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Occupational Change and Upward Mobility of Low-Income Residents in Bangkok

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Abstract

This paper analyzes the occupational changes and upward mobility of urban low-income residents in Bangkok, using macro and micro data including field survey. In traditional theory, the image of upward mobility tends to be linear; that is, it assumes movement from the Informal Economy to the Formal Economy, from informal to modern sectors. However, analysis shows that the actual pattern of occupational paths and people's perceptions of upward mobility is different from the assumptions found in traditional theory. First, the occupational opportunity of lower-class changes within a macro context and people choose their occupations by interacting with these changes. Therefore, their occupational paths are not linear. Second, for most workers, the final goal is not participation in the Formal Economy but the Informal Economy.

Keywords: informal economy, occupational path, upward mobility

Introduction

Contrary to earlier works on development studies, the informal economy (IE) has expanded as globalization marches on [Carr and Chen 2002: 1]. This phenomenon is not only evident in the Third World, but also pervasive in developed countries. In the case of Thailand, the informal sector (IS)[1)] which has been in existence for a long time is still widely observed. At the same time, especially after the economic crisis in 1997, the formal economy (FE) has been showing increasing signs of 'informalization'. These phenomena now coexist in developing countries.

Traditional theories of the 'IS' were characterized by a perspective that is best described as linear modernization. They also limited their analytical framework to

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1) Recently, the term Informal Economy (IE) has been widely used even by international organizations. The author also uses the 'IE' because together with the FE, they show a more dynamic dimension of the structural linkages that define the economy. However, in the history of development studies and government policy, the term, Informal Sector (IS) has often been used to emphasize the divisions between the informal and formal. In this paper, when previous studies or government policy statements are referred to, the term the 'IS' will be used, whereas in other cases the IE will be used.

urban-rural migration within one country. As a result of these underpinnings, these theories fail to explain the dynamics of the city and its informal economy in a globalizing era.

This paper analyzes the occupational changes and upward mobility of urban low-income residents in Bangkok, using macro and micro data, including a field survey in the communities which have been defined as 'slum' areas by the government. It starts from the premise that a complex metropolis such as Bangkok is now the strategic centre for analyzing the dynamics between city and the informal economy. From a macro perspective, it examines the interaction between occupational changes or experiences of residents and the macro economic and labour restructuring that has been going on since the mid-80s. From a micro perspective, it investigates the occupational experiences of individuals by analyzing life courses and risk management processes (e. g. the firing and laying-off of workers, etc.). This paper hopes to show that the actual patterns of occupational mobility are different from the assumptions of traditional theories employed in development studies and policy making. Therefore, this paper will not simply define occupational paths from the perspective of theory but focus on what is actually happening at the ground level, treating the issue as an empirical question within a Thai context.

After an overview of macro trends, this paper presents the profile of, and changes in, occupational opportunities and experiences of the lower-class and clarifies the strong links between macro restructuring and people's job opportunities. Then, from the case study, the paper explains the occupational paths and intra-structure of the urban lower-class. To introduce the perspective of time, life course analysis is used, with special focus on risk management processes, and the actual 'upward mobility' paths of urban lower-class will be redefined in comparison with traditional theory.

There is no concrete definition of the IE, since it differs from country to country owing to political concerns as well as differing economic and social backgrounds. Still, there are some common characteristics: they are not covered by social security, they are non-registered and they do not pay taxes. Therefore, each government uses its own definition for estimation of scale. Just to give an idea, the survey of National Statistical Office (NSO) in 2005 showed that the IE workers (including agriculture workers) made up 62% of workers in Thailand [NSO 2006]. In this paper, self-employed workers, home-workers and employed workers without social security are included as part of IE while employed workers with social security belong to the FE.

I　Analytical Framework and Objectives

I–1　*Traditional Theory and New Perspective of the IE*

Traditionally, the 'IS' theory is characterized by a perspective that is best described as linear modernization, which is based on the hypothesis that the 'IS' is a temporary shelter

and phenomena during the development period, with migrants from rural areas entering in the first stage until they move to the 'FS' or modern industrial sector. This pathway of the workers from rural areas to the urban 'IS', then finally to the 'FS' is usually seen as the typical pattern.[2] Traditional theory also argues that once a country becomes developed, then the 'IS' will shrink. Here, the 'FS' is the final goal or destination of 'upward mobility'.

This simple dualistic theory has been criticized extensively not only by anthropologists and sociologists but also by economists. For example, in his study of the 'IS' in the Philippines, Nakanishi noted that migrants usually do not target the 'FS' but target the 'IS' instead. He also clarified that the 'IS' itself is not homogenous, but is, rather class-divided [Nakanishi 1991: Ch. 4]. These findings call attention to the internal structure of the 'IS'. However, their criticisms still had two major limitations. First, their analytical framework was only limited to urban-rural migration within one country. This in part was because, until the early 1990s, urban expansion caused by an inflow of migrants was seen as the most significant issue. Second, discussions always focused on social relationships, almost always finding a patron-client relationship in the community.

However, contrary to the argument that the 'IS' will shrink with industrialization, it has actually spread despite industrialization and development of developing countries, and it continues to expand as globalization marches forward. In the case of Thailand, as mentioned before, the 'IS' which has been in existence for a long period of time is still widely observed. At the same time, the FE has recently been showing increasing signs of 'informalization.'[3] These phenomena are now coexisting in developing countries. This is a phenomenon that traditional theories have failed to explain. Still, as will be discussed later, the earlier polices of Thai government were clearly based on a simple assumption that in turn underpinned traditional theory. Regarding the limitation of earlier studies, this paper takes some different and important approaches.

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2) The representative discussion of the dualistic approach was by the noted economist, Arthur Lewis (for example, see [Lewis 1954]). Todaro revised Lewis's argument and developed the three-sector model of labour migration, i. e., from rural sector to urban traditional sector to the urban modern sector [Todaro 1969]. While the economic model has its uses, researchers and policy makers who followed Lewis and Todaro tended to simplify its implications in their discussions.

3) In Thailand, the Social Security Law promulgated in 1993 states that all enterprises with 10 employees should provide social welfare to workers. Since 2002, it has expanded to include all enterprises with at least one employee. However, in reality, many enterprises started to find ways to not provide social welfare or reduce some of the expenses of their employees. This trend is widely observed in many countries and many academic and international organizations try to capture this phenomenon, defined as 'infomalization' of the FE. There is still no concrete definition. In Thailand, especially after 1999 crisis, one such significant phenomenon is the increase of dispatched workers and short-term contract workers. Thai labour laws allow companies to classify their workers as trainees for the first 4 months. In reality, many corporations use this system to avoid providing social security to workers [Suehiro 2000].

Firstly, it analyzes urban areas and urban residence from an 'urban' perspective rather than the 'rural' perspective, favoured by most previous studies. Urbanization started nearly 40 years ago and second- and third-generation of migrants are already increasing in Bangkok. An urban perspective will enable a better understanding of how the IE was created, and what changes and reforms it underwent within the urban area. Second, it provides a dynamic analysis of urban areas by focusing on the interaction between macro changes and people's labour and lives. Third, the paper takes the 'individual' as its primary analytical unit and views urban community as an open space where different individuals engaged in different activities—work, study, leisure and so on—in urban space, get together and form households.[4] The long-term field survey conducted in preparation for this paper was both quantitative (questionnaires etc.) and qualitative (participatory observation and intensive interviews, etc.) and is the basis for the following analysis. The case study is important for two reasons. Global changes certainly have an impact, but the 'response' of people or an area always unfolds within a local context which itself depends on the social and economic characteristics of that society.[5] This leads to the second reason that although changes are taking place globally, the impact on people's lives always makes itself felt in an actual 'sphere' and 'place' with 'specific' characteristics. A community is surely one of the places where people create their fundamental lives.

