mother-in-law to buy wood to build a house.

Q: How much do you send each month?

A: If I send it to them to buy construction materials, I send it three times a year, 3,000 baht each time.

Q: Do you also take it with you when you go home?

A: I do both, yes. (Married female out-migrant)

Other migrants had clearly considered who among family members was most in need of migration income. For example, several young married couples without children said that they remitted to only one set of parents. This may either be the parents that are most in need, or those who own land where the couple ultimately hopes to settle. But sometimes family needs superseded individual needs.

Q: Could you tell me why you came to live here?

A: I thought if I worked here and could save up some money, I would be able to take an advanced course in sewing. When I got to Bangkok I asked my friends who worked with me. They said a course like that doesn't come cheap. It cost thousands of baht, not like what you have upcountry. And yesterday I just got a letter from my sister telling me that my mother wrote asking us to send home 30,000 baht. I had told my parents to tell me if they needed money. I have some saved up, but I'm going to give it to my mother first. (Single female out-migrant)

When asked about the degree of necessity for migration income, the implication of many of the responses were that such income was for cash expenses. Several said that survival was not an issue since the family left behind still farmed, so would at least always have food to eat. In these cases remittances were used for cash purchases which improved the quality of life of the household, as discussed above. Some out-migrants said they sent back money during the planting season, for their family to buy fertilizer or other agricultural inputs.

Q: If you didn't send money home, do you think they would manage?

A: Yes they would, because [my father] makes some extra money from being a barber. I send money to pay for the refrigerator we bought. When I have it all paid off I don't have to send any more.....

Q: What if you didn't even send one baht, would that cause problems?

A: Oh yes, it'd cause big problems.

Q: You just said your parents could manage without your help.

A: They could get by with what they make, but it's not enough to pay for the refrigerator.

Q: They wouldn't be able to buy things.

A: No, they only have enough to eat from day to day. (Single male out-migrant)

Q: Are you going to go back [to Bangkok] in the next 2 years?

A: Yes, about a 70 percent chance that I'll

go back there. I have to go to make supplementary income during the dry season.

Q: And come back in the planting season?

A: Yes....If the kids stay in school I need to make more money. (Married male return migrant)

Some seasonal migrants, for example those who go to another province to cut sugar cane, are recruited in their home village and paid in advance. Wages are then paid by the unit (for example, the amount of sugar cane cut). If the worker cannot cut enough in one season to pay back the advance money, they must return in the next season.

Q: How much money did you get in advance that first April?

A: 10,000 baht.

Q: How about last April?

A: Not more than 6,000, because the debt from the year before hadn't been paid.

Q: They give you less money when you haven't paid back all the money you owe them?

A: Yes.

Q: Have you paid it all back yet?

A: Not yet. The amount increases. We took some more money this year.

Q: I see. How much did you take?

A: 20,000.

Q: What did you need the money for?

A: To buy this and that, including fertilizer for the fields.

Q: Did you buy things to sell here?

A: No, just food and clothes for the kids.

Q: The everyday expenses in other words.

A: Yes. (Married male return migrant)

This respondent felt he could make more money if he migrated elsewhere to work construction, but was indebted to return to cut sugar cane. However, 20,000 baht is a large amount that would certainly take more than one season to earn even in an urban setting, and so it is likely that migrants in this position remain in debt for some years.

For others, the degree of dependence on remittances was acute. This was particularly true for households where the major source of support was received from family members working elsewhere. As outlined in Chapter 1 we interviewed several cases of households in this position, where women with young children were dependent on remittances from their husbands or where grandparents were caring for grandchildren whose parents had migrated. Besides these cases, we also interviewed several migrants who had left behind dependent family members. One woman interviewed was a return migrant whose husband currently lives in Bangkok; she plans to join him when he finds work.

Q: If you or your husband were unable to send money home because you are sick, what would happen?

A: That would be a disaster.

Q: For whom?

A: For my parents because they don't have an income. They wouldn't be able to buy food.

Q: Could they find another source of income?

A: My mother could weave and my father could go hunt for crabs and catch some fish. (Married-spouse-absent female return migrant)

Another male migrant was interviewed when he had returned home for the planting season.

Q: When you left home to work, did you worry about your family?

A: Yes, I worried that they'd starve, that there would be no one to help them with the work. My mother was old. I had nothing to do here. All I could do to help was send money.

Q: That means that your wife and kids and your mother all depended on the money you sent?

A: Yes.

Q: During that time they did not work in the fields; they used the money you sent, right?

A: Yes.

Q: Suppose you had been sick, would they have been able to help themselves?

A: No, they wouldn't have. They would have had to borrow money or to sell some things. (Married-spouse-absent male return migrant)

In several cases, respondents had left elderly parents behind who could no longer farm. We also interviewed several migrants in Bangkok who had left children behind with their elderly parents and were responsible for their support.

Q: What would happen if you stopped sending money to your parents; do you think they'd survive?

A: I think it'd be difficult for them. They'd have to borrow here and there, to pay off their debts.

Q: They don't have any income back home?

A: No.

Q: They don't make enough money from farming, do they?

A: No. They're too old to farm. My father goes every day to the fields, though.

Q: They make just enough to feed themselves, right?

A: They don't make enough, because they're pretty old. (Divorced female out-migrant)

When we interviewed women in rural areas who were receiving remittances from their husbands, we found that many of them did not take an active role in decision-making, and most notably that they did not have alternative strategies if their husbands failed to provide for them.

Q: If your husband didn't send you money because he was sick or out of work, what would you do?
A: I'd have to make my own living. I'd probably go get odd jobs.
Q: What can you do
A: I can sew; but I can't cut and design [clothing] very well. (Married-spouse-absent female, husband remits)

Q: Suppose your husband falls sick and is not able to send money, what would you do?
A: I don't know.
Q: Have you ever planned for this?
A: No, never.
Q: What if things like this happened? What would you do?
A: I would find work.
Q: What kind of work? What can you do?
A: I'd go to Bangkok to look. I don't know what kind of job I could do.
Q: Would you take the children?
A: No, I'd leave them with my mother.....
Q: Do you worry about whether he'll be able to send you money?
A: Yes, I do.
Q: I see. And do you worry about his behavior?
A: No, he's a nice, honest person.
Q: If he stays away for a long time, do you think he will continue to send money?
A: Yes I do. Because he loves his children very much. (Married-spouse- absent female, husband remits)

We also interviewed several cases where grandparents were caring for grandchildren because their parents had migrated. Though this is a common occurrence in rural Isan, we were surprised to find that in the majority of cases we met the grandparents were not receiving remittances from their children. In one case a 77-year-old grandfather cared for two granddaughters aged 7 and 8, who had different parents. One child's mother lived next door but was not involved with her care.

Q: What does she do for a living?
A: Nothing. She doesn't stay in any one place. Can't be depended on.
Q: How about her husband?
A: He ran away, left the child with me. He married someone else.
Q: Is your daughter divorced?
A: Yes, she is. She's like that, so you could expect it (to be this way)....
Q: Does she sleep here every night?
A: Yes, she does, but we don't have anything to do with each other.
Q: Where does she go during the day?
A: She gambles, she plays cards. She's not reliable. She's addicted to gambling.

The other child's father was the grandfather's son.

Q: Where is [your son] now?
A: I haven't heard from him. He's disappeared....
Q: How do you manage these days?
A: Sometimes some good-hearted people

bring food, and my neighbors lend a hand.

Q: How about the kids' schooling? How do you pay for that?

A: I borrow from money-lenders, or from the village fund.

Q: How do you pay them back?

A: I find work like making charcoal, small jobs like that. I raise chickens and sell them for 50-60 baht each.

Q: How about their pocket money for school?

A: I give them 2-3 baht a day.

Q: Do your children give you money for taking care of their children for them?

A: In the beginning they did, but after they left their spouses they've never given me anything.

Q: How long has it been since they stopped giving you money?

A: Three years.

In another case a 65-year-old grandmother cared for three children without any support from their parents.

Q: When did [your daughter] bring the child here?

A: When she started Grade 1.

Q: Did she stay a while or did she leave right away?

A: She left right away.

Q: What did she tell you when she brought her child?

A: She said she'd leave the child with me to go to school.

Q: Did she leave any money?

A: No, she said she didn't have any money.

Q: Where did you think you'd get money to raise her child?

A: That was exactly what I asked her.

Q: And what did she say?

A: She didn't say anything. I said, where do you suppose I'd find the money to raise your child?

Q: Then what did she say?

A: "Wherever," she said. Where did she expect? She talked as if money could be dug out of the ground. If it was that easy, I would have done it a long time ago. "I'm not sending any money," she said. And she never did.....

Q: You got [other child] when she was only a baby?

A: Yes, a tiny one....[My daughter] left the baby and ran away. I thought she was dead.

Q: Have the kids ever seen their mother?

A: Once when she came back. The kids didn't even know her.

Q: And she never sent any money?

A: Never. She left to go after her new husband.

Other grandparents did receive some remittances from grandchildren, and the grandchildren also provided care and household help to them.

Q: Do you think you'll be able to bring up these two grandkids?

A: It's not very difficult.

Q: Are they naughty?

A: Yes, they are.
Q: You've had them ever since they were born?
A: Yes.
Q: Do they help with the housework?
A: Yes, a lot.
Q: Do they care for you when you are sick?
A: Yes.
Q: Do you think you'll be able to support them financially?
A: Well, their mother and their aunts send money.
Q: What if they didn't-- would you be able to support them yourself?
A: We wouldn't know how we would find the money to do it. We would have to wait for their parents. (Grandparents caring for grandchildren)

Many of the grandparents interviewed depended to a large extent on children who were still present in the village. Thus they did not receive the majority of support from the parents of the children they were caring for, and would have been in a desperate situation if their other children did not help them. It should be noted that many of the migrants we interviewed, whether in Bangkok or after they had returned home, did leave children behind and remitted support to them. While we cannot conclude from this small number of cases that the majority of grandparent care-takers are not supported by remittances, the pervasiveness of these cases in the sample villages for this study provides evidence that this situation is not atypical. In many cases marital instability of the parents was the reason that the children had been left with grandparents.

