THE IMPACT OF ETHNIC TOURISM
ON HILL TRIBES IN THAILAND

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Abstract: This research examines how the economic benefits of working in the ethnic tourism industry affect households in the local minority community, with a special focus on the division of labor and power dynamics of gender complementarity. Household income data gathered from the inner-city communities of the Akha tribal people in Thailand are the primary data used in a linear regression framework. The results show that ethnic tourism provides income to the local minority community. This income, however, is higher for young people and women than for older men, a disparity that disrupts the community’s traditional patriarchal social system. This study contributes to a nested model of multiple marginalization based on ethnicity, gender, and legal status. This case shall contribute to tourism planning and local policymaking in areas where ethnic tourism prospers. Keywords: ethnic tourism, ethnic minority, stateless, gender, Thailand.

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this research is to examine how the economic benefits of ethnic tourism affect the division of labor and power dynamics of gender within tribal households of minority communities engaged in ethnic tourism. Household data gathered from inner-city communities of the Akha people in Chiang Mai City, Thailand, are analyzed using a linear regression model. Currently, ethnic tourism—which is sometimes discussed as a part of cultural tourism—is an important part of the global tourism industry. Existing scholarly literature about the ethnic tourism industry tends to focus on the decision-making process dominated by either the mainstream residents of the destination country (Cohen, 2001, p. 147; Lindberg, Enriquez, & Sproule, 1996, p. 554; Van den Berghe, 1992, p. 243) or, in some cases, international tourism enterprises (Mbaiwa, 2005, p. 161). The host (natives)—middleman—
guest (tourists) framework (Van den Berghe, 1994, p. 122) or dependency paradigm (Mbaiwa, 2005, p. 158) is used to analyze this mechanism. The literature indicates that the local residents should participate in the decision-making process of ethnic tourism (Brohman, 1996, p. 67; Schilcher, 2007, p. 62), which enables local communities to benefit from the trickle-down effect of ethnic tourism (Milne, 1987, p. 512; Scheyvens, 2002, p. 157).

Van den Berghe (1994) defines ethnic tourism as the search for authentic encounters with other ethnicities. As modernity produces homogenization, instability, and authenticity, it generates a quest for an opposite experience (Van den Berghe, 1994, p. 8). The essence of ethnic tourism is noted as an encounter between the First and Fourth Worlds (Van den Berghe, 1992, p. 247). The Fourth World is defined by Swain, with reference to Graburn (1976), as

\[ \text{... [a] collective name for all aboriginal or native peoples whose lands fall within national boundaries and technobureaucratic administrations of the countries of the First, Second, and Third World (Swain, 1993, p. 33).} \]

Van den Berghe (1992) noted that tourism is a godsend for ethnic minorities of the peripheral class in avoiding starvation because some economic benefits of the tourist trade trickle down to the minorities (Van den Berghe, 1992, p. 244). In addition, it is argued that some minority peoples left in the periphery of national class systems enter into a capitalist market as members of an ethnic group rather than as members of national systems (Swain, 1993, p. 47).

According to Mala Rajo Sathian, residents of Thailand are divided roughly into three groups depending on ethnicity and religion: (1) the predominantly Tai race group (Tai, Lao, Shan, and so on); (2) the non-Tai group, which shares a devotion to Buddhism (Mon, Khmer and Shino-Thai, and others); and (3) the non-Buddhist community, which is regarded as a minority in Thailand and includes Muslims and the highland groups such as Karen, Hmong and Lisu (Sathian, 2009, p. 219). At the same time, residents of Thailand are divided into three categories in terms of legal status: (1) those with Thai nationality, (2) those with authorized resident alien status, and (3) undocumented residents. The ethnic categories and legal statuses are somewhat intricate in reflection of the diverse population. This study concerns inner-city residents, regardless of legal status, who are of one specific ethnic minority: the Akha people. The Akha, also known as Hani in Chinese, is an ethnic group believed to have a population of 2.5 million (Bunyasar-anay & Chumw, 2004, p. 5). The Akha do not have their own state and are scattered across a wide area covering five states—China, Myanmar, Thailand, Laos, and Vietnam (Burutphat, 1995, p. 113; Toyota, 1998, pp. 200–201). In Thailand, 68,653 persons registered themselves as Akha (Krom Phatna sangkhom le sawadikan krasuang kanphatna sangkhom le khwam mankhong khong manusaya, 2002). The Akha are regarded as one of the subgroups of the hill tribes of Thailand.