This case study, focusing on the life course of people will broaden the discussion not only from the perspective of development studies but also from that of labour studies. Labour market analysis clarifies its structure, characteristics and changes. For example, sometimes it highlights the phenomena of increased and new participation of female workers in labour markets as industrial workers. A woman appears in labour market analysis, here and there, as a participant of a specific industrial or occupational group at a specific 'point' of time. Analyses reveal how women contribute to industrial development and provide insights into their role in macro economics, but they do not show what these occupations mean to these women, nor do they say much about continuities and discontinuities in their occupational paths. Life course analysis trains the lens on individuals over time and factor workers' perspectives into the analysis. To discuss the 'upward

4) Traditionally, the household was seen as the unit upon which one's welfare was determined. However, the level of a household's welfare differed because of the varying cooperation of members. For example, even if a husband received a high salary, if he does not bring this home, it will not contribute to the welfare of family members. There are many cases in the field survey where husbands did not share all of their income with their wife and children. Therefore, it is important to start the analysis from the level of the 'individual'.

5) Lim mentioned that workers are 'varied and complex, with significant differences in their situation in country, industry, and period of time' [Lim 1990: 11]. It implies that a simple generalization from one location is not appropriate but at the same time, generalized cases will not bring any implications [Endo 2005: 353].

mobility' of workers, it is important to trace the actual occupational paths taken by the individual, as well as look closely at experiences from an individual's perspective. Otherwise there will be a huge gap between the theory and empirical data.

I–2 *Restructuring of Economic and Labour and Urban Changes in Thailand*

Before we look at the case study, let's briefly overview the macro trend. Thailand has experienced an economic boom since the late 1980s, which was closely linked with an increase in Foreign Direct Investment (FDI). Fig. 1 shows the significant increase of FDI since the late 1980s. During this period, it can be said that 'the first stage' of economic and labour restructuring began with leading industries at that time being the labour intensive ones, such as textile and apparel, which both required a large number of unskilled labourers [Endo 2007: Ch. 2].[6] Young female workers mostly in their 20s were employed and they and their 'hands' were perceived to be the main contributor. However, since the late 1990s, it seems that Thailand has entered 'the second stage' of restructuring as the amount of FDI and industrial structure have changed, with labour-intensive industries declining alongside growth in capital-intensive industries such as automobile, as well as the finance and service sector [Suehiro and Higashi 2000]. Huge lay-offs occurred in the late 1990s, mainly affecting female workers. In recent years, even in the FE, informalization is a growing trend.

For decades, Bangkok has been the leading growth centre of Thailand, with a high concentration of manufacturing, while also functioning as a business and financial centre. Rapid urbanization and population increase have steadily taken place since the

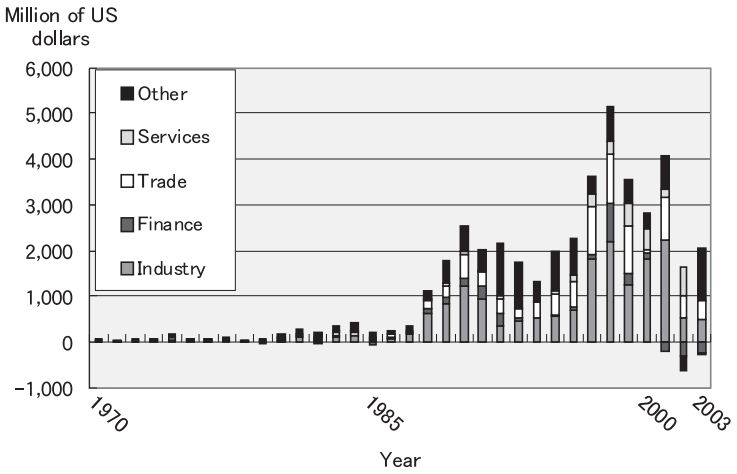


Fig. 1 Net Flow of FDI to Thailand
Source: Made from data of Bank of Thailand (http: //www.bot.or.th)

6) At the end of 1980s, textile and apparel industries became the top exporting industry.

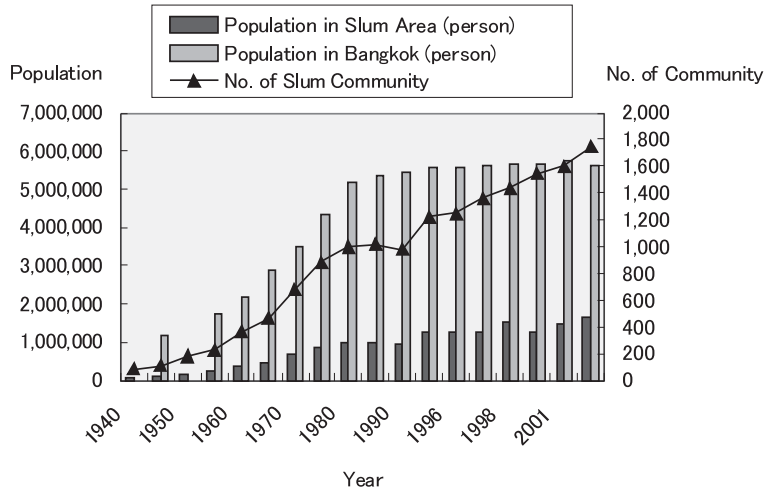


Fig. 2　Population in Slum Area/Number of Community
Source: Niitsu [1998], revised with Sopon [1985] (for data from 1940 to 1990).
Statistical Profile of BMA (each year), 1994–2004.

1960s. However, as Fig. 2 shows, because of a lack of affordable or low-cost housing in urban house markets, the number of slum communities has rapidly increased. Usually, low income residents conjoin their work and living space in order to minimize transportation costs. Simultaneously, job opportunities tended to be concentrated in the inner city, thus most communities tended to cluster in that location. However, things started to change in the late 1980s. As land prices went up, the pressure to evict communities increased and relocation to the suburbs took place. On the other hand, it created more job opportunities for low-income groups in the city centre. Therefore, people came back and entered pre-existing communities thereby increasing community density in inner city areas.

I–3　*Policies towards Urban Poor and the IE Workers*

As slum communities increased, the government started to recognize the issue of urban poverty as an administrative issue and began formulating policies on slum communities in the 1980s. Initially, assistance was limited to physical aspects, but they did not result in direct improvement in the quality of life of the people. Consequently, in the late 1990s, socioeconomic support became a crucial issue. This led to the creation of a promotional policy towards the IE workers (For details, see [Endo 2002; 2007]). However, in the economic liberalization trend at that time, policies emerged out as combination of economic growth theory and poverty alleviation, and had a limited effect on solving urban poverty.