4.6 Conclusion

Both the quantitative and qualitative evidence illustrate the importance of remittances in providing support to North-eastern rural households. A high proportion of households reported that they had received remittances in the two years since the previous survey. These were received through a variety of methods: many received remittance income when family members returned home, whether to visit or to stay, and this points out the inadequacy of the usual survey questions in estimating remittance income. Besides finding that a high proportion of households in the sample received remittances, the proportion of individual migrants who remitted was also quite high. Return migrants were slightly more likely to remit than out-migrants, as expected. Male migrants were more likely to remit than females, but this was mainly due to the fact that more men migrated to work than women. Also, daughters who were out-migrants were more likely to remit than sons, which corresponds to previous findings on rural Thai remittance patterns.

The study also found that agricultural households in particular substantially supplement household earnings with remittances. Lower income households

were more likely to have migrants in the past two years, and those with out-migrants tended to have the lowest incomes. Thus while migration as an economic strategy does benefit households, the benefits for the most part do not allow households with migrants to "catch up" to those who (presumably) do not need to migrate. This is particularly true for households with out-migrants. The implication is that households with temporary migrants also are more likely to have economic resources that provide for the basic needs of the family, which are supplemented by seasonal cash earnings. Out-migrant households may be less likely to be able to provide for these basic needs and so require more long term-migration. Further analysis is needed to draw firm conclusions however, as such households may also have fewer members to support.

This pattern is confirmed when the uses of remittances by households are examined. The vast majority of households reported that they used remittances for basic necessities like food and clothing. Households of return migrants were more likely to report that they used remittances for non-essential items, and households with out-migrants were more likely to say that remittances were essential to their survival. In many cases remittances were used for items essential to the household farm enterprise, such as buying fertilizer/ seeds or paying off a debt. Investments in education and improvements in housing quality were other important uses of remittance income. Qualitative evidence also provides illustrations of the degree of dependence of rural households on remittances, which varies greatly. Some migrants, particularly young single migrants on their first trip away from home, often were not expected to provide substantial support to their families. Others worked to improve their family's quality of life by improving housing or buying appliances. Still others were well aware that their family was dependent on their earnings for their very survival. In the case of dependent family members such as children and those caring for them, including women whose husbands have migrated and elderly grandparents, we found several cases where remittances had stopped after a short time or were never provided. In these cases, the issues of rural poverty, family instability and migration are intertwined.

Chapter 5
Intention to Move

In this chapter results on the future intentions to move from the NMS2 survey are presented. The findings drawn from this specific population should be directly be beneficial to as policy-makers, planners and practitioners concerned with migration and labor force issues, as they give a picture of the appropriate target population for programs which direct or discourage migration. Besides giving sociodemographic characteristics, three issues are included in the study which help to describe those with an intention to move in the next two years. These include the reason for migration, the season when they plan to move, and whether a government program providing them with a monthly income would prevent them from moving. Answers to these questions will be investigated on the basis of their demographic and socioeconomic characteristics so that a picture of the population who intend to migrate in the next two years can be viewed more clearly. Therefore, any solution to reduce or solve problems dealing with migration which may occur in the future may be targeted more effectively. In this case information is not available for out-migrants, since other household members were not asked questions regarding the opinion or future plans of out-migrants.

5.1 Predictive Ability of Previous Questions on Intention to Move

The National Migration Survey in 1992 asked respondents to the individual survey about their future intention to move. The questions were phrased as follows:

> *In the past three years, have you* ***ever thought*** *about moving from this place?*
> ___ *No (skip to next question)*
> ___ *Yes: At present, do you* ***still want*** *to move from this place?*
> ___ *Yes*
> ___ *No*

The ability of these questions in predicting migration outcomes during the 1992-94 period is shown in Table 5.1. The top half

of the table shows the percentage of persons by migrant status based on whether they said they were currently thinking of moving at the time of the first survey (answering yes to both questions posed above). In total 16 percent of the sample said they were thinking of moving, and 11 percent (or 66 percent of this group) actually did move. However, the 84 percent who said they were *not* thinking of moving included 34 percent who actually did make a move (40 percent of this group). In other words, if the survey had been used to predict migration during the 1992-94 period, it would have underestimated the proportion who would make a move by 64 percent (16 percent said they intended to move while 44 percent actually did so). If the definition of intention to move is expanded to include all who had ever thought of moving prior to the first survey, the size of the migrant population would be underestimated by only 27 percent (32 percent said they had considered moving while 44 percent actually did so).

Table 5.1: Ability of 1992 (NMS) Questions on Migration Intentions in Predicting Actual Migration 1992-1994 (N=596)

a. Based on whether currently thinking of migrating at the time of the 1992 survey

Response in 1992	Migration status 1994			
	Non-migrant	Return migrant	Out-Migrant	Total
Yes	5.6	4.0	6.5	16.1
No	50.3	16.1	17.5	83.9
Total	55.9	20.1	24.0	100.0

b. Based on whether ever thought of migrating in the three years prior to the 1992 survey

Response in 1992	Migration status 1994			
	Non-migrant	Return migrant	Out-Migrant	Total
Yes	14.6	7.1	10.2	31.9
No	41.3	13.1	13.8	68.1
Total	55.9	20.1	24.0	100.0

It is likely that the wording of the questions contributed to the lack of success in accurately predicting migration. Many respondents would consider a "move" as labelled in these questions as a permanent change of residence. Even those who were not present at the time of the 1994 survey (and labelled as out-migrants for the purpose of this study) may still consider the Northeast as their home, and the move to be a temporary one for work or another reason. Evidence of this is seen by the fact that the questions were slightly more accurate at predicting out-migration than return migration. In any case, the questions on intention to move were substantially revised for the NMS2 survey, as follows:

> *Do you think that you will move from this place in the next two years, to go to another tambol for a month or more to work or for another reason, either for the dry season or at another time?*
>
> ___ *Yes*
>
> ___ *No*
>
> ___ *Never thought about it...*

It is believed that these questions more accurately describe the migration process for this highly mobile population, and as will be discussed below, the percentage that report they intend to move in the 1994-96 period is much higher than that found in the previous study. It is hoped that a description of those who say they intend to move, often temporarily, in the present study will allow policy-makers to effectively target their programs.

5.2 Demographic and Socioeconomic Patterns Related to Migration Intentions

Table 5.2 shows that a high percentage of respondents (48 percent) said that they intend to move in the next two years. Those with no intention to move in the next two years includes approximately one-third of the sample size (35 percent), and only 17 percent said that they had never thought about moving. It should be remembered that the NMS over-sampled migrants, so that these figures are not representative of the rural Northeastern population as a whole. However, detail on the characteristics of those who intend to move will help to effectively target this population; and to this extent it is an advantage to have a larger number of migrants in the sample. Males were more likely to say that they intend to move, as are younger people; approximately 60 percent of those 17-24 said so, and the proportion intending to move decreases as age increases. However, a fairly high proportion (over 40 percent) of older respondents plan a future move, corresponding to the high rates of seasonal migration in this group. This finding points out clearly that gender and age are related to intention to move, just as they are to actual mobility.

Table 5.2: Intention to Move in the Next Two Years by Selected Individual and Household Characteristics

Selected Individual and Household Characteristics	Intention to move			Total (N)	
	Intend	Not intend	Never thought		
TOTAL	48.2	35.1	16.7	100	(442)
SEX					
Male	54.3	28.7	17.0	100	(188)
Female	43.7	39.8	16.5	100	(254)
AGE					
17-24	59.8	29.5	10.7	100	(112)
25-34	45.8	35.1	19.0	100	(168)
35-47	42.6	38.9	18.5	100	(162)
EDUCATION					
Grade 4 and lower	44.9	36.8	18.2	100	(247)
Grade 5 - 7	49.0	36.4	14.6	100	(151)
Higher than grade 7	63.6	20.5	15.9	100	(44)
MARITAL STATUS					
Single	59.7	27.8	12.5	100	(72)
Married	45.3	37.2	17.5	100	(349)
Widow/divorced/separtd	57.1	23.8	19.0*	100	(21)
OCCUPATION (PAST YEAR)					
Agriculture	53.1	29.9	17.0	100	(271)
Non-agriculture	37.1	46.7	16.2	100	(105)
Not in labor force	45.5	37.9	16.7	100	(66)
OCCUPATION (PAST YEAR)					
Agriculture	53.1	29.9	17.0	100	(271)
Family work	31.4	54.3	14.3	100	(35)
Labor/service	41.0	43.6	15.4	100	(39)
Employee (company, government)	38.7	41.9	19.4	100	(31)
Not in labor force	45.5	37.9	16.7	100	(66)

Table 5.2: **Continued**

Selected Individual and Household Characteristics	Intention to move			Total (N)	
	Intend	Not intend	Never thought		
MIGRATION STATUS					
Non-migrant	38.6	41.6	19.8	100	(329)
Return migrant	76.1	15.9	8.0	100	(113)
FAMILY TYPE					
Nuclear family	44.6	37.8	17.6	100	(193)
Extended family	51.0	32.9	16.1	100	(249)
PRESENCE OF PERSONS AGE <5 IN HOUSEHOLD					
No	42.5	36.7	20.8	100	(226)
Yes	54.2	33.3	12.5	100	(216)
NO. OF PERSONS AGE <13 IN HOUSEHOLD					
None	44.2	39.5	16.3	100	(86)
1-2	48.6	33.8	17.6	100	(290)
3+	51.5	34.8	13.6	100	(66)
PRESENCE OF PERSONS AGE 50+ IN HOUSEHOLD					
No	46.8	36.1	17.2	100	(233)
Yes	49.8	34.0	16.3	100	(209)
PRESENCE OF PERSONS AGE 60+ IN HOUSEHOLD					
No	48.0	36.2	15.8	100	(323)
Yes	48.7	31.9	19.3	100	(119)
NO. OF DEPENDENT PERSONS IN HOUSEHOLD					
None	43.9	42.4	13.6	100	(66)
1-2	48.3	35.1	16.6	100	(259)
3+	50.4	30.8	18.8	100	(117)
OUT-MIGRANTS FROM HOUSEHOLD					
No	45.5	37.7	16.8	100	(310)
Yes	54.5	28.8	16.7	100	(132)

Table 5.2: **Continued**

Selected Individual and Household Characteristics	Intention to move			Total (N)	
	Intend	Not intend	Never thought		
TOTAL HOUSEHOLD INCOME PER MONTH					
<1,000	58.4	31.2	10.4	100	(125)
1,000-2,000	53.8	29.2	17.0	100	(106)
2,001-4,000	41.2	40.2	18.6	100	(102)
>4,000	37.6	40.4	22.0	100	(109)
MAIN SOURCE OF INCOME IN HOUSEHOLD					
Agriculture	50.8	34.1	15.0	100	(246)
Wage work in non-agriculture	45.4	33.0	21.6	100	(97)
Other work	44.4	39.4	16.2	100	(99)
LAND OWNED BY HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS (Rai)					
None	44.9	39.7	15.4	100	(78)
1-10 rai	50.0	36.8	13.2	100	(114)
11-20 rai	47.5	31.1	21.3	100	(122)
>20 rai	49.2	34.4	16.4	100	(128)

* number of cases less than 5

When education is considered, it is shown that 60 percent of the population educated at a level higher than primary school intend to move in the next two years, whereas only 46 percent of primary level persons have that intention. It may be implied that migration intention is selective with regard to education. Moreover, persons who are single, widowed, divorced or separated intend to move more than married persons, indicating that those who intend to move are persons with no burden, no commitment, no spouse and no family of their own.

