Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Background

Social scientists are concerned with inequalities in societies. These include gender, age-specific, cultural, religious and regional differences in education, health, employment, wealth, and political freedom. An important application of social science theory is concerned with the merits of different strategies for alleviating such inequalities. For example, "affirmative action" has been used by universities to justify accepting less-qualified applicants from disadvantaged backgrounds in preference to other better-qualified applicants. This policy has also been used by government offices to provide employment opportunities to less-qualified applicants with disadvantaged backgrounds. Relevant recent studies include those by Healy et al (2003) in Thailand, Ho (2006) in Hong Kong, Basu and Basu (2005) in Australia, Neupane (2010) in Nepal, and Jhingran and Sankar (2009) in India.

The merits of such strategies continue to be debated. Apple (2004) stated that education systems that stream students too early can perpetuate class inequalities by channelling them into inflexible career paths. Davies and Guppy (2006) argued that schooling contributes to the reproduction of class differences, using the concept of "cultural capital" developed by Bourdieu (1997) and applied to a study of Japanese children by Bassani (2003). According to Stehr (1999), inequality regimes are now

substantially changing based on the extent to which knowledge is a key stratification element, a theme developed further by Sato (2010).

Although Thailand could be regarded as one of the developing nations where social inequality exists to a lesser extent than in other countries, and where all its citizens have similar educational and employment opportunities regardless of gender, region, wealth and ability, there are pockets where substantial disparities exist. For example, in their study of demographic factors affecting education, Thongchumnum and Choonpradub (2008) found substantial differences by gender and religion in secondary school completion rates in Pattani province.

Research into social inequality uses data from sample surveys and registries. Son (2007) used labour force surveys in Vietnam in 2002 and Thailand in 2004 to develop mathematical models that explain the disparity in welfare between male and female workers. Kauppinen (2007) sampled data from an employment statistics register of 15-year-olds living in Helsinki during 1990-1994 to study the effects of neighbourhood-level factors on residents' secondary education completion. Sittichai et al (2009) used data from the registrar's office at Pattani campus to fit a logistic regression model to university discontinuation rates, finding substantial differences by gender, religion and faculty. However, such data collection can be expensive and time-consuming, whereas census data is usually available at minimal cost.

The data available from the 2000 Population and Housing Census of Thailand (National Statistical Office, 2001) include individual records containing employment status (employed, not employed, or unknown), school attendance status (attending, not attending, unknown), gender, religion, district of residence, and age group. These

data provide an opportunity to define an outcome that is a measure of youth disadvantage for a demographic group, defined as the proportion of residents in the demographic group (defined by specifying the combination of gender, age group, religion and district) not attending school and not employed. Since most school students are less than 18 years of age and most of those employed are at least 15 years of age, we chose the 15-17 year-olds as the relevant age group for this study.

1.2 Statement of problem

School non-attendance is a major social problem among children and teenagers. Many children stop attending school for a variety of reasons such as: psychosocial, physical and behavioural factors; family factors such as structure, functioning and socioeconomic status; school factors such as school organization, curriculum and school climate; community and society variables such as poverty, community norms and demographic factors (Clark et al 2000).

In developed countries, youths normally get a sufficient education since they are considered as important resources to a society. If youth are under-educated or not educated, they are prone to become unskilled labourers. This is because most uneducated youth are from poor families, and thus are forced to work to find or increase incomes to help their families. For these reasons, lack of education among children results in further social problems such as crime (Buonanno and Montolio 2008), illicit drugs, HIV infection, and other social problems (United Nations 2000).

In Thailand, even though the youth unemployment rate is below the global average and not as severe as in some other countries, the rate is far greater than that of adult unemployment. Youth is a valuable resource to society (Pakorn 2005). Youth

unemployment can result in lessening a country's productivity. Moreover, youth being not in the labour force can lead to drug use and crime.

Since the start of the unrest in Thailand's three southernmost provinces and some areas in Songkhla in 2004, the problem of unemployment and school non-attendance among youths have largely been ignored by the Thai government.

Our objective was thus to investigate the variation in these *non-participation* (that is, not attending school and not employed) rates with respect to two factors, location (district or larger region) and gender-religion in a region of Thailand where such social inequality has been found or is believed to exist.

Our study emphasizes such social inequality conditions in order to identify the level of the problem among this group. Models for analysing youth unemployment in Pattani and Songkhla before the unrest might be useful in the future for comparisons, using data from the 2010 National Census. The purpose of this study is to focus on models of youth unemployment and school non-attendance using census data in 2000 for Pattani and Songkhla Provinces of Thailand.