It is believed that until the 1950s, most of the hill tribes of Thailand, including Akha, resided in villages located in mountainous areas,
having scarce contact with the Thai central government in Bangkok (Bhruksasri, 1989, p. 12; Kesmanee, 1994, p. 681). In 1955, the Thai government set up border patrol police in northern mountainous areas in response to the geopolitical situation surrounding Thailand (Kunstadter, 1967, p. 281; Manndorff, 1967, p. 526). Since then, the hill tribes gradually integrated into the state of Thailand (Cohen, 2001, p. 136; Tapp, 1990, p. 154). In the 1970s, the central government offered Thai nationality to mountain villagers to secure their loyalty to the Thai central government. Because most of the hill tribal people were reluctant to accept it, only a few received it. Since the 1970s, a number of foreign governments and international organizations have launched development projects in mountain villages in collaboration with the Thai government (Sutthi, 1995, p. 5; Vienne, 1989, p. 35). Since the 1980s, numerous non-governmental organizations have launched small-scale development projects in the villages (Chotichaipiboon, 1997, pp. 110–114). As a result, in the name of development, the mountain villagers have been gradually inculcated with the nation state’s ideology, economy, or concept of social order (Kampe, 1996, pp. 155–156).

In the process, the socioeconomic situation of the mountain villagers dramatically changed (Chandraprasert, 1997). First, subsistence farming subsided (Chotichaipiboon, 1997, pp. 104–106), and materialism, nationalism, and capitalism began to take root (McCaskill, 1997, p. 32), including participation in tourism. Second, hundreds left their mountain villages and migrated into urban and suburban areas in search of employment and education (Jatuworaphruek, 1997, p. 1; Toyota, 1998, p. 197). Some of the tribal peoples migrated further than the cities of Northern Thailand to Bangkok, the southern beach resort areas, and sometimes even abroad (Yoshino, 1998, p. 81). As Cohen indicates, ethnic tourism in northern Thailand has developed commercially as it has simultaneously been absorbed into the lowland political, economic, and cultural system (Cohen, 2001, p. 64). As a result, the lives of these hill tribe people are no longer limited to the social sphere of mountain villages; their lives are now part of the global socioeconomic picture. At this stage, some hill tribe people began to realize that the lack of Thai nationality was a great disadvantage.

Those who had been reluctant to accept Thai nationality began requiring it around the turn of the century. Without Thai nationality, they were stateless people within the global socioeconomic system. However, at the same time, the geopolitical situation surrounding Thailand had changed. The “threat of communist parties” in surrounding countries had faded, and the central government, therefore, had no political motivation to distribute Thai nationality simply to secure the loyalty of the mountain villagers in the border areas. Furthermore, since the 1980s, large numbers of people have emigrated from Myanmar to Thailand, making it sometimes difficult to distinguish the hill tribes of Thailand from other recent emigrants. Today, the Thai government is trying to improve its nationality statues and requirements. However, it is still impossible to solve all stateless issues of ethnic minority people. Correspondingly, some hill tribe people are still
unable to acquire Thai nationality even though they take part in the
global socioeconomic world. This study, which examines hill tribes’
residual income earnings from ethnic tourism, sheds new light on
the debate concerning the circumstances under which their situation
will be improved through participation in ethnic tourism.

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE

Scholarly Work on the Socioeconomic Impact of Ethnic Tourism Worldwide

Recent literature contains two contrasting perspectives regarding the
socioeconomic impact of ethnic tourism on local minority residents
(Adams, 2006; Boswell, 2005; Bruner, 2005; Hitchcock, 2000;
Middleton, 2004, p. 73). The first widely accepted perspective is that
ethnic tourism has multiple benefits, such as cultural/identity revival
and socioeconomic, and sometimes even political, gains for local
minority residents (Adams, 2003, p. 571; Andereck, Valentine, Knopf,
Thompson, 2004, p. 380). These scholars often challenge traditional
arguments that question the authenticity of minority culture that is
reproduced on behalf of tourism (Grünewald, 2002, p. 1016; Yang &
Wall, 2009, p. 236). In contrast, the second perspective maintains that
ethnic tourism provides a limited economic return for local minority
residents, although many scholars do acknowledge the positive impact
of ethnic tourism on cultural/identity grounds (Cohen, 2001, p. 86;
point out situations where locals tolerate tourism’s unwanted effects
(Andriotis, 2006, p. 1082). According to these scholars, minority resi-
dents accept ethnic tourism despite the limited economic return be-
cause of its positive impact on the revival of culture and identity,
which transcends the limited economic return (McKercher & Fu,