With respect to occupation and intention to move, it is found that persons engaged in agricultural work within the past year hold the highest proportion of population with an intention to move (53 percent), followed by persons not in the labor force, such as housewives, students, older persons and the handicapped. The smallest proportion is persons engaged in non-agricultural work, who are, for example, laborers, employees, and service workers. It is also found that return migrants have a higher proportion intending to move than non-migrants. Thus people with migration experience are more likely to have the intention to move again. Social networks such as relatives and friends in their former residence might be supportive factors for these return migrants to consider re-migration.

Regarding family structure, persons residing in extended family households have a higher percentage intending to move than those living in a nuclear family (the percentage is 51 and 45, respectively). The data also shows that those residing in households with children under aged five are more likely to intend to move than those without (54 percent and 43 percent, respectively). When considering the number of children living in the household, a similar pattern is found: the percentage intending to move increases according to the number of children under age 13. This finding points out that family size and number of dependent children are related to intention to move, because of the burden of child-rearing expenses; it also implies that young single persons who intend to migrate come from households where they have younger siblings. However, besides family structure and dependent children, older relatives also are a factor, because the elderly also depend on the family for care. It is found that when the aging population is defined as 50 years old and over, those with household members of that age have a slightly higher intention to move than households with no members of that age (50 percent and 47 percent respectively). When defined as age 60 and over, no difference is found between respondents in households with and without an aged member. This can be interpreted two ways: that having dependent members can increase the intention to move in order to support the family, or can diminish it because of the need for caretakers in the household. However, when dependent children and dependent aging persons are compared in terms of their influence on migration intention, it ap-

pears that having dependent children in the household acts as a slightly stronger push factor for migration than having an aged person in the household.

Regarding migration intentions and having out-migrants from the same household, respondents whose household members are out-migrants are more likely to intend to move than those who have no out-migrants in their household. Having out-migrants may be regarded as a supportive or motivating factor for future migration because out-migrants can provide their household members with information in the destination area such as job possibilities, income, financial assistance, housing, etc., which will facilitate their migration.

Respondents from households with lower income have a higher intention to move than those with higher income. This corresponds to the finding in Chapter 4, that lower income households are more likely to use migration as an economic strategy. It appears that the proportion of those intending to move gradually decreases as family income increases. In sum, it can be stated that poverty is an encouraging factor for migration intentions, and improvement in the standard of living is likely a common expectation for every migrant. Besides, it is also revealed that those whose main income is gained from agricultural work have a higher likelihood to intend to move than those earning their main income from other occupations. This finding is consistent with that concerning family income mentioned earlier. Multivariate analysis in future research will further disentangle these effects.

5.3 Reasons for Intending to Move

When asked why they intend to move in the next two years, 89 percent of respondents replied that their main reason is to find work, or that there is no work available in their home village (Table 5.3). The rest of them (approximately 11 percent) intend to move because of other reasons such as following their family or to further their study. The proportion with other reasons is small; the second most frequent response was being bored with the work or life at home (7 percent, N=14), followed by intending to marry or moving for education (2 percent, N=4 for each). The proportion giving alternative responses is too small to allow further analysis.

Slightly more females than males said they intended to move for work. The older they are, the higher the proportion intending to go to search for work. Less educated persons were more likely to intend to move for work than higher educated people. Regarding marital status, those with the intention to move for work were more likely to be married or widowed/ divorced/ separated than single persons, who possess other reasons for migration such as being bored at home or to gain experience. The finding for marital status is also consistent with the age factor since

Table 5.3: **Reason for Migration Intention by Selected Characteristics**

Selected Characteristics	Reason for migration intention		Total (N)
	For work/no job here	Other	
TOTAL	88.7	11.3	100 (213)
SEX			
Male	87.3	12.7	100 (102)
Female	90.1	9.9	100 (111)
AGE			
17-24	79.1	20.9	100 (67)
25-34	92.2	7.8	100 (77)
35-47	94.2	5.8*	100 (69)
EDUCATION			
Grade 4 and lower	92.8	7.2	100 (111)
Grade 5 - 7	89.2	10.8	100 (74)
Higher than grade 7	71.4	28.6	100 (28)
MARITAL STATUS			
Single	67.4	32.6	100 (43)
Married	94.3	5.7	100 (158)
Widow/divorced/separtd	91.7	8.3*	100 (12)
OCCUPATION (PAST YEAR)			
Agriculture	92.4	7.6	100 (144)
Non-agriculture	84.6	15.4	100 (39)
Not in labor force	76.7	23.3	100 (30)

* number of cases less than 5

single persons appear to be younger. Agricultural workers intend to move for work reasons more often than non-agricultural workers and persons not in the labor force.

5.4 Season When Respondents Plan to Move

Because of the current concern about the large numbers of people moving to Bangkok during the dry season, the survey asked what season respondents planned to move. As seen in Table 5.4, among respondents who intend to move, the majority of them (70 percent) intended to do so in the dry season rather than other seasons; those who said they planned to move during the dry season had the highest proportion saying that they planned to move for work-related reasons. Females were slightly more likely to have this intention than males, and older people (aged 25 and over) intended to move in the dry season more than younger people (aged 17-24). The same is true for less educated persons and the ever married.

As expected, agricultural workers had a higher proportion of people intending to move in the dry season than non-agricultural workers and people who were not in the labor force. Moreover, non-migrants intended to move in dry season in higher proportions than return migrants. It may be that the latter group came back for a short visit and plan to return; therefore, the season is not their major concern. It is also found that persons who gain main income from non-agricultural work intend to move in dry season more than other occupational groups.

5.5 Impact of the Government Program to Decrease Seasonal Migration

In 1993 the Ministry of Labor announced a policy aimed at decreasing rates of seasonal migration, particularly to Bangkok. The plan was to pay one member in rural households 50 baht per day to attend a training program in their home community and agree not to migrate. The survey investigated the impact of this program by asking respondents who expressed their intention to migrate in the dry season whether they would still migrate if they were able to obtain 1,200 baht income per month (based on receiving 50 baht per day working approximately 24 days per month). Those who still said they would migrate were asked if they would stay if they could obtain 1,800 baht per month (based on a rate of 75 baht per day). The findings indicate whether an increase in wage payments is likely to affect a decline in intentions to migrate among the rural Northeastern population.

The results, shown in Table 5.5, are based on weighted data in order to reflect the proportions in terms of a representative sample of rural Northeastern residents; as

Table 5.4: **Season When Respondents Planned to Migrate by Selected Individual and Household Characteristics**

Selected Individual and Household Characteristics	Season		Total (N)
	Dry season	Other season	
TOTAL	69.9	30.1	100 (206)
SEX			
Male	66.3	33.7	100 (98)
Female	73.1	26.9	100 (108)
AGE			
17-24	65.6	34.4	100 (64)
25-34	73.0	27.0	100 (74)
35-47	70.6	29.4	100 (68)
EDUCATION			
Grade 4 and lower	72.7	27.3	100 (110)
Grade 5 - 7	72.2	27.8	100 (72)
Higher than grade 7	50.0	50.0	100 (24)
MARITAL STATUS			
Single	53.7	46.3	100 (41)
Married	74.8	25.2	100 (155)
Widow/divorced/separtd	60.0	40.0*	100 (10)
OCCUPATION (PAST YEAR)			
Agriculture	73.4	26.6	100 (143)
Non-agriculture	63.6	36.4	100 (33)
Not in labor force	60.0	40.0	100 (30)
OCCUPATION (PAST YEAR)			
Agriculture	73.4	26.6	100 (143)
Family work	72.7	27.3*	100 (11)
Labor/service	64.3	35.7	100 (14)
Employee	50.0*	50.0*	100 (8)
Non-worker	60.0	40.0	100 (30)
MIGRATION STATUS			
Non-migrant	73.0	27.0	100 (126)
Return migrant	65.0	35.0	100 (80)
MAIN SOURCE OF INCOME IN HOUSEHOLD			
Agriculture	68.0	32.0	100 (122)
Wage work	79.1	30.9	100 (43)
Other work	65.9	34.1	100 (41)

* number of cases less than 5

Table 5.5: **Proportion Who Plan to Migrate During the Dry Season in the Next Two Years and Impact of the Government Program Providing 1,200 or 1,800 Baht to Prevent This Migration (percentages based on weighted data)**