The policy concept for the IE workers is schematized in Fig. 3 and shows the

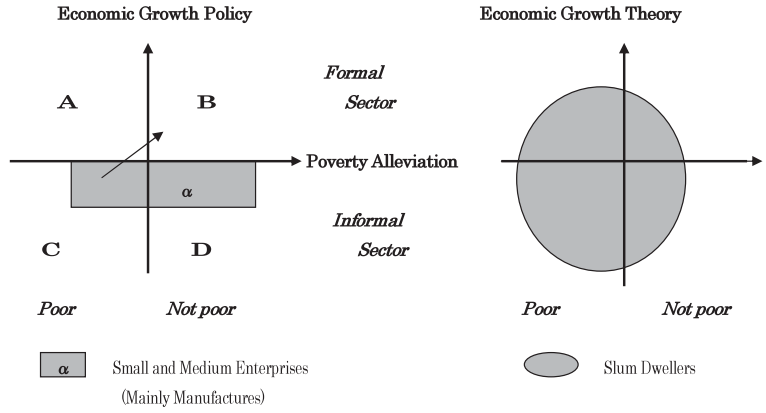


Fig. 3–1 **Fig. 3–2**

Fig. 3 Concept of Policy

Source: Made by author.

dualistic perspective and image of upward mobility of the government. The vertical axis illustrates the vector of economic growth strategy. In other words, it can be interpreted as the modernization of industry. The horizontal axis represents policies for the urban poor; moving to the right, income rises. The left side of the figure represents 'Poor' and the right side 'Not poor.' The lower part of the figure represents the 'IS' (or IE) and the upper part is the FS (or FE). In practice, support was centred on small and medium enterprises (SMEs) shown as the gray part of Fig. 3–1, which contributed to the development of manufacture.[7] The majority, such as vendors, garbage collectors and other self-employed were not included. At the same time, as urbanization spread, the profiles of slum dwellers also diversified (Fig. 3–2), resulting in yet another discrepancy of the target.[8]

It is also important to note that during Thaksin Shinawatra's regime, community development became politicized and the IE received wider attention. Many projects popped up, targeting the IE workers. Some of these were effective, but as the strategy of projects was to bring about self-reliance and competition among the poor, the projects privileged the upper echelons of the lower-class more than those in the middle and the poorest of poor [For detail, see Endo 2007]. In addition, there was not much discussion about 'upward mobility' and the goal of long-term development. Empirical studies are

7) Allal pointed out that in reality, most of the projects were for large enterprises and some medium sized ones; micro and small enterprises which constitute of 75% of all enterprises were not covered by the policies [Allal 1999].

8) In the traditional discussion, migrants from rural areas, slum dwellers and the 'IS' were viewed as a triadic source of urban poverty [Endo 2002].

still needed to understand the disparities and diversity within this increasingly multi-layered lower-class. What is really happening on the ground? To answer this question, we turn to the case study.

II　Low-income Residents and Their Occupation

II–1　*Methodology of Analysis of Case Study*

As mentioned above, the IE is not homogenous and it is important to understand its internal structure. To analyze the occupational aspects of the lower-class, we need to make a distinction among the different occupational strata or 'Occupational categories'. From the field survey data, which considered levels of income, skills, education and so on, about 20 occupational categories were set, representing different strata, for both male and female (For details, see Appendix Table 1). Then these categories were grouped into four bigger 'CATEGORIES' as shown in Table 1.[9] 'Upper Employed' consists of occupations such as white collar work, public officers and skilled workers. 'Lower Employed' refers to service workers such as maids, security guards, unskilled factory workers, waitresses, and daily workers. 'Upper Self-employed' includes grocery shop owners, subcontractors of manufactured goods, hair salons and so on, all of which require higher skills and resources. 'Lower Self-employed' includes vendors, washing ladies, garbage collectors and so on. These four categories are used for the analysis of occupational changes. The FE is 'Upper Employed' and a part of 'Lower Employed' with social security, and all others are the IE. By using these categories, we will not only be analyzing the lower-class as a whole but also the intra-structural features of the IE.

Also, in order to bring in the perspective of time and space into the analysis, the life course[10] of people in two communities is analyzed to illuminate the interaction between

9) 'Employed' and 'Self-employed' workers should be clearly distinguished because of the significant differences in their employment status and the risks they encounter. Within each category, additional distinctions on 'occupation' and 'industry' are made to define different occupational categories by referring to international statistical standards. In defining groups as 'Upper' and 'Lower', several factors such as average income, education, working hours, wage rate per hour, productivities, social security status, etc., are taken into consideration. Adding to that, levels of initial investment and skill were considered for defining each occupational category in 'Self-employed'. Previous studies used two classifications, 'Upper' and 'Lower' productive groups, but did not consider the issue of diversity within each group. By setting up different categories, analysis of the IE becomes much richer (For detail of analysis procedure, please see [Endo 2007]).

10) According to Elder, 'life course' refers to 'a sequence of social defined events and roles individuals enact over time' [Elder *et al*. 1998: 22]. During the period of adult life, two roles-occupational career and marriage/family life- are the most important influences on one's life course. One has to balance these two aspects as required. Occupational career is the sequence of roles where one carries out self-investment required for a specific role. It↗

occupational opportunities for lower-class and macro changes. Moreover, life course analysis is also useful for illuminating intra-structure and individual occupational experiences. Focusing on individuals' risk management processes can help clarify, the occupational paths of individuals. In the case study, risks such as lay-offs and fires are considered in the case studies. Looking at these actual occupational paths enables us to compare and evaluate the hypotheses of government and earlier theories and clarify differences in the image of upward mobility.

II–2 *Community Profile*

The case studies were conducted in two communities with different geographical functions, in light of the radical development pattern of Bangkok. U community is a 'former' fringe area. It is located on the east side of Bangkok. Large factories were located here starting in the late 1980s and it functioned as one of the centres of production. But these major corporations started to move to the outer suburbs and as Bangkok itself expanded outward, the area lost its production potential. S community is located in the inner city, close to the financial and business centre, Silom, which developed rapidly during the 1990s. As it grew, labour demand for service and retail jobs for low income residents also increased. Both communities have 40 years of history and are defined as slum areas by the government. For quantitative data, questionnaires for 50 households (U community) and 65 households (S community) were conducted in 2003 to 2004 by interviewing both husband and wife separately and a questionnaire for about 400 households was distributed in S community in 2005 to gauge the impact of and people's responses towards

Table 1 Occupational Category: 4 divisions

Occupational Category	Example
Upper Employed	White collar, Public officer, Skilled worker
Lower Employed	Service (Security guard, Cleaning), Unskilled worker, Waitress/Waiter, Daily worker
Upper Self-employed	Grocery shop owner, Subcontractor (Construction), Hair Salon, Small industry
Lower Self-employed	Vendor/Hawker, Washing, Garbage collector

Source: Made by author.

↘ sometimes shows continuity and coherence but occasionally, this trend is non-continuous and changeable [Clausen 1986: 30–31]. 'Continuous' does not mean stable in the physical sense or being less mobile, rather it refers to the fact that people's visions and goals in life are consistent with how they can manage these plans. Therefore, it is important to see 'why' and 'how' people change their occupations. As mentioned above, an occupational experience is the process by which people adapt their lives, showing interaction between people's own capacity and will, and the changes in the macro structure, which affect job opportunity [Endo 2005: 363].

a fire that broke out in April 2004. As there is no resident list, the former survey used community house lists for random sampling by referring to Gallup's area sampling method. With the latter, questionnaires were distributed to all households during community meetings.

II–3　*Recent Occupational Profiles and their Characteristics*

Recent occupational profiles are shown in Table 2. In the U community, a former fringe community, the IE workers constituted 62% of males but this figure increased to 89% among female workers. The average monthly income is 8,408 baht for male and 4,755 baht for female workers. Female workers income is much lower, about 3,700 baht lower than that of males. There is a high percentage of female in IE jobs, such as vendors or home-based workers. In contrast, male workers are more often employed in the FE as factory workers.

For S community, the profile shows different characteristics. The IE work is 74% for females and 64% for males. The biggest group is the self-employed. But one important characteristic that stands out in comparison with the other community is the prevalence of a high proportion of service workers such as maids, cleaners and security guards. Transportation is also popular among male workers. The average monthly income is 7,635 baht for male workers and 6,243 baht for female workers.