Existing scholarly literature has focused on the analysis of the socio-
economic impact of tourism based on whether local residents partici-
pated in the tourism industry or not (Li, 2006, p. 133). Generally,
the conclusion has been that if local communities participate in the
tourism industry, especially in decision making processes, a trickle-
down effect can then empower and benefit local residents (Brohman,
1996; Hampton, 2005; Milne, 1987; Scheyvens, 2002). Hampton indi-
cates this finding from a case study of Borobudur tourism in Java, Indo-
esia (Hampton, 2005), and Scheyvens draws similar conclusions from
case studies of backpacker-tourism in the Third World (Scheyvens,
2002). Recent literature has begun focusing on the participation of
minority groups in the tourism industry and is shedding light on the
diversity of minority groups (Britton, 1982; Cohen, 2001; Lacher &
Nepal, 2010; Mbaiwa, 2005). However, little research to date has
focused on how economic benefits are distributed within the local
community (Harrison & Schipani, 2007, p. 86). Some of the existing
literature has analyzed and examined emerging core-peripheral relationships, such as those of the gateway city and peripheral villages or the dominant islands and subordinate islands, for example (Cohen, 2001; Walpole, 2000; Weaver, 1998). However, no known research has analyzed how the nationality status of local minorities has been affected socioeconomically by the tourism industry.

Two key papers that motivate this study are Van der Berghe (1992) and Swain (1993). Van den Berghe (1992) argues that ethnic tourism creates a new division of labor that broadly follows ethnic lines (Van den Berghe, 1992, p. 237):

"Tourists... are privileged... often seen by locals as a kind of super-ethny... Tourists are often predominantly Fourth-World peoples, ... in the sense of being economically and politically marginal to, and culturally distinctive from, the First-, Second- or Third-World countries of which they are nominal citizens... tourists are ethnically distinctive not only from tourists, but in the majority of cases, from the dominant ethnic groups of their own "national" societies. ... Middlemen generally belong to the dominant ethnic group or groups that control the polity and economy of the host country" (Van den Berghe, 1992, p. 237).

Swain (1993) discusses the gender dynamics within ethnic minority groups involved in ethnic tourism. According to Swain, women producers of ethnic arts seem to be empowered at the household level by their work (Swain, 1993, p. 49). However, at the ethnic group level, most women conform to societal expectations of male and female roles within their own ethnic and state societies. As a result, women are frequently not empowered to change their societies (Swain, 1993, p. 48). To date, few studies have succeeded in analyzing these points with empirical data, especially at the local level. This study tests the results of well-established arguments, such as those previously mentioned, by initially examining the income ethnic minority people earn from ethnic tourism as a proxy for the economic benefits accrued by the tribal household. The findings will then be interpreted in context of the impact these benefits have on the division of labor within marginalized ethnic minority communities. Also considered will be the extent to which those benefits affect gender complementarity and the power dimension of gender roles within kin-based household economics. The data set examined here is household data gathered from the inner city Akha community of northern Thailand.

DATA AND VARIABLES

Data

This study is based primarily on a subsample of the 382 Akha residents residing within the inner-city area of Chiang Mai. The subsample was collected between February 11, 2008, and March 28, 2008. Although there are no formal statistics on inner-city Akha populations, according to Bunaysaranay and Chumw, the Akha population in the
inner-city area of Chiang Mai was estimated to be 1,020 in 2004 (Bunayasanay, & Chumw, 2004), while Toyota estimated it to be around 2,000 in 1996 (Toyota, 1998, p. 197). Based on these two estimates, the sample of this study represents approximately 20–37% of all the Ahka residents in the inner-city area of Chiang Mai and includes residents with and without formal residential status. The sampling strategy was to interview Ahka residents of two major Ahka communities located in the southern part of Chiang Mai City. The data were derived from respondents who agreed to be interviewed. There were only two cases in which the residents indirectly declined to be interviewed. If an individual was not at home at the time of the interview, one of the family members reported on his or her behalf. There were a few cases in which family members were not sure about the absent family member’s income or educational background; in those cases, the samples were simply excluded from the data.

The household data were collected by a group consisting of three persons: the author, a coordinator, and a translator. The coordinator was a non-governmental organization (NGO) staff member, who had been providing educational support in the community for six years. The translator was a young Akha man who was bilingual in Thai and Akha and lived near the community. The interviews were conducted primarily with acquaintances of the translator, resulting in snowball sampling. In other words, samples may be biased in favor of residents who originally come from the same village area as the translator. Snowball sampling, however, was the only way to gather household data from the target community, which consisted of both documented and undocumented residents. No government or international organization or individual researcher has ever succeeded in gathering statistical data from this community. This study benefited from the efforts of the translator, who was a typical resident of the target community. In addition, the sample included sufficient varieties of gender, age, legal status, and occupation, as seen in the tables. Thus, the sample can be considered representative of the residents in the communities.