Selected Characteristics	% who intend to move in the dry season	% who would still move if given 1200/ month	Reduction in migrants from 1200 baht program		% who would still move if given 1800/ month	Reduction in migrants from additional 600 baht/ month		(N)
			% of total	% of seasnl movers		% of total	% of seasnl movrs	
Total	25.2	3.9	-21.3	-84.5	2.6	-1.3	-5.2	(148)
Sex:								
Male	29.7	5.6	-24.1	-81.1	3.6	-2.0	-6.7	(68)
Female	22.3	2.7	-19.6	-87.9	1.9	-0.8	-3.6	(80)
Age:								
17-24	29.4	5.6	-23.8	-81.0	4.9	-0.7	-2.4	(44)
25-34	23.3	3.9	-19.4	-83.3	2.4	-1.5	-6.4	(55)
35-47	24.8	2.9	-21.9	-88.3	1.5	-1.4	-5.6	(49)
Education:								
Primary	25.1	3.6	-21.5	-85.7	2.3	-1.3	-5.2	(129)
>Primary	26.4	6.1	-20.3	-76.9	4.6	-1.5	-5.7	(19)
Marital status:								
Single	24.1	7.3	-16.8	-69.7	7.0	-0.3	-1.2	(24)
Married	25.5	3.5	-22.0	-86.3	1.9	-1.6	-6.3	(118)
Formrly mar	23.6	0.0	-23.6	-100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	(6)
Occupation:								
Agriculture	31.0	2.8	-28.2	-91.0	1.9	-0.9	-2.9	(107)
Non-agricult	15.3	7.1	-8.2	-53.6	4.6	-2.5	-16.3	(23)
Not in lf	15.8	3.3	-12.5	-79.1	2.3	-1.0	-6.3	(18)
Migration status:								
Non-migr.	20.2	2.2	-18.0	-89.1	2.0	-0.2	-1.0	(94)
Return migr	42.1	9.5	-32.6	-77.4	4.5	-5.0	-11.9	(54)
Main source-hh inc								
Agriculture	25.8	2.8	-23.0	-89.1	2.4	-0.4	-1.6	(64)
Agr.worker	31.4	0.0	-31.4	-100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	(20)
Other	23.6	5.7	-17.9	-75.8	3.2	-2.5	-10.6	(64)

discussed in Chapter 1, the sample selected in 1992 contains an oversample of migrants. It is seen that while 25 percent of respondents said that they intend to move in the dry season, only 4 percent would still move if they could obtain an additional 1,200 baht per month in income. This means that 21 percent of the population would be affected by this program; or in other words, that 85 percent of seasonal movers say they would not migrate. The impact of receiving an additional 600 baht (or 1,800 per month) is only slightly higher. Only 1 percent of the population or 5 percent of seasonal movers would be affected by receiving an additional 600 baht (see Figure 5.1). This implies that the vast majority of seasonal movers do not estimate that they could make more than 50 baht per day in their destination (often Bangkok), once they have accounted for their expenses in moving and living in another place. The findings in Chapter 4 on remittances, which found the median amount remitted to households to be less than 5,000 baht per year, support this estimate. Hence from a policy perspective, the cost effectiveness of a 50 baht per day program is high. It should be remembered however that if only one member of a household can benefit from the program, others may still choose to migrate.

In order to effectively target this program it is enlightening to examine which potential migrants would be most likely to be affected. For example, though a lower proportion of women intend to move during the dry season (22 percent vs. 30 percent for men), a higher proportion of these women would be affected by the government program: 88 percent of female seasonal movers vs. 81 percent of males in that category (see Figure 5.2). But a higher proportion of male seasonal migrants (7 vs. 4 percent) said that they would change their plan for 1,800 baht per month, likely due to their higher wages. This pattern holds for other groups with greater earnings ability: for example, a higher proportion of intended seasonal migrants with a primary education would agree not to move for 1,200 baht than those with more education (86 vs. 77 percent) but the percentage who would stay for 1,800 baht is slightly higher (6 vs. 5 percent). Those who are currently or formerly married are more likely to be affected by the policy than single people. Those working in agriculture are particularly likely to be affected as well; as we have seen in earlier chapters, these households are more likely to depend on remittances for household income. Interestingly, those who did not migrate in the past two years are much more likely to say they would stay for 1,200 baht (89 vs. 77 percent) while return migrants are more likely to be affected by an additional 600 baht (12 vs. 1 percent). These findings indicate that even though those with previous migration experience are more likely to intend to migrate, their experience also gives them a realistic estimate of the economic benefit and expenses involved. For this group there is a much higher marginal return of an extra 600

Figure 5.1: **Effect of Government Policy To Prevent Seasonal Migration**

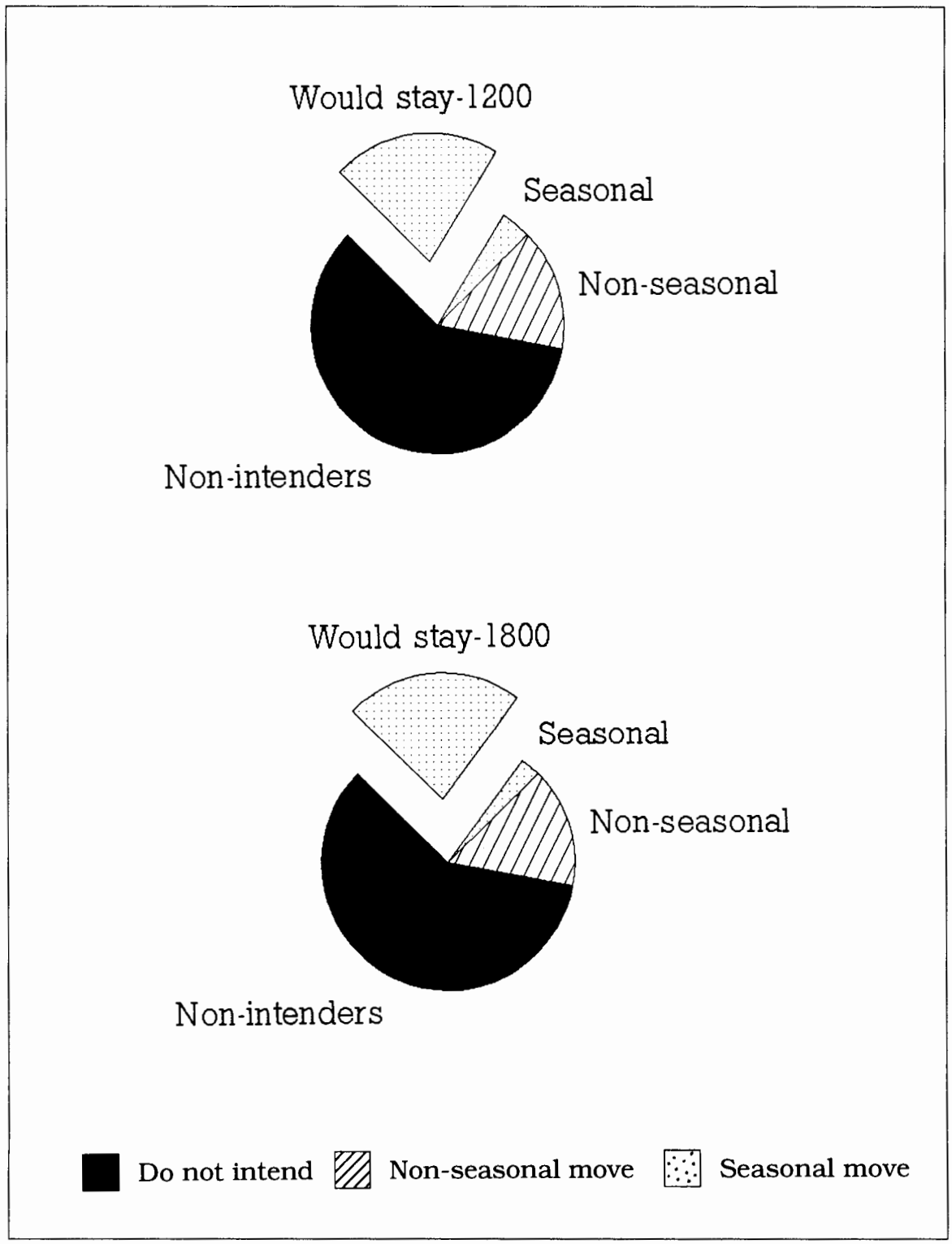
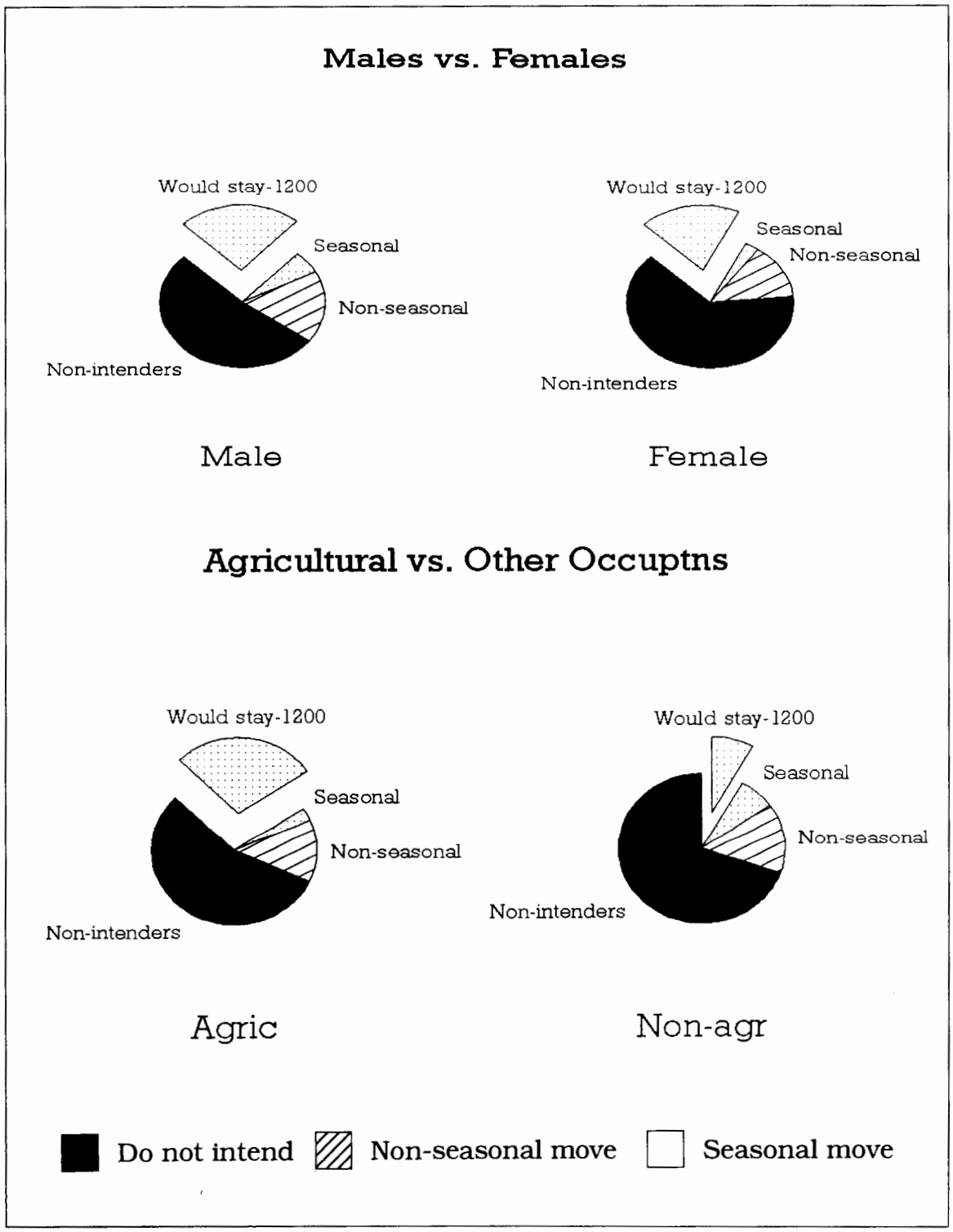


Figure 5.2: **Effect of Government Policy To Prevent Seasonal Migration by Gender and Occupation**



baht. Nevertheless, it seems that most people do not want to stay apart from their family or hometown and that if they can earn enough income to support themselves and their family, they have no intention to migrate.