1.3 Research questions

The research questions for the study are as follows.

(a) Among uneducated youth residing in each area of Pattani and Songkhla, how many had an 'unemployment' status?

(b) What was the pattern of youth unemployment and school non-attendance in Pattani and Songkhla?

(c) How do geographic factors affect youth unemployment and school non-attendance in Pattani and Songkhla?

1.4 Objectives

The objectives of the study are as follows.

(a) To examine the unemployment status of uneducated youth residing in each area of Pattani and Songkhla, and to analyse the pattern of youth unemployment and school non-attendance in those provinces.

(b) To examine the effects of geographic factors on youth unemployment and school non-attendance in Pattani and Songkhla.

(c) To construct appropriate statistical models of youth unemployment and non-attendance in Pattani and Songkhla.

1.5 Definitions of terms

Youth: Youth is often defined as persons aged 15 to 24 years old, but in this study it is defined as '15 to 17 years, inclusive', because in Thailand this age group is expected to be engaged in full-time education.

Non-Participation: Non-participation is defined as 'youth who are out of school and also have unemployment status.'

Disparity: Disparity is the difference or gap between outcomes of interest. In this case disparity refers to the gap between demographic groups (between youth of different gender groups or of different religions) in terms of being at risk of being neither at work nor at study.

Disparity Index: A disparity index measures the extent to which different demographic groups have different non-participation rates.

1.6 Literature review

School non-attendance

The number of out-of-school children reported by UNESCO was 115 million worldwide in the school year 2001/2002. Almost one in five (18%) of all primary school age children in the world are currently not in school. Almost half of them live in West and Central Africa and more than one third in Eastern and Southern Africa. In South Asia the proportion is estimated as 25%, but this proportion is no more than 6% in industrialised countries. Clearly, there are different regional patterns. There are also differences in rates between girls and boys. Girls account for 53% of the world's out-of-school children. The greatest gender differences are in the Middle East and North Africa region as well as in South Asia. In Thailand, about 13.3% of primary school-age children were out-of-school in school year 2001/2002, with slightly more girls not attending school (UNESCO Institute for Statistics 2005).
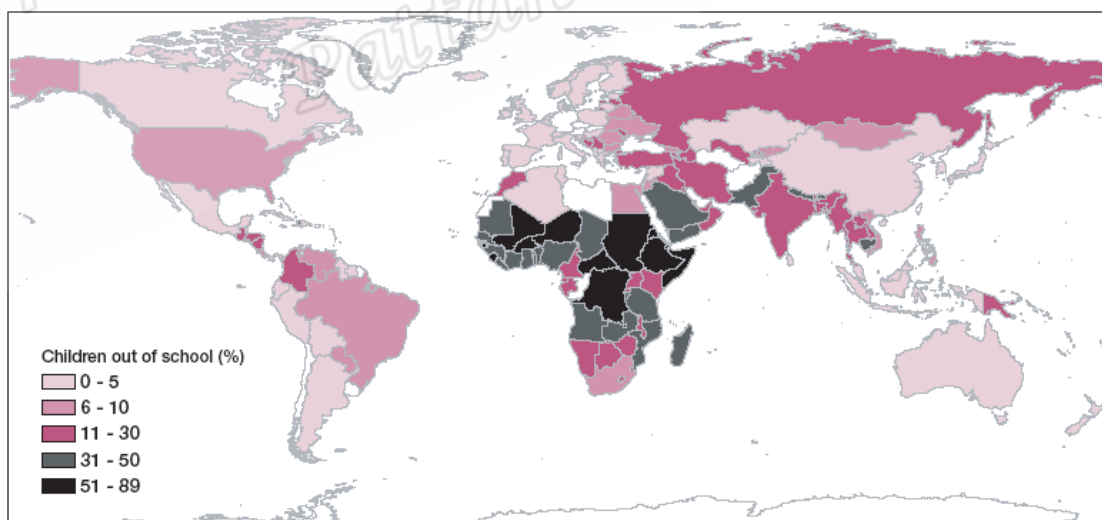
Figure 1.1: Primary School-age children out of school by country, 2001/2002

Youth unemployment situation

The economy is one of the main factors affecting employment. The human resource is the most important component to drive a country's growth. A population with high employment is significant in adding more potential to that resource of human labour. It can also be noted that not only does adult employment, but also youth employment, contribute to a nation's employment rate, and this element is tending to be more vital as youth population increases.