The sample is based on self-reports. In addition, according to rumors among community members, the possibility exists that there may be income that was not revealed in the interviews. For example, young people may receive money from foreign partners, or some may receive extra income by selling illegal items. Although this research would be more exhaustive had it been able to include such hidden income, attempting to identify such sources of income would have jeopardized the respondents’ trust and would have possibly resulted in their refusing to be interviewed. Had the research team pursued information on the respondents’ “hidden income,” it is likely they would have suspected the research team of being affiliated with the police. In other words, in an effort to collect the existing data, information related to possible hidden income was not requested. In the event that respondents were unable to calculate their monthly income, they were asked for a weekly income instead; that figure was then multiplied by four to estimate the respondent’s monthly income. If the respondents were also unsure about weekly income, then they were asked for their daily...
income and how many days per month they generally did not work. The daily income was then multiplied by the days the respondent generally worked in a month, and that figure was used. Vendors, who must also pay operation costs, were asked about those expenses, and the amount of those costs was then subtracted from the estimated monthly income.

Waitstaff at tourism-based restaurants, cafés, or bars, for whom tips are an important source of income (tips often exceed their fixed salary), were asked to include tips along with salary income. If the respondents or their family, who frequently did not know the amount of tip income, did not report these tips, they were asked for the name of the restaurant where the respondent worked. Estimating tip income was easy for the research team because the numbers of restaurants where Akha work are quite limited, and many other Akha have worked in such places. All of these processes were helped by research collaborators who were also Akha residents in the community or NGO staff members who had been involved in the community for several years. All data records were double-checked for coherence by the NGO staff member and the author on site. If any incoherence was found, it was verified by the respondents and modified on site. For this investigation, the occupation whose income was the most difficult to estimate and verify was souvenir vendor. To address this difficulty, pre-research was done by joining the Akha souvenir vendors in the night bazaar area for a week to check the amount of sales, operating costs, and the number of days the vendors worked per week. The results of the household data were then verified with the pre-research results, leading to the conclusion that such household data were sufficiently reliable.

Even though the samples collected amounted to nearly 400, they were restricted to the Akha’s labor force. Thus, the following people were excluded from the analytic sample: (1) children younger than 14 years, (2) full-time students, (3) pregnant women or mothers with newborn babies, (4) disabled people, (5) incarcerated persons, and (6) live-in domestic workers. Concerning the first group mentioned above, there were four exceptional children younger than 14 years old whose incomes were as high as the other adults and were, as a result, one of the major income earners in their families; these children were included in the sample. As for the second group mentioned above, it was quite common to find people who had missed formal educational opportunities and attended non-formal education courses and night/weekend courses. At times during the investigation, these people reported their occupation as students instead of unemployed. Those over 15 years old are included in the sample as part of the unemployed population regardless of their own classification.

For the third group mentioned above, women who were not working at the time because of pregnancy or recent childbirth were classified as being on maternity or childcare leave. Women who were working during the last stage of pregnancy were not automatically excluded from the sample. As for the fourth group mentioned above, there was an exceptional man who was blind but could still earn enough monthly income to feed his wife, two children, and himself. Because his
monthly income was rather large and stable even in comparison to surrounding households, this man, although blind, was included in the sample. Regarding the sixth group, a few respondents reported that their family members were working as live-in domestic workers and did not receive any salary but did receive shelter and meals. These live-in domestic workers were excluded from the sample because it was impossible to categorize them into income-earner or unemployed. Of the 382 samples, 177 of these were removed due to the above reasons.

Out of the 205 samples regarded as the labor force, 17 samples were removed because those people were involved in non-tourism-related occupations, such as diner staff at local markets (which tourists rarely visit), factory workers, local government workers, delivery people, garbage collectors, school orderlies or other similar occupations. The following are defined as tourism-related occupations in this study and are not limited to formal employment or legally enrolled businesses.

1. Hotel staff, such as cook or housekeeper
2. Waitstaff at restaurants that cater to tourists
3. Bar staff in tourist areas; floor service staff or cleaning staff
4. Car parking staff at tourist areas
5. Day laborers at construction sites for tourist-related buildings, such as hotels
6. Souvenir vendors, including all kinds of street vendors
7. Souvenir wholesalers
8. Barbeque stand vendors in tourist areas
9. Flower vendors in tourist areas
10. Beggars in tourist areas

As for unemployed residents, many of them had been involved in the above tourism-related occupations. They were therefore regarded as unemployed in the tourism-related industry and were included in the sample. As a result, 188 of the 205 samples remained for analysis. The details of the samples are shown below. Table 1 displays descriptive statistics for three groups of Akha residents in this sample. This analysis compares levels of earnings in terms of age, gender, and return to education for three groups of Akha inner city workers: Thai citizens, resident aliens, and undocumented residents.