One of the characteristics of U community is the high rate of female workers in the IE. However, interviews with these workers about their occupational experiences or life courses revealed that IE workers actually increased over the past 10 years. More than half

Table 2　Recent Occupational Profile/Basic Data

U Community (50 households)		S Community (65 households)	
No. of workers/Average Income		No. of workers/Average Income	
Female 44 persons/ 4,755 baht		Female 49 persons/ 6,243 baht	
Male 39 persons/ 8,408 baht		Male 45 persons/ 7,635 baht	
Informal Economy Workers		Informal Economy Workers	
Female 88.6% Male 61.7%		Female 73.5% Male 64.4%	
Occupational Profile: Female		Occupational Profile: Female	
Vendor/Hawker (Self-employed [Lower])	36.4%	Vendor/Hawker (Self–employed [Lower])	36.7%
Homeworker (Self-employed [Lower])	25.0%	Service (Employed [Lower])	14.3%
Other Self-employed [Upper/Lower]	18.3%	Commerce (Employed [Lower])	10.2%
Occupational Profile: Male		Occupational Profile: Male	
Transportaion/Communication (Employed/Self-employed [Lower])	20.6%	Transportaion/Communication (Employed/Self-employed [Lower])	42.3%
Manufacture (Employed [Upper])	15.4%	Vendor/Hawker (Self-employed [Lower])	17.7%
		Service (Enployed [Lower])	13.3%

Source: Made by author from field survey.
Note: 'Occupational Profile' shows three major occupational categories in order. It is their main occupations and secondary occupations are not involved.

of female workers experienced factory work when production function was located in the area.

In S community, an interesting point for discussion is the increase of workers in service and retail, and transportation from the 1990s to 2000s as offices sprouted in inner city areas. Taxi and bike taxi drivers were widely seen from the 1980s but in the 2000s, messengers and company drivers also started to appear. Comparison of recent occupational profiles clearly shows that these are influenced by locations. For example, the former fringe community shows a high percentage of female IE workers, about 89%. But with males, factory workers are highest in ratio. At the inner city community, there are many service workers such as security guards, maids and waitresses, i.e., jobs that cannot be found at the fringe community. Looking back over the history of these communities, or bringing in the perspective of time, highlight the fact that these recent profiles were created as a result of macro changes. For example, in the 1990s, most female workers in the former fringe community who were previously in factory work moved into the IE.[11] The same thing happened in the inner city, as service workers increased in the late 1990s and 2000s. There are changes in components of transport workers as well, as there used to be many taxi drivers and bike taxi drivers in the 1980s to 1990s but in 2000, some moved up, becoming messengers or company drivers as the city centre developed as a business centre. This evidence shows that the occupational opportunity of lower-class is created along with or by interacting with macro economics and labour market restructuring and urban morphology. Therefore, a simple linear understanding of occupational paths is not appropriate; we need to seriously consider the characteristics of the period, the function of the city, location, and so on. Individuals make occupational choices within the context of these opportunities and experience different occupational paths. They are not homogeneous; diverse and individual and household conditions define different paths. This paper will not go into a factor analysis of different paths of individuals but will instead, confine itself to discussing two examples of different occupational paths.[12] One is of female workers in the former fringe community who were the group that were most affected by macro restructuring while maintaining their key role in household welfare (See note 11). The other group consists of people who were

11) It is important to note that 'gender' factor also plays a role in different occupational paths. Male workers in the former fringe community started to enter factory work in the 1990s at the same time as female workers. However, they continued to work even in factories that relocated to the outskirts of Bangkok. The workers followed the factories and moved out to the suburbs alone or commuted by as much as two hours daily to their work places. No female worker did the same because of constraints of being mother and wife. Contradictory the role of female as main income earners has increased because some husbands who work and live separately in the suburbs often do not bring their incomes back home.

12) For detailed discussion of the female worker's choice and occupational paths, please see Endo [2005].

affected by the fire in the inner city community, especially those who were self-employed.

III　Intra-structure of Lower Class and Occupational Mobility

III–1　*From 'Employed' to 'Self-employed': A Case of Former Fringe Community*

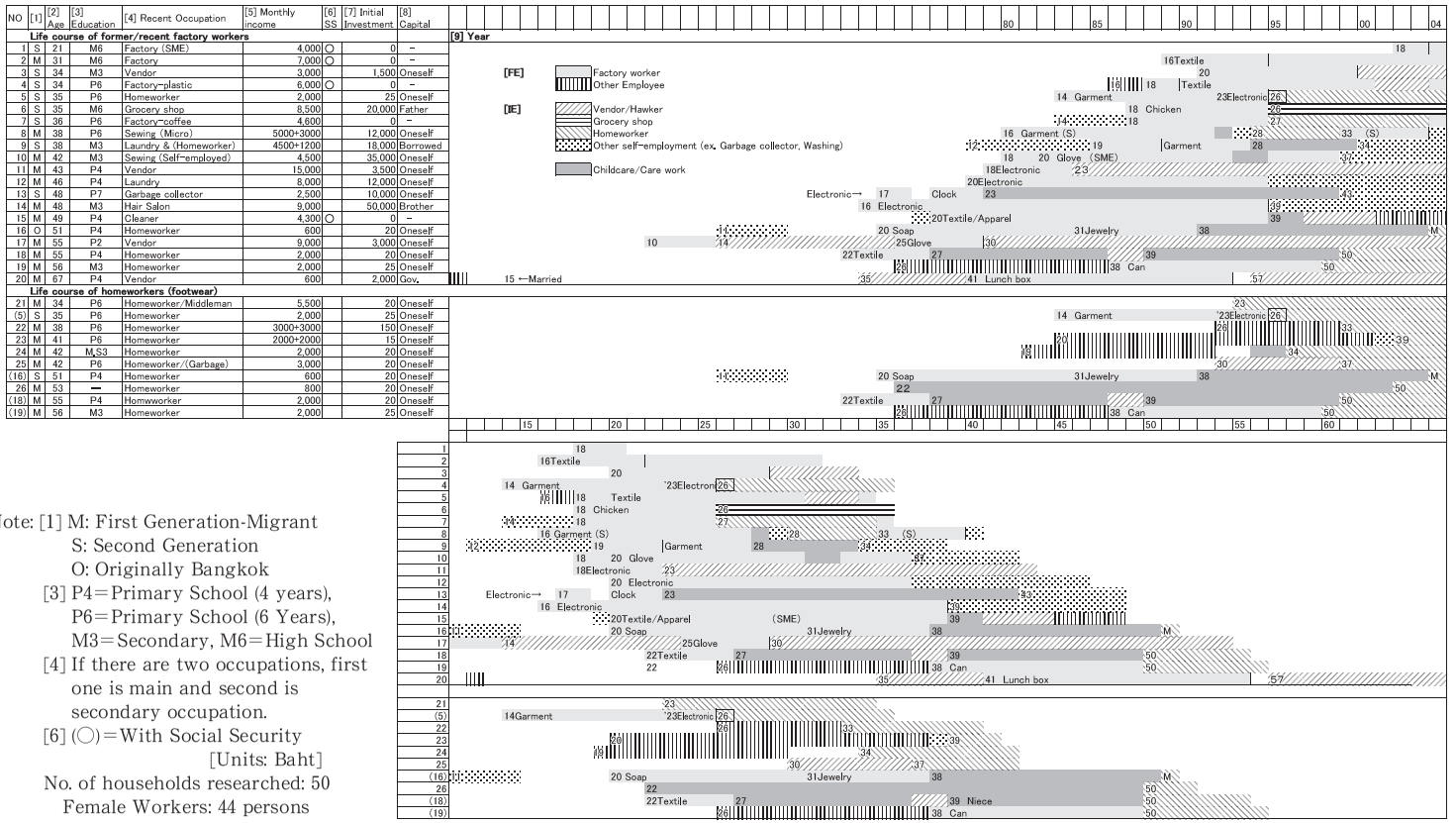
The first example is female workers in a former fringe community. As mentioned before, about 89% of female are IE workers. These female workers, taken as a group, were seen as main contributors during the first stage but were mostly affected by restructuring during the second stage. The upper part of Fig. 4 shows the life course of former factory workers by years. Workers are put in order of their age: younger comes top of the figure and older to the bottom. If we look at factory work, (which is regarded as the FE), it is clear that many female workers entered factory work from the 1980s to early 1990s. The figure also shows that the self-employed such as vendors and grocery shops, and shoe homeworkers increased in the past decade. Except for young people, workers entered the IE jobs, and the number of IE workers increased in the community. Looking at their life course again by age in the figure, we see that many had left the FE and factory work, by their 30s and entered the IE. Other workers except former factory workers are shown in Fig. 5. Most of them are elderly, in their 50s to 60s now, and experienced mainly in the IE jobs and moving within the IE.