Mladýs (2003) studied unemployment in regions of the European Union (EU) for the age group 15-24 years and found that the rate in youth unemployment varied between 3.4% in the Austrian of Tirol and 59.5% in the Italian of Campania. The youth unemployment rate for the EU averaged 15.2% in 2002 but rates differed markedly between regions, being at less than 10% in 64 regions while 10 regions recorded levels in excess of 40%.

International Labour Organization (2005) reported labour and social trends in Asia and the Pacific in 2005. South Asia has the largest unemployed youth 14.5 million in 2004. Youth unemployment in South-East Asia more than doubled, from fewer than 5 million in 1994 to nearly 10.5 million in 2004. Indonesia and Philippines unemployment rate was over 25%.

The Thailand Development Research Institute (TDRI) in 2001 reported that the number of youth between 13 and 17 years of age within the labour force had been reduced from 3.5 million in 1984 to 1.04 million in 2000. The tendency for a higher percentage of youth to be in school and a lower percentage in work was arguably a result of governmental policy in improving educational opportunities for high school.

Additionally, this 'pull factor' was accompanied by the 'push factor' of the youth unemployment rate being higher than that of adults. Employment of youths decreased 57% for males and 64.7% for females. This reduction tended to be higher after the economic crisis in 1997. Compared to the period before the crisis, youth employment was reduced by one third.

The Ministry of Labour (2007) reported that Thailand's population aged 15 years and above in the third quarter of 1997 was around 44.6 million, of which 33.3 million (74.8%) were employed. This ratio had dropped by 2005, with 36.8 million or 73.7% of the population in the same age group employed.

Youth Education Crime and Drugs

Entorf and Spengler (2000) reported the results of socioeconomic and demographic factors of crime in Germany using panel data of the German states. Being young and unemployed increased the probability of committing crimes.

Gregg and Tominey (2005) found that a period of youth unemployment imposed a sizeable wage deficit for the individual, followed by slow recovery over the next twenty years if that individual could avoid further spells of unemployment after age 23. The modest residual wage deficit of around 9-11% persisted up to twenty years later even for those with no further unemployment experience.

Petrongolo and Segundo (2002) studied factors influencing staying-on at school after 16 years of age and the impact of labour market conditions in Spain. They found evidence that secondary school students base their decisions regarding post-compulsory education on local unemployment rates. The direction of these effects is clearly in line with the human capital theory for the demand for education. The high

youth unemployment rates may have made some contribution to the rise in upper secondary enrolment in Spain but the main determinant of the decision to stay on at school beyond the age of 16 was found to be the education level of parents.

Carling and Larsson (2005) found no evidence that intervention measures in Sweden to assist unemployed 20-24 years old youths gain employment did actually improve their future labour market situation.

Buonanno and Montolio (2008) identified the socio-economic and demographic determinants of crime across Spanish provinces, among those aged 15-29 years. The study found that crime rates display persistence over time and the economic variables used to reflect opportunities (GDP growth rate and educational attainment) were related to reductions in property crimes. Their findings also suggested that unemployment and not age structure is positively associated with the crime rate.

Carmichael and Ward (2001) investigated the relationship between crime and male adult and youth unemployment in Britain, focusing on 16-25 year old youths and 26-64 year old adults. They found that youth unemployment and adult unemployment were both significantly and positively related to burglary, theft, fraud and forgery and total crime rates. A relationship was found between youth unemployment and these specific crimes.

Bae and Song (2006) studied youth unemployment (15-29 year olds) and the role of career and technical education in the Korean Labour Market. This study found that the youth jobless rate had remained at around 7% over the previous five years; the percentage of unemployed college graduates among all jobless youth had continued to rise during the past decade; employment of female university graduates had declined;

in terms of job placement, two-year college graduates continued to perform better than those with a four-year degree; similarly, career and technical education (CTE) graduates performed better in gaining employment than students who did not achieve CTE graduation; and high school graduates without occupational skills were the highest at-risk youth group.

Knoester and Haynie (2005) found a negative association between family integration through having a resident mother and the risk of an adolescent committing violence. A negative association between family integration through having a resident mother and violence by adolescents was found to be important, for those living in neighbourhoods with lower proportions of single-parent families.