5.6 Conclusion

A high proportion of this high-mobility sample said that they anticipated moving in the future, whether temporarily or permanently. Just as with actual mobility, intention to move is strongly related to being male, younger, having more education, working in agriculture, and having low income. A high proportion of those intending to move (70 percent) planned to do so in the dry season. Investigation into the impact of the government policy which would provide income to rural residents if they agreed not to migrate found that a large proportion of seasonal migrants (85 percent) would agree not to move if they were offered 1,200 baht per month. Only a small additional percentage would be affected by raising this amount to 1,800 baht, but this group includes those with greater earning power such as men and those with more education. Implications of this finding and recommendations for government policy are further discussed in Chapter 7.

Chapter 6
Migration Consequences and Policy-Related Issues

This chapter examines Northeastern respondents' perceptions of several policy issues related to migration. These include their opinion of how migration affects socioeconomic conditions in their home community, and how illegal migrants modify job chances of Thai workers. The survey also investigated the extent to which migrants place pressure on social services at the destination community and migrant's perceptions of the role of migration in the rapid spread of AIDS infection.

6.1 Perceptions of Migration Consequences on the Village

The consequences of migration can be assessed objectively by compiling and comparing social and economic indicators across time. However, objective assessments may matter more for future migration intentions than subjective assessments, which are formed through the imperfect information network available to potential migrants. While subjective assessments of migration consequences at the individual level are not readily available, much less available are subjective assessments at the village level. By using a five-point scale (i.e., strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, and strongly agree), this section examines not only the direction of opinions but also the strength of respondents' views on how migration issues affect the village. Note that a comparison of objective and subjective village-level migration consequences should be included in a future research agenda.

6.1.1 The Village Economy

Does migration reduce or increase the resources of the village? As people migrate in large numbers, the externalities associated with individual-level migration can be assessed at the village level. The village economy depends to a large extent on the quality and quantity of its human resources and the available capital and technological resources for improving its production output. Reduction of village resources can hinder its progress if re-

sources that can be tapped for economic production or other development activities are used to defray the cost of migration.

Survey results reveal that the majority of respondents disagree or strongly disagree (77 percent) with the idea that the high cost of migration diminished the economic resources of their respective villages (see Table 6.1). The clear positive assessment of migration's impact on the village, however, needs further clarification on which of two possible scenarios are operating: (1) either migration is not perceived to be costly for the village, or (2) the returns from migration are seen to far exceed the costs. Future research should not only try to disentangle the situational possibilities but also attempt to measure the costs and returns of migration for a more in-depth analysis of migration effects.

While no age and sex differentials are observed, there is a difference in opinions expressed by migration status. Return migrants are more likely than non-migrants to disagree to the same statement. This may be indicative of the return migrants' more direct perception of their contribution to the village economy, perhaps as senders of remittances to their families before they came back and/or as new entrepreneurs bringing fresh capital investment to the village upon their return. In contrast, non-migrants as recipients of remittances may have a more direct perception of the village effects of these remittances.

Benefits from migration are often quantified by the volume of migrants' remittances. In Chapter 4 we have underscored the importance of migrants' remittances in improving household income in the Northeastern region. The NMS2 data provide a village-level assessment of the perception of these benefits by including statements on the role of migrant remittances in improving the standard of living, income and investments at the village level. The perception of improvement of general living conditions of people in the village through remittances received from migrants is confirmed. Only 4 percent of the respondents disagreed with this positive impact of migration on village living conditions. Remittances from migrants are also considered to have augmented the income of villages (82 percent), and have increased economic investments in the village (77 percent). The remittance-augmenting perspective, however, is more likely to be held by women than by men. This may be because women are more likely to be recipients of remittances than men.

6.1.2 Labor Availability

Since migration is selective of people in the young and productive ages (see Chapter 2), perhaps the most apparent migration consequence is the availability of labor in the villages. Nearly half (48 percent) of the respondents held a positive opinion while 45 percent held a negative opinion

Table 6.1: Respondent's Perceptions of the Effect of Migration on Their Home Village

Respondent's Perception	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	(N)
The wealth of this village has declined due to the high cost of sending people to other places.	3.4	11.8	8.2	40.5	36.1	(440)
Remittances from migrants have improved the general living conditions of people in this village.	39.9	46.7	9.1	3.2	1.1	(441)
The income of this village has increased due to remittances from people who used to live here.	28.9	52.7	8.0	8.6	1.8	(440)
Return migrants helped boost economic investments in this village, such as opening a store or buying land.	38.0	38.9	8.0	11.4	3.7	(437)
The number of workers in this village has declined due to migration.	11.6	36.4	6.8	27.5	17.7	(441)
Migration has raised the demand for labor in this village.	27.1	45.7	8.4	12.0	6.8	(442)

on the statement "The number of workers in this village has declined due to migration" (see Table 6.1). The prevalence of seasonal migration among people in the Northeast that we have seen in Chapter 2 indicate that respondents may have a sense of labor sufficiency, since many workers return to the villages during the planting and harvesting periods. But despite the evidently split answers, older respondents (those aged 30 years or more) were more likely than younger respondents (52 vs. 44 percent) to express a positive opinion on the above-mentioned statement. This likely reflects the fact that older residents have lived through rapid socioeconomic changes in their lifetimes, and have seen the outflow of migrants from the community.

On the other hand, is the sense of labor sufficiency in the villages affected by out-migration? The majority of respondents (73 percent) were of the view that migration raised the need for labor in the villages, and just about one out of every four respondents were opposed to this view. This indicates that despite the prevalence of seasonal or circular migration, which ensures there will be workers available to respond to seasonal agricultural labor needs, the perceived higher labor requirement signals either a lack of labor replacement for permanent migrants or an increasingly more dynamic agricultural economy. Accounting for factors leading to perceived increases in the labor requirements should be the focus of future research in this field.

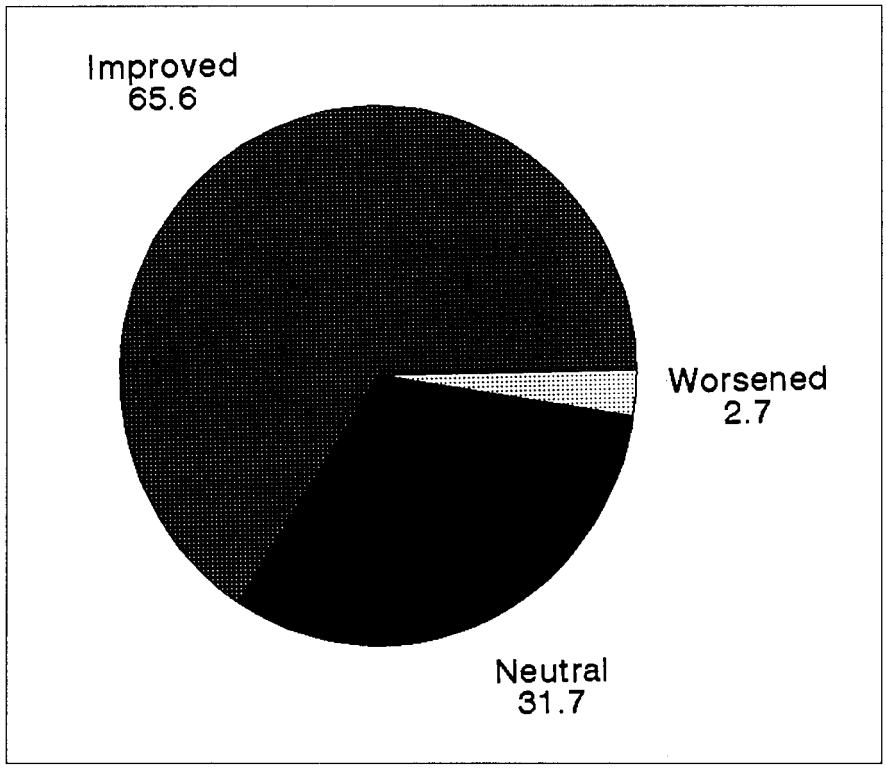
6.1.3 General Living Conditions

Figure 6.1 shows that more than half (66 percent) of respondents consider that migration improved people's lives in the village. Only 3 percent reported that migration has worsened people's lives in the village, but the neutral category is quite large (32 percent). The non-committal category can be viewed either as a lack of concrete information on before and after effects in the village as a basis for their opinion, or as an indication of the failure of respondents to conceptualize the village as a separate and distinct entity capable of being influenced by the dynamics of its constituents. It will be worthwhile in a future study to control for these possible scenarios (such as by giving concrete examples of the effects of migration) and see whether people still are non-committal on migrations' influence on village peoples' lives.

6.2 Pressure on Social Services at the Destination

One often cited effect of migration is the migrants' contribution to the demand for social services in the area of destination, particularly in Bangkok. The data presented here pertain to return migrants only and thus indicate the extent to which temporary migration enhances the pressure on social services in the migrants' prior residence. For this reason, these assessments are likely to underestimate the

Figure 6.1: **Effect of Migration on People's Lives in the Village**



actual impact, since temporary migrants are likely to have different characteristics and experiences than more long-term migrants; but they are also the main group that the government wishes to target for migration reduction strategies.