It must be noted that all sample income was derived from a particular season and that much of the tourist-related income, such as that earned by vendors, is affected by trends in tourism. During the peak tourism season, their income booms, but it shrinks during the off-season every year. Because this survey was performed during a rather busy season, the incomes appear larger than average. The income of day laborers also changes, depending on NGO construction projects in the city. Sometimes, day laborers have no income at all; however, at the time of the survey, there was a major hotel construction project taking place near the target community, and as a result, the laborers’ income appears to be higher than average. Ethnicity was self-selected,
and subcategories within the Akha were not included. Mixed-race children and non-Akha stepchildren are included in the samples, regardless of their ethnic background, as long as the children were raised as members of the target communities.

Non-Akha spouses who live in the area, such as the French man and Thai man living in the community as the husbands of Akha women, were excluded from the samples because of their potential advantage in earning money due to their language ability or nationality status. However, even with these limitations, the household data gathered seem worth analyzing because the respondents’ age, gender, and occupation were so broad and covered all imaginable categories within the community. Furthermore, some consistencies were found among answers and amounts reported by the respondents. Because no formal statistics on such community residents exist, these household data surely have significance in providing an understanding of the situation of the inner city Akha community. Although this approach sacrifices greater depth in the measurement of the Akha people’s income, it does provide a greater breadth of understanding of income distribution among ethnic minorities derived from ethnic tourism.

**Variables**

The dependent variable was the monthly log-earnings from tourism-related occupations. To gather log-earnings, we added one to the monthly earnings of all samples to enable analysis of the samples for

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Table 1. Descriptive Statistics</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total sample</strong> (N = 188, Male: 52%, Female: 48%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monthly income</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
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<td>Education</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Thai nationality holders</strong> (N = 118, Male: 53%, Female: 47%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monthly income</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Alien’s card holders</strong> (N = 38, Male: 53%, Female: 47%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monthly income</td>
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<tr>
<td>Age</td>
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<td>Education</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Undocumented residents</strong> (N = 32, Male: 47%, Female: 53%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monthly income</td>
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<td>Age</td>
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<td>Education</td>
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* Their income is originally earned by Thai Bhats. The amounts are converted into U.S. dollars by the rate of the first day of the field research (February 11, 2008, 1USD = 0.0314 THB).
which earning was zero. As for independent variables, the following
factors were used: (1) Age, (2) Gender, (3) Education, and (4) Legal
Status. Variables number 2 and 4 were measured as categorical/dummy
variables. On the original survey questionnaire, “Thai language abil-
ity” and “occupation” were also included as factors affecting income.
However, Thai language ability has a high correlation with education,
and occupation has an obvious correlation with gender x age. Those
two factors were therefore omitted from the final stage of the analysis.
A catalog of the measurement procedures for all variables is presented
in Table 2.

**Hypothesis**

When examining the results of the linear regression analysis of the
effects of each of the above factors, the monthly log income clearly
shows that education has a positive effect on residual income earnings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Complete Title or Definition of Categories</th>
<th>Measurement</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Independent Variables</strong></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Age at the date of survey</td>
<td>Self reported age at the date of survey. Even for elderly residents, their self-reported age are quite reliable. Because Akha traditionally recognize their birth year by twelve signs of the Chinese zodiac</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Male or Female</td>
<td>Self reported gender</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Years of completed schooling</td>
<td>Any kinds of formal educations are included, also included several non-formal educations organized by the government related organizations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal Status</td>
<td>Type of formal identity card</td>
<td>Either nationality card, authorized foreigners’ cards or no cards, followed by respondents’ report. As for children younger than 14 years old, their legal status is estimated from their parents’ legal situation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dependent Variable</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Income</td>
<td>Log-monthly earnings from all tourism-related sources</td>
<td>Tourism related earnings consists of wage and salary income and self-employment income from all tourism related sources</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Sources:* from the conducted survey; *a* In Thailand, residents are issued nationality card at the age of 15.
(y = 3.142 + 0.078x + \varepsilon, p-value < 0.001). At the same time, a negative correlation (−.504, p-value < 0.001) was discovered between a person’s age and years of schooling. In the community, the younger residents tend to be more educated. When considering the above points, the conclusion seems to be that community members’ economic situations will improve in the future as younger generations will be provided with more educational opportunities. However, that conclusion needs further investigation. This article examines the assumption more fully by asking the following question: Do the income-earning levels of the target Akha community members increase if additional educational opportunities are provided? Furthermore, if education is not the crucial factor in increasing income, then what is?

RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

Although this study builds on the results of past research, which has described the ethnic division of labor and gender complementarity on power dimensions of gender roles, this study goes further by investigating household data collected in a minority community in which most residents were heavily involved in ethnic tourism. In other words, this study tests how ethnic tourism’s economic benefits affect the division of labor and gender dynamics in the household economies of ethnic minorities engaged in tourism. To date, very little research has been conducted to investigate this point statistically. This study is a statistical analysis that examines residual income from ethnic tourism as a proxy for economic benefits for the tribal household. To better understand this, we analyze the following four components in an effort to disentangle the net effects they have on income: (1) Age, (2) Gender, (3) Education, and (4) Legal status. Previous research in this area is improved by recognizing that the division of labor is not a single structure but rather a nesting double structure in terms of both ethnicity and nationality. Additionally, the power dimension of gender dynamics within that structure implies that there will be conflict between women’s increases in economic status within the household and the ethnic and gender ideology of patriarchy within an ethnic minority community. The results of this study will contribute to tourism planning and local policymaking in areas that have similar situations to those of the local communities in Northern Thailand.

Multivariate Methods

In order to test whether years of schooling increase the residual incomes of ethnic minorities in the tourism industry, I estimated a set of earnings regression models. The basic model, model 1, tests rate of return for each factors to log monthly income. The equation for model 1 is defined as follows:

\[ y_{ij} = \alpha_j + \beta x_{ij} + \varepsilon_j \quad [j = 0, 1, 2] \quad \text{Model 1} \]
\[ y_{ij} = \alpha_j + \beta_j x_{ij} + \epsilon_j \quad [j = 0, 1, 2] \] Model 2

\[ y_{ij} = \alpha_j + \beta_j n_{ij} + \epsilon_j \quad [j = 0, 1, 2] \] Model 3

\[ y_{ij} = \alpha_j + \beta_j n_{ij} + \beta_j^2 g_{ij} + \epsilon_j \quad [j = 0, 1, 2, \quad g = 0, 1] \] Model 4

\[ \beta_j^g \] represents a return to gender for person of the \( j \)th group, when \( g = 0, 1 \) indicating 0 = male, 1 = female.
RESULTS

Testing Educational Effect—Model 1

Table 3 presents the regression results for Models 1 to 3. The first attempt, Model 1, estimates the effect educational background has on the earning ability of people depending on their legal status. As for citizens, the years of schooling and income have a positive effect. However, in contrast, for those with only resident alien cards or those who are undocumented, educational experience had no statistically significant effect on the monthly log income. In other words, if residents are Thai citizens, any educational background can raise their income. However, if they are not citizens, an improvement in education is not reflected in their income level. The main question concerning this research is whether improving educational opportunities for the local minority will improve their economic situation via ethnic tourism. The answer is that for people who are citizens, improving educational opportunities will improve their economic situation. For those who are not citizens, however, improving educational opportunities will not improve their economic situation. This result leads to the conclusion that the effect of education is limited and that educational background has a positive effect only on those who are citizens.

Testing Age Effect—Model 2

If educational background is not a crucial factor in raising the income level of the local minority people, then what is a significant factor? The second objective of this analysis is to discover the factor that determines the income level of those residents participating in the tourism industry. Experimentation with several classification methods revealed that income differences were observed across age groups after dividing the target into legal status groups. The effect of age on income level for each legal status group was then explored, as shown in Model 2. The Model 2 results reveal the effects of age in the overall monthly log income. Age has negative implications for all target residents regardless of legal status. This outcome differs from the educational effect, which is beneficial only for those who are citizens, meaning that the effect of age is more crucial for residents than the effect of education. At this point, various regression models revealed that a significant difference exists among income reduction rates by legal status × gender. Model 3 further investigates this point regarding gender differences.

Testing Gender Effect—Model 3

Thus far, the effects that legal status, education, and age difference have on monthly income have been discussed. The next step is to impute gender effect into the analysis. Substantive conclusions can be drawn on this point from Model 3, which shows how genders decrease in earning capacity as age increases. First, when comparing the coefficients of males...
and females within each legal status group, coefficients for males are always larger than those of females, which means that regardless of legal status, a decrease in income due to age is more substantial for males than for females. Second, compared to citizens and resident aliens, undocumented residents show a larger gap between males and females. Thus, for undocumented couples (usually, the legal status of a couple is equal), women are more likely to gain a higher income than men. This gap grows more obvious as ages increase. Furthermore, only the results of undocumented women are not statistically significant, meaning that examinations of the decrease in income that occurs as a woman ages show that only undocumented women are free from this decrease.