Chant and Jones (2005) studied youth, gender and livelihoods in West Africa: perspectives from Ghana and the Gambian children's geographies focussed on youth and children age 10-29 years old. This study found an interface between education and work. Education often required concurrent work for financial and other reasons, and the leaving of school was not just a parental decision but often involved the agency of the young person. The conclusion relates to the observation that even if labour markets in Ghana and Gambia are not accessed through education, their participants thought that education was directly correlated with income.

Horowitz and Trivitt (2007) found in the results of their study that if youth-crime is reduced by employment, it is highly formalized work environments of multi-national and well-established domestic firms that convey the strongest socializing effects, and some other prior child-labor initiatives may have been unintentionally counterproductive.

Studies using Statistical Modelling

Lassibille et al (2001) studied transition from school to work for 16-30 year old youths in Spain. They found that, for those who experienced some unemployment, the length of youth unemployment was less than 6 months for 38.6%, 6-18 months for 22.0% and more than 18 month for 39.5%. The result of this study included that the education of human capital exerts a strong influence on the duration of unemployment. With regard to the job match between education and work they found that young workers were more likely to be underutilized compared to their adult co-workers. Regression results indicated that people with higher education have a lower probability of being overeducated and a shorter length of unemployment. They also highlighted the poor performance of upper secondary education; a key problem in the Spanish educational system.

Hammarstrom et al (2002) studied unemployment and health behaviour after leaving school and the influence of the unemployment level, in both Sweden and Australia. The odds ratio for unfavourable health behaviour (including smoking and/or excessive alcohol consumption) was higher with increased unemployment, ranging from 2.05 for daily smoking to 4.05 for illicit drug use. Regarding gender, men were more likely to be involved in excess alcohol consumption and drug use but women were at higher risk for smoking.

Hammer (1999) studied young persons aged 18-24 years and found that the unemployment rates were 41% for Finland, 19% for Iceland, 27% for Norway, 29% for Sweden and 29% for Denmark. The relationship between unemployment in the original family and parents' educational levels showed differences between countries. In Finland, Iceland and Sweden, unemployment in the family of origin was

significantly related to reported economic problems among the unemployed. There was no significant relationship found between parents' education and unemployment in any of the countries studied, except Norway, where father's educational level was significantly related to the risk of unemployment. Logistic regression was used in the analyses for each country, and the negative effect of economic deprivation in the family of origin upon later job chances remained the same, even when controlling for unemployment and educational level in the family.

Many studies focus on lack of education and/or unemployment. Some show a relationship between these and crime and violence. Some of the unrest over the past seven years in southern Thailand has involved crime and violence. It would therefore be of interest to study more closely the situation of youth being unemployed and not completing education in the southern Thai provinces of Pattani and Songkla.

1.7 Expected advantages of this study

(a) An expected outcome from this study will be to create both descriptive knowledge and awareness of risk factors to guide local planning for reducing youth unemployment and absence from the educational system in specific districts of Pattani and Songkhla.

(b) Potentially, results from this study can be used to create guidelines for the government that can assist in diminishing the unrest in Pattani and Songkhla.

1.8 Scope of the study

This study focused on unemployment and school non-attendance among teenagers aged 15-17 years in Pattani and Songkhla in Southern Thailand. It investigated population characteristics and constructed statistical models to explain the

unemployment and school non-attendance situation among youth in Pattani and Songkhla provinces. Moreover, the effects of demographic and geographic factors were also investigated.

Pattani is a multi-cultural society with most of the population being Muslim. Its current unrest situation might be related to religion or culture. Songkhla is a sizeable and economy-driven province, where the Muslim population is a minority compared to the 'other religion' category, within which Buddhism is dominant. One factor of interest is that the unrest situation has spread to Songkhla. It can be noticed that four districts of Songkhla have already been identified as violence-risk areas. This invites more detailed research on this topic. However, it was not possible to fully investigate influences of the family social structure, due to the fact that such data were not routinely recorded in the national population and housing census that provided the data for our study, and collection of such primary data was not feasible.

1.9 Outline of thesis

This thesis contains five chapters. The introductory chapter discusses the rationale, objectives and definitions of the terms used in study, and also includes a review of relevant literature.

Chapter 2 provides a description of the methodology, including an overview of the statistical methods for data analysis aligned to the statistical models.

Chapter 3 shows preliminary data analysis, area and box plots graphically describing youth non-participation rates in Pattani and Songkhla, Thailand.

Chapter 4 presents the additive model, multiplicative model and map of the multiplicative model for youth non-participation rate in Pattani and Songkhla, Thailand.

The last chapter states the summaries and general conclusions. Suggestions for further research are also provided in this chapter.