Regarding housing, as seen in Table 6.2, the majority of return migrants reported that they stayed in housing provided by their employers. For this reason, it cannot be said that they caused a major strain on housing in the destination community. Among those who rented, the average amount paid by return migrants was 528 baht per month. Their monthly expenditures for electricity and water were, on average, 25 and 35 baht, respectively. Less than half of the return migrants used public or private garbage disposal services (47 percent). They also have not used buses on a regular basis; 43 percent never used buses and 24 percent only once a week. This is likely because many of them were housed by employers or rented a room/house which was within walking distance to their place of work.

Table 6.2: Percentage Distribution of Return Migrants' Use of Social Services at their Prior Residence

Social Services at the Prior Place of Residence	Percent
Housing in the last place	
free w fam/friend	16.9
free by employer	68.6
rent a room w fam	10.2
rent a hous w fam	0.8
other	3.4
(N)	(118)
Monthly rent paid for house	
None	25.0
< 200	12.6
200-499	50.2
500+	12.6
(N)	(16)
Electricity paying	
< 20	49.9
20-49	24.9
50+	24.6
(N)	(12)
Paid for water used in last place	
< 20	25.0
20-49	25.0
50+	50.0
(N)	(8)
Dispose of garbage	
threw away/buried	18.1
burned	34.5
in container for gov	43.1
in container for oth	3.4
other	0.9
(N)	(116)
Frequency of using public bus	
no buses	7.8
never used	34.8
< once a week	24.3
1-3 times a week	20.0
4-6 times a week	5.2
7-10 times a week	1.7
11+ a week	6.1
(N)	(115)

These results imply that discouraging seasonal migration would not provide much relief for destination communities with regard to housing and public transportation, since the majority of seasonal migrants live at their workplace. Social services for water, electricity, and garbage disposal are also often provided by the employer. Note that other important social services often availed of by migrants and their families at the destination are not covered in this analysis, e.g., education and health services. Future research should endeavor to examine the pressure on a wider spectrum of social services at the destination for a more comprehensive evaluation of migration's impact.

6.3 Illegal Migration and Employment Opportunities

Over the years, Thailand has experienced increasing illegal migration of foreign laborers. Most of them, especially the recent flows, come from Myanmar and other neighboring countries (Archavanitkul 1995). With Thailand's flourishing economy and rapidly increasing labor demand, illegal migration has reached unprecedented proportions. The NMS2 questions were designed to gather information of the respondents' knowledge and opinion of illegal migration and how it affects domestic job opportunities.

Seventy-nine percent of the respondents were aware of the existence of illegal migration in the country. These respondents are more likely to perceive illegal migration effects on the job opportunities of Thai workers in general (82 percent), than their own job opportunities in particular (51 percent). These high percentages indicate that many domestic migrant workers sense the competition that may be posed by illegal migrant workers, particularly in regards to low-paying and low-skilled jobs, which are largely filled by domestic migrant workers from the Northeast. The emphasis on human resource development in the current national development plan, especially the extension of the compulsory education from 6 to 9 years, if implemented successfully, will determine whether this tight job competition situation among domestic Northeast migrants and illegal foreign workers would fade away in the next 10 to 15 years.

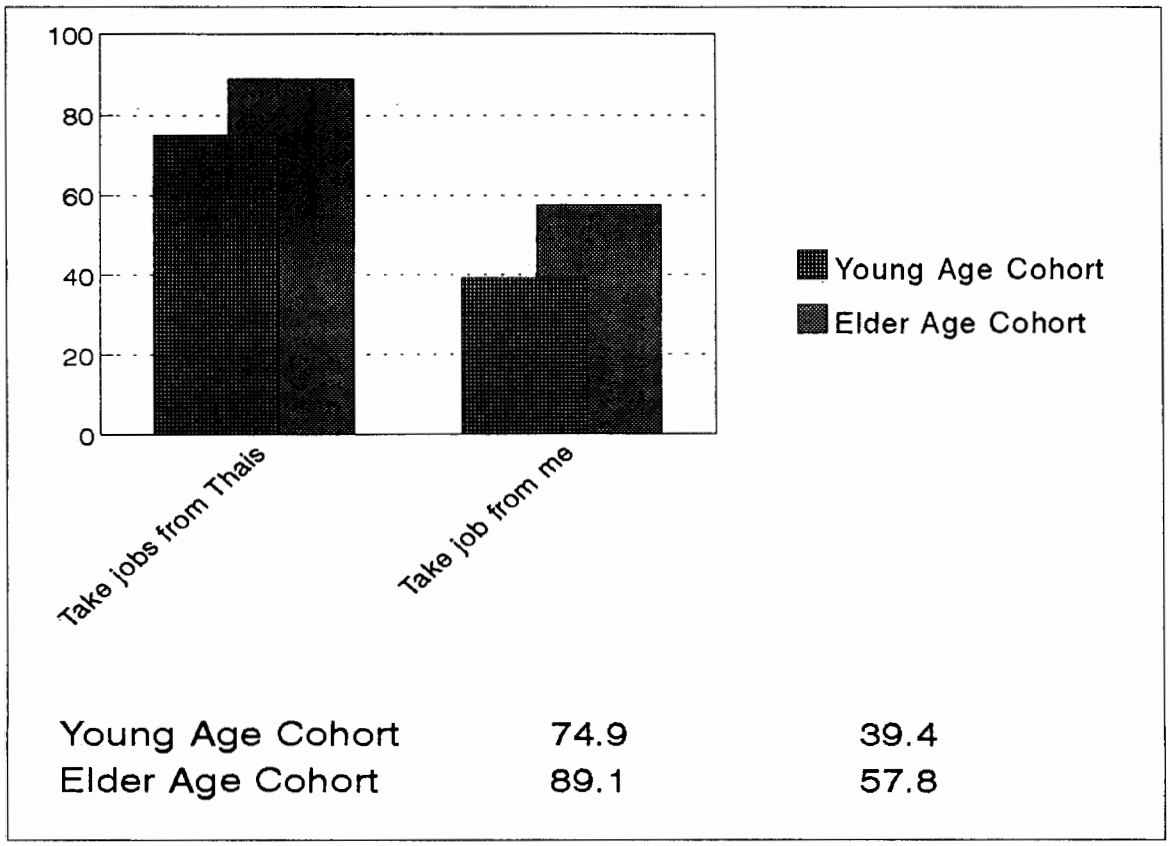
Another interesting result is shown in Figure 6.2. There is a marked difference in views between the young (aged less than 30 years) and the older (aged 30 or more) respondents on the effect of illegal migration on Thai workers. Older respondents are more likely to view illegal migrants as a threat for Thai workers. Younger and older respondents also differed on their views about the effect of illegal migration on themselves. Again, the older respondents are more likely to consider illegal migrants as a threat to their own job prospects (58 percent) than the younger respondents (39 percent). The perceived higher job insecurity *vis-a-vis*

illegal migrant workers among the older respondents may be attributed to their lower potential for human resource development, plus perhaps the added burden of having a family to support. For this reason, increasing educational, vocational and training opportunities for Northeastern Thai workers would also have the effect of decreasing competition from illegal immigrants.

6.4 Migration and AIDS

The AIDS situation in Thailand is increasingly becoming critical. Many recent studies have documented the important role migration plays in the rapid spread of the disease in the country. It was only in 1988 that the anti-AIDS campaign was launched, yet the spread of AIDS appears unabated. The questions included in the NMS2 survey attempted to measure AIDS

Figure 6.2: **Perception of How Illegal Migrants Affect Thai Workers, By Age Cohort**



Young Age Cohort	74.9	39.4
Elder Age Cohort	89.1	57.8

information awareness of Northeastern rural residents and their perception of how migration influences people's exposure to AIDS infection.

Despite the relatively high incidence of AIDS in the country, only one out of every 15 survey respondents knew someone personally, or had heard of someone that a friend knew personally, that was actually infected with the disease. Respondents were more likely to know/know of an infected person who lived closer to the their place of residence (see Figure 6.3). Only 7 percent of the 30 respondents who knew of someone infected with AIDS said that the infected person resided in Bangkok or provinces in Isan other than their own. The highest percentage reported that the AIDS infected person they knew (or knew of) was in the same *tambol* that they lived. This indicates that the AIDS threat is beginning to affect the rural Northeast, though not yet in large numbers.

Figure 6.3: **Knowledge of Persons with AIDS, by Location of AIDS-Infected Person**