Figure 1 plots the monthly incomes for the target people depending on legal status and gender based on Model 3. In this graph, normal lines indicate the predicted monthly log income of citizens, broken lines indicate resident aliens, and dotted lines indicate undocumented residents. In the same vein, for all local groups, dark-colored lines indicate male, while bright-colored lines indicate female. The results of the income survey plotted in Figure 1 clearly indicate that earnings decrease in inverse proportion to an increase in age for all the groups, and for all three groups of the target residents, the slope of income reduction is steeper for men than women. Furthermore, it is also obvious that a citizen’s average earnings are higher than those of resident aliens and that a resident alien’s average earnings are higher than those of undocumented residents. The earnings of an undocumented male are the lowest.
In conclusion, the results of the investigation demonstrate the following points. First, educational background is effective in raising monthly income only for citizens because if residents do not have nationality, their income does not increase, even if they receive further education. In other words, the education effect is limited to citizens. Second, the results suggest that for all the target groups, age affects the income level regardless of legal status, unlike the education effect, which is limited to a particular legal status group. Youth is one of the crucial factors in increasing income earning potential and is more crucial than education. Third, considering gender x legal status differences, income reduction proportionate to the age increase of women is more moderate for men of all legal status groups, which means, in this case, that being female is a crucial factor in securing higher income levels for the local minority people. Last, for both genders, it is common that a citizen’s income level is higher than that of a resident alien and that a resident alien’s income is higher than that of an undocumented resident. Legal status is a significant factor in securing better income. How are we to interpret these results? In the next section, we further analyze the mechanisms that produce them.

DISCUSSION

Limited Effect of Education

Why are people without nationality unable to increase their income even though they acquire higher education? The reasons are complicated, although some are inapplicable to this research. First, target residents are limited to certain jobs, and only citizens are able to secure the jobs that provide a secure and stable income. According to the residents, those employed as hotel staff or hamburger shop clerks, occupations that provide a secure and stable income regardless of seasonal tourist trends, need to provide a diploma from at least a primary school, which proves their basic skill in the Thai language. According to Thai law, schools must award diplomas to anyone who successfully completes the curriculum, including those who are not citizens. At the time of investigation, those without nationality could study at schools, but few possessed diplomas. In other words, despite legal regulations prohibiting such action, there was, in fact, still a multicollinearity between nationality status and education. Consequently, opportunities to gain stable employment are limited to citizens.

In addition, one of the high-income occupations among the target residents is becoming a souvenir wholesaler, selling materials from northern Thailand in Bangkok or in the southern resort areas, which requires frequent travel. For people without nationality, traveling outside districts where they are registered is restricted. Even resident aliens, who are allowed to travel outside their residential district, need to apply for permission each time they leave their district, and this takes time and effort. It is almost impossible for them to gain permission to travel regularly. Therefore, to become a high-earning wholesaler, one needs
nationality. Although the reasons for the income difference between citizens and non-citizens are now clear, the income difference between resident aliens and undocumented residents is unclear. When examining the reasons for the income differences between resident aliens and undocumented residents, even for marginalized occupations such as souvenir vending or day labor at construction sites, it is clear that undocumented workers are in a very disadvantageous situation. For example, research on souvenir vendors revealed that each souvenir vendor has a monthly contract with landowners where they operate their vending stands and that these landowners explained that every tenant must have some kind of identification card, such as a nationality or resident alien card.

Thus, for undocumented residents, the only way to be a vendor is to be a “walking” vendor, and this occupation has the smallest income level compared to those who sell souvenirs on mats spread out on the pavement. Respondents also explained that day laborers at the same construction site earn different rates depending on nationality status. For example, citizens can earn a good income abiding by national regulations. Resident aliens can earn regular income, albeit not as high as what citizens earn. Undocumented residents, though, receive the smallest payment or sometimes no payment at all. Furthermore, undocumented residents cannot protest to their employers for fear of being reported to the police because they are illegal residents. As a result, undocumented residents are still deprived of income opportunities, even niche occupations at the bottom of the local tourism industry. Thus, the income level of undocumented residents is even lower than that of resident aliens. Young undocumented residents can still find a way to gain a higher income in the service sector, although this is impossible for senior undocumented residents.

The Advantage of Youth and Femininity

When the target residents are young, there is not that great of a gap in income levels based on gender or legal status. However, as the residents age, the gap grows exponentially. For every group, income declines proportionally as age increases. The rate at which income declines is greater for resident aliens than for citizens, and it is greater still for undocumented residents. At the same time, this rate of decline is more severe for men than women for each legal status group. What can explain these results? Although this question cannot be answered completely, some causes can be ruled out. Ethnic tourism, as previous research indicates, relies on stereotypical images of the ethnic minority as unspoiled, timeless, primitive, natural, and exotic (Cohen, 2001, pp. 43–54; Nepal, 2005, pp. 124–125), images that often relate to gender (Yang, Wall, & Smith, 2008, p. 761). As a result, the most abundant job opportunities for ethnic minority residents are souvenir vending, waiting tables, or working within the service industry, including jobs in the sex industry, which are usually given only to women or young boys, with the largest labor market being young women. Simply put,
most of the income opportunities that capitalize on “hill tribeness” are given mainly to women. As a result, in the research target, minority men in their 40s or above are generally not employable. Those tourism-related occupations that are open to senior men, such as souvenir wholesaling or tour operations, are limited in number and available only to people who meet certain requirements, such as being citizens and/or having a sufficiently good education. In other words, it is quite difficult for senior minority males to find a job in ethnic tourism, which favors females and the young in the name of exoticism.