What is important here is that female workers, who are now in their 30s and 40s, and who confronted the economic boom in their teen years or 20s, first experienced factory work in big factories. Their first occupations were thus in 'Lower Employed' or categorized as the FE. After being laid off, they moved into 'Lower Self-employed' or 'Upper Self-employed', the IE. This is one observable pattern of occupational paths.

III–2　*From 'Self-employed' to 'Employed': A Case of Inner City Community*

The next example is the inner city community. Research started in 2003. However, in April 2004, a big fire destroyed about 800 houses and caused severe damage to people's lives. Many ended up living in temporary shelters. The fire was a by-product of the active redevelopment of the inner city. With lots of communities being eliminated and groups like vendors or the IE workers facing relocations these days, this case has implications for how the IE workers react when their occupations are damaged. If we consider the effects of the fire on occupational mobility, we find that although the fire did not have much effect on employed workers, it affected the self-employed, since their tools and production measurements were also destroyed. Vendors, grocery shops owners, and others lost their jobs. There were three patterns of occupational paths. Some of them remained unemployed for several years, especially the elderly due to lack of resources. Those who could obtain resources began anew, but others who could not avail themselves of resources decided to change their occupations.

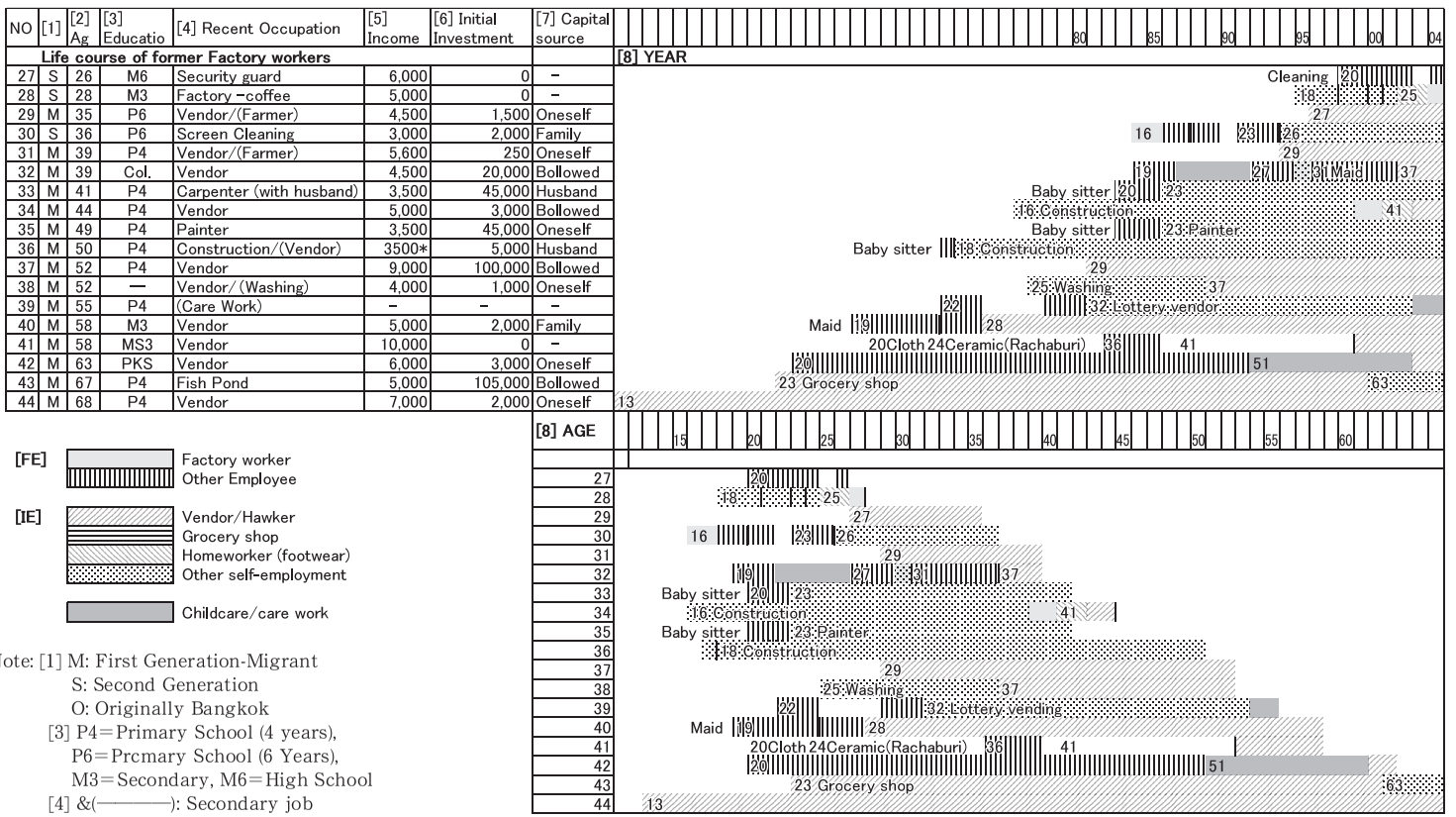
NO	[1]	[2] Age	[3] Education	[4] Recent Occupation	[5] Monthly income	[6] SS	[7] Initial Investment	[8] Capital
Life course of former/recent factory workers								
1	S	21	M6	Factory (SME)	4,000	○	0	–
2	M	31	M6	Factory	7,000	○	0	–
3	S	34	M3	Vendor	3,000		1,500	Oneself
4	S	34	P6	Factory-plastic	6,000	○	0	–
5	S	35	P6	Homeworker	2,000		25	Oneself
6	S	35	M6	Grocery shop	8,500		20,000	Father
7	S	36	P6	Factory-coffee	4,600		0	–
8	M	38	P6	Sewing (Micro)	5000+3000		12,000	Oneself
9	S	38	M3	Laundry & (Homeworker)	4500+1200		18,000	Borrowed
10	M	42	M3	Sewing (Self-employed)	4,500		35,000	Oneself
11	M	43	P4	Vendor	15,000		3,500	Oneself
12	M	46	P4	Laundry	8,000		12,000	Oneself
13	S	48	P7	Garbage collector	2,500		10,000	Oneself
14	M	48	M3	Hair Salon	9,000		50,000	Brother
15	M	49	P4	Cleaner	4,300	○	0	–
16	O	51	P4	Homeworker	600		20	Oneself
17	M	55	P2	Vendor	9,000		3,000	Oneself
18	M	55	P4	Homeworker	2,000		20	Oneself
19	M	56	M3	Homeworker	2,000		25	Oneself
20	M	67	P4	Vendor	600		2,000	Gov.
Life course of homeworkers (footwear)								
21	M	34	P6	Homeworker/Middleman	5,500		20	Oneself
(5)	S	35	P6	Homeworker	2,000		25	Oneself
22	M	38	P6	Homeworker	3000+3000		150	Oneself
23	M	41	P6	Homeworker	2000+2000		15	Oneself
24	M	42	M,S3	Homeworker	2,000		20	Oneself
25	M	42	P6	Homeworker/(Garbage)	3,000		20	Oneself
(16)	S	51	P4	Homeworker	600		20	Oneself
26	M	53	—	Homeworker	800		20	Oneself
(18)	M	55	P4	Homwworker	2,000		20	Oneself
(19)	M	56	M3	Homeworker	2,000		25	Oneself



Note: [1] M: First Generation-Migrant
S: Second Generation
O: Originally Bangkok
[3] P4=Primary School (4 years),
P6=Primary School (6 Years),
M3=Secondary, M6=High School
[4] If there are two occupations, first one is main and second is secondary occupation.
[6] (○)=With Social Security
[Units: Baht]
No. of households researched: 50
Female Workers: 44 persons
Male Workers: 39 persons
Source: Processed from data of questionnaires conducted by author.