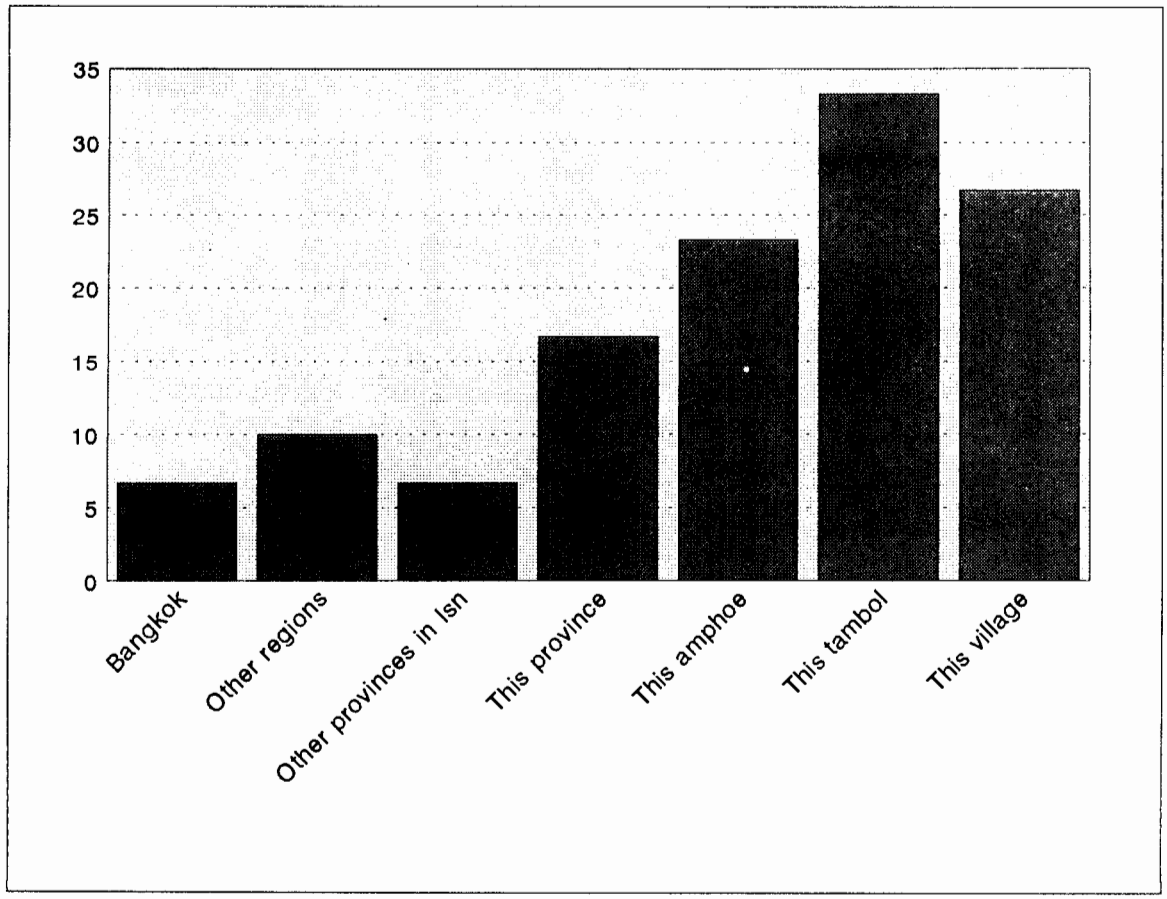


Figure 6.4: **Comparing the Sexual Risk Behavior of Migrants and Non-Migrants, By Gender**

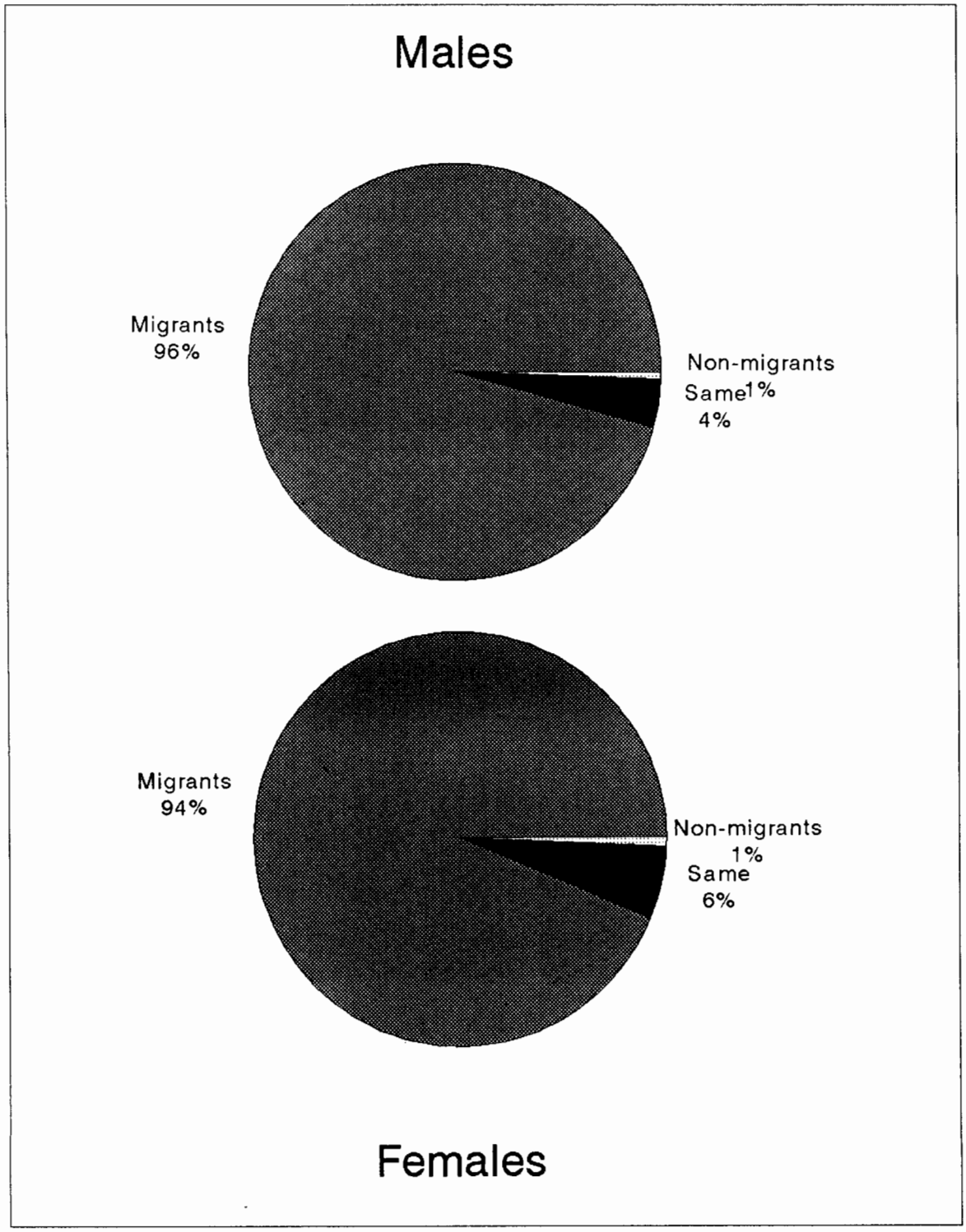
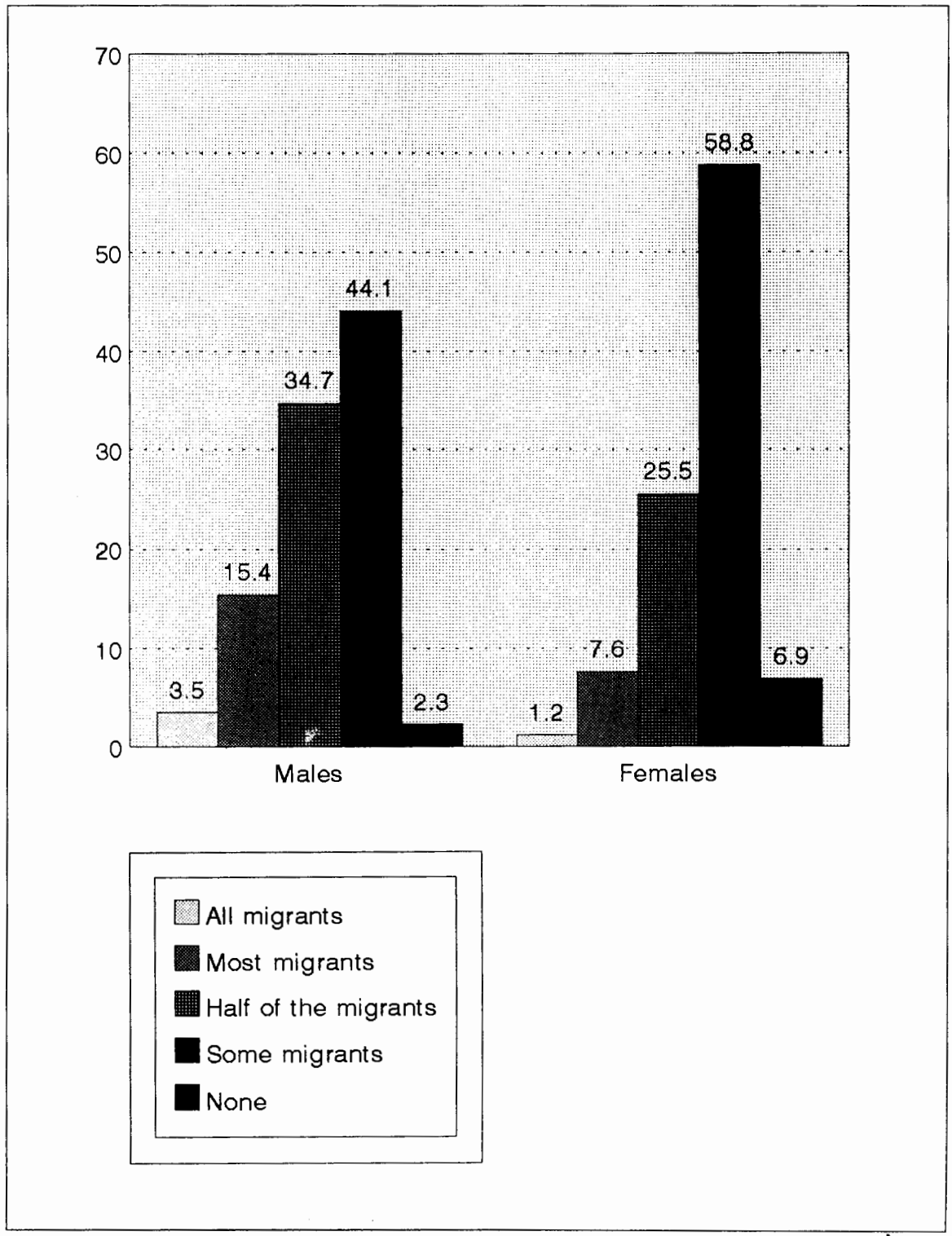


Figure 6.5: **Perception of Sexual Risk Behavior of AIDS Infection Among Migrants, By Gender**



When respondents were asked to compare the risk of getting AIDS for migrants and non-migrants, the majority were of the opinion that migrants are more at risk of the AIDS infection than non-migrants (see Figure 6.4). A very small gender difference was observed, with male migrants perceived to be slightly more at risk (96 percent) than female migrants (94 percent). Very few felt that migrants and non-migrants have the same sexual risk behavior conducive to AIDS infection: 4 percent for males and 6 percent for females, respectively.

The difference in the perception of sexual risk behavior associated with AIDS between men and women migrants can be better discerned in Figure 6.5. Respondents were asked whether all, most, half, some, or no male migrants were likely to be at greater risk of AIDS infection; they were then asked the same question regarding female migrants. Three times as many respondents replied that **all** male migrants were more likely to be at risk of AIDS infection then said the same for **all** female migrants. This is assuredly due to the more active sexual lifestyles of males than females. However, the proportion saying that **some** females have higher risk behavior was higher than that for **some** males. This result reflects villagers' perception of the key role of female prostitutes in the rapid spread of AIDS in Thailand (Archavanitkul and Guest 1994; Havanon, Knodel & Bennett 1992; Podhisita et al. 1994).