*Interpretation of Ethnic Division of Labor in a Socioeconomic Context*

Van den Berghe (1992) argues that ethnic tourism creates a tripartite division of labor: tourists, “tourees,” and middlemen (Van den Berghe, 1992, p. 236). In most cases, this is an ethnic division of labor (Van den Berghe, 1992, p. 236). Tourists are privileged people who come from various ethnic groups (Van den Berghe, 1992, p. 236), while tourees are predominantly Fourth-World peoples, often belonging to the poorest and most isolated of the underdeveloped countries (Van den Berghe, 1992, p. 237). Middlemen generally belong to the dominant ethnic group or groups that control the polity and economy of the host country (Van den Berghe, 1992, p. 237). In addition to the ethnic division of labor indicated by Van den Berghe, this study shows that among Fourth-World people that have been marginalized ethnically and culturally by dominant citizens, there exists a further division of labor, based on predetermined residency status categories: citizens, resident aliens, and undocumented residents. Those people who belong to an ethnically marginalized group and have nationality can earn a relatively higher income than those without nationality. In other words, this study’s findings indicate the existence of a nesting double marginalization structure by ethnicity and nationality.

*Gender Complementarity and Power Dimensions of Gender Roles*

Swain argues that in minority societies engaged in tourism, women often lead in the production and sale of ethnic goods (Swain, 1993, p. 35). This gendered artisan production can rarely support an entire family, but it is, nonetheless, a source of income that is much more significant for ethnic identity than other forms of work in the state society (Swain, 1993, p. 44). The success of women’s sales of textile art promotes women’s economic self-sufficiency and thus changes gender dynamics within the group (Swain, 1993, p. 46). However, at the ethnic group level, women are not empowered because most women conform to cultural ideas of male and female roles within their own local and state societies (Swain, 1993, p. 48). This socioeconomic situation induces gender antagonism within the household. Patriarchal rule is challenged by the gender division of household labor in which women are now the main household income provider, but cultural ideology
continues to reproduce social forms of ethnic identity (Swain, 1993, p. 42). In the target Akha community, minority men traditionally worked as the head of the household; however, many have now become dependent on the income that women and young children provide. This new gender division of labor in the household income structure conflicts with patriarchal gender complementarity. This “contradiction” and “stigma for men” sometimes leads to alcohol and narcotic abuse among the community’s men. According to the nesting double marginalization structure, the role of kin-based household economies to strengthen ethnic identity and gender roles is threatened.

CONCLUSION

This article has examined how the economic benefits of ethnic tourism for tribal households affect the division of labor and gender dynamics in the local minority community engaged in the tourism industry. It has examined the income from ethnic tourism as proxy for economic benefits, and a sample of inner-city Akha residents, of whom many work in the tourism industry, was tested. The results clearly showed that among the minority people investigated, the young and women were the highest income earners. A mature man earns the least, although culturally, he is expected to be the head of the household under traditional patriarchy. This situation threatens the ability of kin-based household economies to strengthen ethnic identity and gender roles. Patriarchy is challenged by the new gender division of household labor in which women and the young now earn the main household income, but cultural ideology continues to reproduce social forms of ethnic identity based on patriarchal gender roles (Swain, 1993, p. 42). This socioeconomic situation induces gender antagonism within the household. This study supports Swain’s argument that women earning income via commoditization of ethnicity are not empowering themselves to change their societies through this process (Swain, 1993, p. 48).

Perhaps an even more important finding of this analysis is that undocumented people are even more marginalized within an already ethnically marginalized group. This study shows that among the Fourth-World people who are ethnically and culturally marginalized by dominant citizens, there is a further division of labor based on predetermined residency status categories: citizens, resident aliens, and undocumented residents, which we refer to as the legal-status division of labor. Multiple nesting marginalization structures exist, and this complicated socioeconomic situation, induced by participation in ethnic tourism, results in the limited empowerment of women and also alcohol and narcotic abuse among men in the community. In conclusion, this case is one of the examples that demonstrates how merely promoting education or “economic income” can improve neither the marginalized situation of the minority community within the state nor the power imbalance of gender roles or legal status within the minority society. The findings of this research concerning the Akha
community will contribute to tourism planning and local policy-making in other regions to secure a social mechanism that enables to have easier access to nationality.

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