Fig. 4 Life Course of Female Workers (U Community): Former Factory Workers and Homeworkers

NO	[1]	[2] Ag	[3] Educatio	[4] Recent Occupation	[5] Income	[6] Initial Investment	[7] Capital source
Life course of former Factory workers							
27	S	26	M6	Security guard	6,000	0	–
28	S	28	M3	Factory –coffee	5,000	0	–
29	M	35	P6	Vendor/(Farmer)	4,500	1,500	Oneself
30	S	36	P6	Screen Cleaning	3,000	2,000	Family
31	M	39	P4	Vendor/(Farmer)	5,600	250	Oneself
32	M	39	Col.	Vendor	4,500	20,000	Bollowed
33	M	41	P4	Carpenter (with husband)	3,500	45,000	Husband
34	M	44	P4	Vendor	5,000	3,000	Bollowed
35	M	49	P4	Painter	3,500	45,000	Oneself
36	M	50	P4	Construction/(Vendor)	3500*	5,000	Husband
37	M	52	P4	Vendor	9,000	100,000	Bollowed
38	M	52	—	Vendor/ (Washing)	4,000	1,000	Oneself
39	M	55	P4	(Care Work)	–	–	–
40	M	58	M3	Vendor	5,000	2,000	Family
41	M	58	MS3	Vendor	10,000	0	–
42	M	63	PKS	Vendor	6,000	3,000	Oneself
43	M	67	P4	Fish Pond	5,000	105,000	Bollowed
44	M	68	P4	Vendor	7,000	2,000	Oneself



Note: [1] M: First Generation-Migrant
S: Second Generation
O: Originally Bangkok
[3] P4=Primary School (4 years),
P6=Prcmary School (6 Years),
M3=Secondary, M6=High School
[4] &(————): Secondary job
*Thele was no order for construction.
Income comes from vending.
No. of households researched: 50
Female Workers: 44 persons
Male Workers: 39 persons

Source: Processed from data of questionnaires conducted by author.

Fig. 5 Life Course of Female Workers (U community): Non-former Factory Workers

The survey of about 400 households in 2005, one and a half years after the fire, reveals interesting trends. In cases of the occupational profiles in Table 3–1 and Table 3–2, employed workers increased but self-employed decreased (For detail, please see Table 3 in appendix). Among the employed, the 'Upper Employed' is not increasing, while more people have entered 'Lower Employed' occupations, such as maids, cleaning waitresses and waiters. These types of work are relatively easy to enter into, especially for women, because they only require the skills which they already possess from their daily household work, such as cleaning washing cooking. Therefore, people moved from 'Self-

Table 3–1 Changes in the Occupational Profile in the Community (Male)

Occupational Category	Before Fire		After Fire	
	Persons	Ratio (%)	Persons	Ratio (%)
Farmer	0	0.0	0	0.0
Employer	0	0.0	0	0.0
Employed	81	38.5	87	41.2
Upper	*29*	*13.8*	*29*	*13.7*
Lower	52	*24.7*	*58*	*27.5*
Self-employed	120	56.9	113	53.6
Upper	*29*	*13.7*	*25*	*11.9*
Lower	*91*	*43.1*	*88*	*41.7*
Homeworker	0	0.0	0	0.0
Other	8	3.8	9	4.3
Unknown	2	0.9	2	0.9
Total	211	100.0	211	100.0

Table 3–2 Changes in the Occupational Profile in the Community (Female)

Occupational Category	Before Fire		After Fire	
	Persons	Ratio (%)	Persons	Ratio (%)
Farmer	0	0.0	1	0.9
Employer	1	0.9	1	0.9
Employed	54	49.0	64	58.0
Upper	*9*	*8.1*	*9*	*8.1*
Lower	*45*	*40.9*	*55*	*49.9*
Self-employed	39	35.4	25	22.7
Upper	*11*	*10.0*	*1*	*0.9*
Lower	*28*	*25.4*	*24*	*21.8*
Homeworker	1	0.9	2	1.8
Other	15	13.6	17	15.4
Total	110	100.0	110	100.0

Source: Calculated by author, from field survey conducted 2005
Note: Survey was conducted for household head.
Gray = 'Upper' division (B = Baht)
Income (Male) Before fire (Average 8,721 baht Median 8,000 baht)
After fire (Average 7,850 baht Median 7,000 baht)
Income (Female) Before fire (Average 7,984 baht Median 6,000 baht)
After fire (Average 7,160 baht Median 6,000 baht)

employed (‘Upper’ and ‘Lower’)’ to ‘Lower Employed,’ partly from the IE to the FE, or ‘Lower Self-employed.’ How would looking at these two actual occupational paths and mobility, enable us to define the upward mobility of the lower-class?

IV　Upward Mobility of the Lower-Class

The image of upward mobility in traditional theory is linear, that is, it assumes movement from the IE to the FE, from informal to modern sectors. From the field survey, we can posit the following counter argument on two levels. First, the occupational opportunities of lower-class change from time to time, as they interact with macro changes including economic restructuring and urban functions. Individuals make choices within the limits and possibilities created by these conditions. Second, micro analysis shows frequent mobility among ‘Lower Employed’, and ‘Lower’ and ‘Upper Self-employed’. Female workers leave factory work (the modern sector), and then they move to self-employed, and these IE jobs will probably be their life work. Thus, factory work or the FE was temporary in their life course, which actually goes against the grain of assumptions that underpin traditional theory.

Figs. 6–1 and 6–2 show the occupational mobility of two cases. ‘Employed’ come to the left of the figure and ‘Self-employed’ to the right. ‘Lower’ comes at the bottom and ‘Upper’ comes at the top. Former factory workers, females in Fig. 6–1, move from ‘Lower Employed’ to ‘Self-employed (Upper and Lower)’. At the burned site in Fig. 6–2, some people moved from ‘Self-employed’ to ‘Lower Employed’. These two cases show high mobility within these three occupational categories, ‘Lower Employed’, ‘Upper

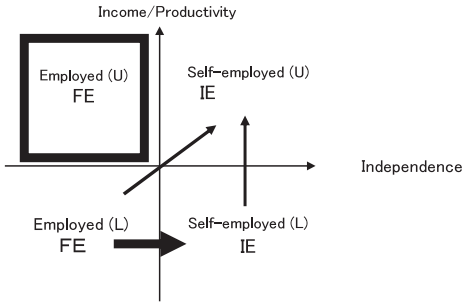


Fig. 6–1　Female (Former Factory) Workers in U Community

Source: By author, from field survey
Note: FE＝Formal Economy
IE＝Informal Economy
(U)＝Upper, (L)＝Lower
Occupational changes due to laying off, pregnant, etc.