6.5 Conclusion

How does migration influence socioeconomic conditions at the village of origin? While data are not available to directly measure these effects, we find the prevailing perception among villagers that migration has a positive impact on the economy and general living conditions in the Northeastern villages of Thailand. Although migration's influence on the availability of labor is not clear, respondents felt that migration seems to increase labor requirements in these villages, perhaps due the prevalence of seasonal moves. Additionally, the survey indicates that a decline in seasonal migration would not provide much relief on the pressure for social services for housing and public transportation at the places of destination. This finding on the minor impact of migration on social services at the destination should be treated with caution since this information was collected from return migrants only; also, though migrants tended to have water, electricity and garbage disposal services provided by their employer, they still were using these services. Still, the stress on traffic and housing in Bangkok caused by seasonal migration appears to be exaggerated, as most migrants lived at their workplace.

Besides asking perceptions of migration consequences, the survey asked about two important social issues. Illegal migration was found to be viewed with reservation, since those who know of its existence suspect that it reduces the job chances for

Thais in general, and their job chances in particular. The job threat posed by illegal migrants is more likely to be sensed by older respondents (i.e., aged 30 or more) than by their younger counterparts. Secondly, AIDS infection is a risk that is often associated with migrants. Male migrants, in general, are considered to have greater sexual risk behavior than female migrants, but **some** female migrants (perhaps in reference to female prostitutes) are perceived to have higher risk behavior than male migrants.

Finally, is there a need to change the current migration policy in the light of these results? Migration's perceived positive impact on the village of origin and the relatively minor effect on migrants' destination resulting from seasonal or temporary migration suggest that policy suggestions calling for a reduction in migration flows may be misguided. What appears necessary is to make migration less costly for those who decide to migrate and to ensure a better quality of life for those who remain in the villages. Specific policy recommendations that follow from this research are presented in the final chapter.

Chapter 7
Policy Implications and Recommendations

This report has investigated the migration patterns of the highly mobile population in the rural Northeast, including factors that influence the decision to migrate. It has also provided detailed information on the livelihood of rural Northeasterners, the degree of support earned from outside the home community and the potential vulnerability of families dependent on such support. We have seen that migration, whether short-term or for a longer period, is a common strategy for supplementing household income. Young single people of both genders were found to migrate at high rates, and a high proportion of them had left the household in the two-year period between surveys. At older ages and after marriage, women were much less likely to migrate but married men often migrated seasonally. Much of the migration from this population was to Bangkok and the surrounding area, though a great deal of seasonal movement was to rural areas, particularly in the Central region, for agricultural work.

The findings presented here show that agricultural households in the region rely on remittances for a considerable proportion of their income. We also found that households who had out-migrants in the past two years had lower incomes and received lower amounts of remittances on average than those with return migrants. Households who received remittances reported that they were mainly used for basic necessities such as food, household goods and agricultural inputs. The findings suggest a high degree of dependence on migration income among these households.

There has been considerable debate over whether migration is detrimental to national development. Many policy-makers blame rural migrants for Bangkok's overurbanization, as manifested in traffic problems, overcrowding and pollution. Yet as we have seen here, most seasonal migrants live at their place of employment and do not even use public transportation. Other research has shown that migrants also tend to be concentrated in certain occupational enclaves, such as construction, low-skilled factory jobs and agricultural labor, that are not attractive to

"native"Bangkokians (Richter and Ogena 1994). From a national development standpoint, the inflow of young workers to Bangkokûs industrial perimeter has formed the backbone of the modernizing labor force. It should be noted however that these migrants may be lacking in the educational and vocational skills needed to take full advantage of new opportunities.

At the household level, social welfare concerns have been raised about the impact of migration on the family. The separation of spouses from each other, of parents from young children, and of the elderly from their adult children raises serious concerns. For the farm family, migration provides badly needed income, as witnessed by the low levels of income reported by respondents. Yet qualitative evidence provides a strong indication that many migrants would prefer to stay in their hometown if there were sufficient income-generating opportunities. Rural development schemes that would attempt to curb the out-flow of migrants thus must address the need for this income to provide for basic necessities.

Following are suggestions for policy development that arise from this research. Many of these follow from a seminar held in Bangkok on July 28, 1995 to present the results of the NMS2 study. In the afternoon session, participants broke into small groups to discuss the implications of the study, and of migration in Thailand in general, for national policy. Recommendations that emerged from that seminar, in combination with those suggested by the NMS2 research team, are drawn directly from the findings of this research.

7.1 One of the major findings from the study was that many of those who migrated would prefer to stay home if they could make sufficient income. These include many of the older seasonal migrants with children; but also include some young single migrants who would prefer not to migrate. For this reason **development efforts should be directed towards allowing rural residents to make a sustainable livelihood in their home communities**. Programs could include expanded agricultural extension activities; expansion of crop varieties that would provide year-round income; social marketing to aid farmers in gaining income from new crops; and expansion of irrigation facilities. These activities would help farmers to be financially independent. Another suggestion is the establishment of community-based investment counseling centers in rural areas. Advice about possible business ventures to pursue, whether in the home community or outside, and appropriate referrals for the training of new entrepreneurs in business management and technology transfer, should be provided. One of these centers' major goals should be to increase the production of value-added commodities in the villages. These centers would also aid migrants in making better and longer-term use of remittance income.

7.2 For other migrants, we have seen that there are certain attractions that migration provides, particularly to urban areas, that

could nonetheless be re-directed. Young people often stated that they were motivated by the desire to gain experience in different kinds of occupations and to have new social experiences, even while they ultimately wanted to return home. Also those with more education and/or vocational skills were less likely to be motivated by government policies that would simply provide cash income for staying home. For this group, **policies must be implemented to improve the quality of life and job opportunities in rural areas.** Rural development schemes would include further investment in the infrastructure in rural areas; improved educational facilities; and expanded employment opportunities. Industrialization thus may spread into the countryside, but with sustainable development as a goal. This would include incentives for private industry to build small factories that do not overload the infrastructure of rural communities or create an undesirable environment.

7.3 We have seen that migration is a selective process, and that the outflow of the young and more educated has drained the resources of the rural areas. For this reason, **human resource development** should include training for rural people in vocations suitable to the modern job market. Increased knowledge of employersû needs and dissemination of this information is necessary to make employee's skills better suit the emerging job market. This includes both formal and informal educational systems, and should include older people as well as younger people and children. In order to be competitive not only in the domestic but more importantly in the international labor market, strong incentives should be placed for the retention of students currently in school and in encouraging young adults to return to school for long-term economic benefits not only for personal but also for village and national interests. Return migrants should particularly be targeted for these programs. Hence, studies identifying factors that could facilitate massive human resource development should be encouraged and fully supported.

7.4 For the same reasons, **social programs are needed for families left behind**, especially in regard to children and the elderly. This includes the need for supportive care as well as provision of basic needs. Households with out-migrants were found to have the lowest base incomes as well as lower levels of remittances, pointing out the importance of this group as a target for programs combatting rural poverty.

7.5 Because migration is a long-term pattern in the rural Northeast, it is unlikely that migration flows can be completely stemmed. Thus it is important to **re-direct migration flows to make the migration process more systematic and efficient.** This would include working with migrants' already strong social networks and information flows. Migrants should be provided with information on employment opportunities using a bottom-up approach; for example, return migrants can contrib-

ute to a central job bank. The government and NGO's should take a more active role in providing this information to migrants, including that regarding more local opportunities. Regional centers responsible for aiding migrants should be established that would match skills of workers with needs of employers. This would include the development of a databank on labor force, skills, training, employment and investment information at the village level. A coordinating body would organize inputs from community residents, various government and non-governmental organizations and put this information online, updated on a quarterly basis, using the new information technology (IT). Being online, the databank should be accessible not only for potential migrants, through the establishment of village data-retrieval points throughout the country, but also for national development planning. Plans for the location of new industrial sites and/or subsidiary branches should take into account the information provided by the databank to reduce labor force displacements and to disperse the economic growth zones. Plans for making the databank operational should be done in conjunction with the current IT efforts at making Thailand the IT model/hub in the region.

7.6 Besides efforts to stem migration flows and make the process more efficient, efforts should be made to re-direct migration away from over-crowded destination communities, namely Bangkok. This would include policies to **decentralize employment opportunities**, including incentives for employers to locate outside of the Bangkok metropolitan area, and continued movement of higher education facilities including universities and vocational/technical training. The government should take a more aggressive and active role in the employment process, with the Board of Investment doing more to decentralize employment. Incentives, such as a differential tax structure, should encourage the private sector to get involved in the employment process. The private sector should also be more responsible for training and human resource development.

Finally, in addition to these policy recommendations that arise from this research, our study provides direction for future research in this area, as follows:

•• More information is needed on **occupational change through migration** and whether individuals and households are able to improve their quality of life through the migration process over the life course. Similarly more information is needed on the relationship between **migration and increased educational attainment**. Do migrants really improve their lives through migration, or is it a short-term solution to provide daily expenses?

•• More information is needed on **the effect of migration on the family**, especially on dependent family members left behind. There has been much concern expressed about the lack of care for the elderly in rural villages and of children

being raised far from their parents. Migration has also been cited as a frequent cause of marital disruption. Further research in this area should balance whether migration may also keep families together by sustaining the family farm, and the degree to which migrants are able to keep in touch with and support their families financially. Since poverty may be an underlying cause of both family disruption and migration, care should be taken to examine this issue in detail.

•• Both of the questions outlined above point to the need for research on **psychological aspects of migration**, both in regard to individual development and stress. Effects should be measured both for migrants and the families left behind.

•• More information is needed on **the use of remittances** in order to more effectively design social service programs. This would include more detailed measures of rural income including income-in-kind and the costs of production. More information on **migration expenses** would also be valuable, both at the origin and the destination.

•• Related to the above, research is needed on both **objective and subjective consequences** of migration, including economic, social and psychological costs and benefits.

•• Finally, research on migration needs to have an interdisciplinary focus to effectively measure and describe all aspects of the process.

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