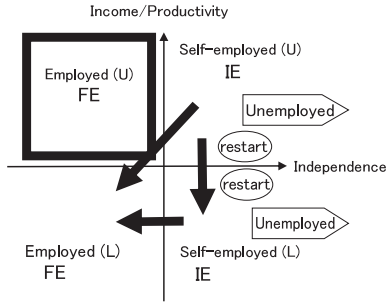


Fig. 6–2　Occupational Changes after the Fire

Source: By author, from field survey
Note: FE＝Formal Economy
IE＝Informal Economy
(U)＝Upper, (L)＝Lower
Occupational changes due to the fire

Self-employed' and 'Lower Self-employed', yet these workers also do not show signs of moving into the 'Upper Employed'. What distinguishes the 'Upper Employed' from others? The answer is simple: education. To enter 'Upper Employed', workers need to have studied in university and there are few people who can afford this. The fact that Thai society is divided along educational lines is strongly evident in the labour market of the lower-class as well. When you enter 'Self-employed', paths to the different types of occupation within self-employed are defined by individual conditions, such as ownership of resources, skills information, and so on. Here, these factors are much more important than educational level. In other words, it might not be easy, but if individuals can still obtain resources, they can enter 'Upper Self-employed' or move from 'Lower self-employed' to the 'Upper Self-employed'. However, for many of these people, the 'Upper Employed' is not an area that is easy to enter.

Interviews included questions on jobs satisfaction and also whether they want to start new jobs in the future. Not surprisingly, one of the important factors considered is 'income level'. Especially for 'Employed', people choose occupation, taking income factor into consideration. 'Stability' or 'Security' comes next. However, data on those classified as 'Self-employed' reveal an interesting trend: their emphasis on different factors. For both 'Upper' and 'Lower Self-employed', the first reason for choosing their current occupation is 'Independence'. Income factor is still important, but receives lower points [Endo 2007]. Interestingly, respondents have two different views on work values, notions of stability or security and independence. If they regularly needed cash for the education of their children, they tended to value stability, and therefore preferred to be 'Employed'. If not, then most people preferred to be independent, and so 'Self-employed'. Many people say they would like to open a grocery shop in the future (56% of people who want to start new jobs), in 'Upper Self-employed'.

These answers compel us to rethink traditional ideas of upward mobility. Again the image of upward mobility adopted by the government and traditional theory is one that is linear; that is, upward mobility means C becoming B in Fig. 3. If Figs. 6–1 and 6–2 are turned 90 degree to the right as Fig. 7–2, occupational paths figures actually overlap with the government's image. The axis of 'Income/productive' now overlaps with axis of 'poverty alleviation', and the axis of 'independence' is now downward. Government might define this direction as insecurity or instability. For the people, if their income level is about the same between 'Lower Employed' and 'Self-employed', then they prefer to be in 'Self-employed' because this means being independent. They cannot enter 'Upper Employed', but if they can avail themselves of resources there is a possibility for them to become 'Upper Self-employed'. Therefore, their image of upward mobility means much for the 'Upper Self-employed' in this divided occupational world of the lower class. Those who moved to the 'Lower Employed' after the fire might also fall back into 'Self-employed'. For the first generation, the image of success is someone who could manage their own business without facing risks such as fire or lay-offs. That image also

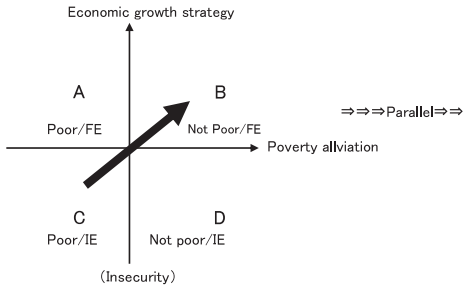


Fig. 7–1　Image of Upward Mobility by Government

Source: By authour
Note: FE＝Formal Economy
IE＝Informal Economy

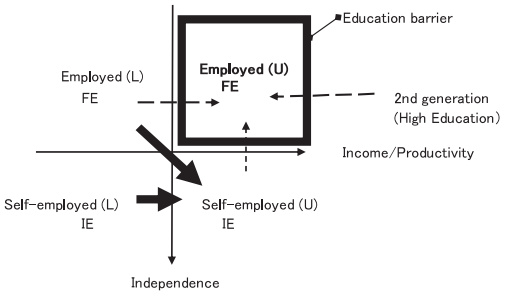


Fig. 7–2　Image of Upward Mobility by Lower-class, and Their Occupational World

Source: By authour
Note: FE＝Formal Economy
IE＝Informal Economy
(U)＝Upper, (L)＝Lower
——▸ Images of 1st generation
- - - -▸ Images of 2nd generation with high education
Turned 90 degree to the right

Fig. 7　Images of Upward Mobility by Government and Lower-class

includes those who were better able to manage risks and who could obtain stable development in their self-employed businesses. People can imagine these paths but not in the 'Upper Employed'. For the first generation, the education barrier is much higher compared to other conditions such as resource entitlements. The second generation might be the key actors to break through this barrier.

Conclusion

When paired with a dynamic urban analysis, empirical data presented in this paper, suggest that the actual patterns of occupational mobility and upward mobility diverge from the classic images of upward mobility propounded in traditional theories. The occupational opportunity of lower-class changes within a macro context and people choose their occupations by interacting with these changes. Their occupational opportunities are shaped by these macro conditions. It is important to note that the interaction between macro changes and the responses of people is not homogeneous and 'locality' and 'individuality' exist with specific characteristics. The field survey presented in this paper is useful for understanding and highlighting the macro trend and locality as a whole.

From the perspective of workers, the IE is not a temporary shelter but a lifelong

work. IE jobs were the final goal for some people, especially for the first generation. High mobility is often seen as negative, but from the workers' perspective, high mobility and instability that comes with it are something they can predict. Therefore, the problem is not mobility itself but how workers can build continuous occupational paths by managing risks and changes. IE jobs for the first generation enable them to invest in the education of the second generation and meet other needs. It is thus important not to dismiss the crucial role of the IE both as urban services and income source for workers. The choices and occupational paths of the first generation are made along with macro constraints. Still, success in 'Self-employed' enables them to invest in the second generation. This indicates that a second generation with better education might have wider choices and occupational opportunities.

However, along with the rapid macro-economic changes, competition among the IE is increasing for some groups. They confront the dilemma of increased vulnerability even if they themselves appreciate their independence. At the same time, 'employed' work has also started to change with the increase of temporary workers. Further discussion is needed to find out how people are coping with these challenges and whether these changes affect one's evaluation on value of work between 'Stability' and 'Independency'. Adding to that, even if individuals sufficiently manage the risks and changes, the level of household welfare is defined by how household members cooperate with each other. This aspect awaits further research and discussion.

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Appendix

Table 1 Occupational Category/Stratum

Male

	Occupational Category	Occupational Category	Example (from field survey)
Employer	Employer	Employer	
Employed (SS)	Upper Employed	Public officer, Teacher, etc	Public officer, Teacher
		Skilled worker (factory)	QC, Prastic factory, Electronic factory, Iron processing, Repair (car), Railway
		General employed, Office worker	Company, Wholesale/trade company, Marketing, Publisher, Medical company
	Lower Employed	Service worker	Security guard, cleaning, gardener
		Retail worker	Waiter, Hotel (room service), Supermarket
		Transport/Communication	Driver (Company/Individual), Messenger, Delivery
		Daily worker	Daily labour (Rapjaan), Daily worker (construction)
Self-employed	Upper Self-employed	Shop owner (except grocery)	
		Grocery Shop owner	Grocery shop
		Craftsman (Construction)	Carpenter, Interior, Painter, Floor
		Craftsman (Manufacture)	Sewing, Repair (car, electronic equipment)
		Artisan	Barber
	Lower Self-employed	Transport/Communication	Bike taxi, Taxi driver, Tuktuk driver
		Retail (Vendor/Hawker)	Vendor, Hawker
		Service	Garbage collector
		Other	Singer
Homeworker	Homeworker	Homeworker	Home-based worker, work on piece rate
Other	Agricuture	Farmer/fisher	
		Slaughter	

Female

	Occupational CATEGORY	Occupational Category	Example (from field survey)
Employer	Employer	Employer	
Employed	Upper Employed	Public officer, Nurse, Teacher	BMA, District officer, Teacher, Nurse
		General employed, Office worker	Office worker, Telephone operator
		Other employed	Saler (Yakult, Insurance)
	Lower Employed	Unskilled worker (factory)	Factory (Box, Textile/apparel, Plastic, Food processing)
		Service worker/Domestic worker	Security guard, Maid, Cleaning, Massage
		Retail worker	Waitress, Supermarket, Cook, Hotel
		Daily worker	Daily labour (construction)
Self-employed	Upper Self-employed	Shop owner (except grocery)	Game shop, Fishing pond
		Grocery shop owner	Grocery shop
		Craftswomen (Manufacture)	Sewing
		Artisan	Hair Salon
	Lower Self-employed	Retail (Vendor/Hawker)	Vendor/Hawker
		Carpenter, Interior, Painter, Floor	Construction (with husband)
		Service	Garbage collector, Washing
		Other	
Homeworker	Homeworker	Homeworker	Piece-rate worker (shoes, box, jewellery)
Other	Agriculture	Farmer	

Source: Made by author from field survey
Note: Gray = Upper division

Table 2　Data of Two Communities (By Occupational CATEGORY)

Former Fringe Community (Male)							
Occupational CATEGORY	Monthly Income (Baht)	Persons	Ratio (%)	Average Age	Education (Year)	Working Hour (week)	Wage per Hour (Baht)
Employed (Upper)	9,869	13	33.4	39.4	10.2	53.9	45.8
Employed (Lower)	6,067	9	23.2	41.7	7.7	58.9	25.8
Self-employed (Upper)	10,700	5	12.8	54.4	5.6	62.0	43.1
Self-employed (Lower)	8,136	11	28.3	47.0	5.4	81.5	25.0
Homeworker	2,000	1	2.6	66.0	4.0	98.0	5.1
Male (Total)	8,408	39	100.0	44.7	7.5	65.5	31.0
Former Fringe Community (Female)							
Occupational CATEGORY	Monthly Income (Baht)	Persons	Ratio (%)	Average Age	Education (Year)	Working Hour (week)	Wage per Hour (Baht)
Employed (Upper)	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Employed (Lower)	4,989	9	20.4	34.8	7.2	58.0	21.5
Self-employed (Upper)	8,167	3	6.9	50.0	8.3	87.7	23.3
Self-employed (Lower)	5,433	21	47.8	47.3	6.3	69.8	19.5
Homeworker	2,336	11	25.0	44.0	6.2	66.1	8.8
Female (Total)	4,755	44	100.0	44.1	6.5	68.0	20.6
Inner City Community (Male)							
Occupational CATEGORY	Monthly Income (Baht)	Persons	Ratio (%)	Average Age	Education (Year)	Working Hour (week)	Wage per Hour (Baht)
Employed (Upper)	15,800	5	11.1	40.4	9.4	59.4	66.4
Employed (Lower)	7,590	19	42.2	37.9	7.5	60.8	31.2
Self-employed (Upper)[1)]	2,833	3	6.6	38.0	6.3	98.3	7.2
Self-employed (Lower)	6,132	18	40.0	44.4	5.7	86.6	17.7
Male (Total)	7,635	45	100.0	40.9	6.9	73.1	26.1
Inner City Community (Female)							
Occupational CATEGORY	Monthly Income (Baht)	Persons	Ratio (%)	Average Age	Education (Year)	Working Hour (week)	Wage per Hour (Baht)
Employed (Upper)	12,100	5	10.1	37.6	10.8	53.6	56.4
Employed (Lower)	5,772	18	36.7	41.5	4.8	58.5	24.7
Self-employed (Upper)	6,450	10	20.2	42.1	4.7	90.3	17.9
Self-employed (Lower)	4,625	15	30.6	46.3	4.9	83.8	13.8
Homeworker	6,000	1	2.0	47.0	4.0	133.0	11.3
Female (Total)	6,243	49	100.0	42.8	5.3	73.3	21.3

Source: Processed by author, by using data from field survey

Note: [1)] One worker (Self-employed, sewing) could not get order for 3 weeks, during research period, therefore average income become lower.

Table 3 Changes in the Occupational Profile of Household Head (Male)

Occupational Category	Before Fire		After Fire	
	Persons	Ratio (%)	Persons	Ratio (%)
Farmer	0	0.0	0	0.0
Employer	0	0.0	0	0.0
Employed	81	38.5	87	41.2
Public officer, teacher	9	4.3	7	3.3
Skilled worker (factory)	9	4.3	11	5.2
General employed worker	11	5.2	11	5.2
Service worker	16	7.6	16	7.6
Retail worker	8	3.8	8	3.8
Transport/Communication	11	5.2	16	7.6
Daily worker	17	8.1	18	8.5
Self-employed	120	56.9	113	53.6
Shop owner (except grocery shop)	0	0.0	0	0.0
Grocery shop owner	7	3.3	5	2.4
Craftsman (construction)	14	6.6	13	6.2
Craftsman (manufacture)	7	3.3	6	2.8
Artisant	1	0.5	1	0.5
Vendor/Hawker	27	12.8	24	11.4
Transport/Communication	60	28.4	61	28.9
Service	4	1.9	3	1.4
Homeworker	0	0.0	0	0.0
Other	8	3.8	9	4.3
Househusband	0	0.0	0	0.0
Unemployed	4	1.9	5	2.4
Retired	2	0.9	3	1.4
Rental house, house owner	1	0.5	0	0.0
Study	1	0.5	1	0.5
Unknown	2	0.9	2	0.9
Total	211	100.0	211	100.0

Source: Calculated by author, from field survey
Note: Gray＝Upper division
Before fire (Average 8,721 B Median 8,000 B)→After fire (Average 7,850 B Median 7,000 B) (B＝Bahts)

Table 4　Changes in the Occupational Profile of Household Head (Female)

Occupational Category	Before Fire		After Fire	
	Persons	Ratio (%)	Persons	Ratio (%)
Farmer	0	0.0	1	0.9
Employer	1	0.9	1	0.9
Employed	54	49.0	64	58.0
Public officer, teacher	5	4.5	4	3.6
General employed worker	4	3.6	5	4.5
Unskilled worker (factory)	6	5.5	4	3.6
Service worker	22	20.0	32	29.1
Retail worker	13	11.8	15	13.6
Daily worker	4	3.6	4	3.6
Self-employed	39	35.4	25	22.7
Shop owner (except grocery shop)	1	0.9	0	0.0
Grocery shop owner	7	6.4	0	0.0
Craftswoman (manufacture)	3	2.7	1	0.9
Artisant	0	0.0	0	0.0
Vendor/Hawker	25	22.7	21	19.1
Construction	0	0.0	0	0.0
Transport/Communication	1	0.9	1	0.9
Service worker	2	1.8	2	1.8
Homeworker	1	0.9	2	1.8
Other	15	13.6	17	15.4
Housewife	0	0.0	1	0.9
Unemployed	9	8.2	12	10.9
Retired	4	3.6	4	3.6
Rental house/house owner	1	0.9	0	0.0
Study	1	0.9	0	0.0
Total	110	100.0	110	100.0

Source: Calculated by author, from field survey
Note: Gray＝Upper division
Before fire (Average 7,984 B Median 6,000 B)→After fire (Average 7,160 B Median 6,000 B)