

“City Lights or Quiet Nights?” Perceptions of urban versus rural life among young adult rural to urban migrants in Thailand

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Introduction

The world is currently undergoing an urban transition marked by redistribution of the global population from predominantly rural to predominantly urban. About half of the world's population now lives in urban areas, and the United Nations (2010) projects that this proportion will reach 68.7% urban by the year 2050. The world's more developed regions are further along in this urban transition than are less developed countries, where the pace of urbanization is now most rapid. While the urban populations of more developed regions are projected to increase slightly, the vast majority of population growth in the coming decades will be absorbed by urban areas in the developing world. Meanwhile, the size of rural populations in all regions of the world will decline (United Nations, 2010).

The geographic focus of this study is Thailand, where approximately one-third of the population resides in urban areas (Population Reference Bureau, 2010; United Nations, 2010). The United Nations (2010) projects that this figure will reach 60% by 2050, an increase that is commensurate with the projected urbanization trend of the developing world. Thailand represents not only urbanization and migration patterns typical of the developing world, but it also exemplifies the demographic context that other developing countries will face as they complete their own urban transitions.

Rural-to-urban migration constitutes a growing proportion of the internal migration flows in Thailand (Guest 2003) largely due to a transformation in the labor force structure resulting from government policies supporting export-oriented development (ESCAP 2002, Jones 1993). Expanded employment opportunities in the industrial and service sectors have increased the demand for labor in urban areas (Lim 1993, Phongpaichit and Baker 1995). Financial considerations have been found to motivate rural-to-urban migration. According to Thailand's *1980 Population and Housing Census*, the most common reasons for rural-to-urban migration were economic (Pejaranonda, Goldstein and Goldstein 1984). Because economic aspirations and employment prospects are primary motivations for migrants, economic and employment outcomes are often key considerations among the consequences of migration.

While economic determinants and outcomes of rural-to-urban migration are among the most salient factors for both researchers and migrants, the subjective well-being of migrants is also at stake. Recent research has examined the impact of urbanization on mental health. Some studies have found relatively high prevalence of mental health disorders in cities, such as anxiety and depression (Demyttenaere et al. 2004; Kessler et al. 2010), and some suggest that rural-to-urban migration contributes to the high prevalence of mental health disorders in cities where individuals who move from rural areas are more likely to experience poverty, deprivation, and isolation, which in turn can negatively impact mental health (e.g. Andrade et al. 2012). However, there are a variety of aspects of city life that are attractive to young adults, such as employment and educational opportunities, increased anonymity, social opportunities, and exposure to globalized society. Thus, rural-to-urban migration may also result in better well-being.

In previous work on the health impacts of rural-to-urban migration on young adults in Thailand, we observed a significant increase in mental health status for rural-to-urban migrants relative to their counterparts who stayed in the rural origin villages (Nauman, et al. 2011). Moreover, in a subsequent study, we found that perceptions of city life are associated with improvements in mental health status for rural-to-urban migrants (Nauman, et al. 2012). In this paper, we further explore migrants' perceptions of city life and whether pre-migration perceptions are associated with subsequent migration; whether migrants' perceptions change from pre- to post-migration; and how their perceptions compare with their counterparts who live in rural and urban areas.

Research Objectives

The aim of this paper is to examine perceptions of city life for rural-to-urban migrants relative to their counterparts who reside in the rural origin villages and urban destination areas. Employing a mixed methods approach, we analyze longitudinal survey data and qualitative interviews to address the following research questions:

1. Before they move, do rural-to-urban migrants have different perceptions of city life than their counterparts who stay in the rural origin villages?
2. Do perceptions of city life change with rural-to-urban moves? If so, how?
3. How do the perceptions of recent rural-to-urban migrants compare with the perceptions of longer-term urban residents?

Data & Methods

This study includes both quantitative and qualitative components. The quantitative data are from a longitudinal survey that was conducted in Kanchanaburi province, located on the western border of Thailand, and in urban destination areas. Baseline data were collected in 2005 through a household-based census of 80 rural villages in Kanchanaburi province. Because migration is typically undertaken during young adulthood, the sample for this study includes the 18 – 29 year olds who were enumerated in the initial census. A follow-up census was conducted in 2007, and those who remained in the rural study sites in Kanchanaburi were re-interviewed there. The 2210 individuals re-interviewed in rural Kanchanaburi comprise a comparison group of young adults who remained in the sending areas. Those who migrated to urban areas, including Metropolitan Bangkok, Nakhon Pathom and Kanchanaburi City, during the two-year period between survey waves were re-interviewed at destination; these 177 individuals constitute the sample of rural-to-urban migrants, our primary group of interest. In 2007, a

sample of longer-term urban residents was selected in communities where the rural-to-urban migrants had settled. This sample could only be selected after migration, because it was drawn from migrants' chosen destinations in order to maximize comparability with the rural-to-urban migrants. This additional comparison group included 252 individuals who had lived in the urban destination areas for at least 5 years. The survey collected information on socio-demographic characteristics, migration history, physical and mental health status, social support, perceptions of city life, and many other measures.

The key dependent variables for our analyses are the following perceptions of city life:

- Urban life is freer than rural life
- Urban people work harder than rural people
- People who move to the city make a lot of new friends
- People who move to the city meet new girlfriends/boyfriends
- Urban people are more lonely than rural people
- People who move to the city get help from friends
- Earning income in urban areas is easier than in rural areas
- People who move to the city have free time to learn new things
- Urban life is more expensive than rural life
- Urban areas are more dangerous than rural areas
- Urban life is more stressful than rural life

These items were measured pre- and post-migration with dichotomous response options: agree or disagree. The first set of analyses compares perceptions of city life measured in 2005 (*i.e.*, when eventual migrants were living in rural Kanchanaburi) between those who subsequently migrated to urban destinations and those who stayed in rural Kanchanaburi. The second set of analyses examines changes in perceptions of city life from pre- to post-migration for rural-to-urban migrants. By comparing changes in perceptions for the migrants and the rural comparison group, we assess whether changes in perceptions of city life are associated with rural-to-urban migration. Presumably, the perceptions of those who stay in rural Kanchanaburi would not change much, while migrants' perceptions may be influenced by their first-hand experience of city life. We then compare post-migration perceptions of city life (*i.e.*, when migrants are living in urban areas) with the perceptions of longer-term urban residents.

For the qualitative component of the study, in-depth interviews were conducted with 12 male and 12 female young adults who had moved from the rural study sites in Kanchanaburi province to Metropolitan Bangkok. The overall purpose for collecting qualitative data was to better understand life changes related to the migration experience, focusing on the benefits and consequences of rural-to-urban migration. The discussion guides address the decision to migrate; living arrangements; differences between life in the village and life in the city; social relationships; health changes; benefits and challenges of living in the city; and new opportunities that accompany migration. The transcripts of these interviews were coded using NVivo software and analyzed for key themes in the migration experiences of Thai young adults. In this paper, we will present results that pertain to migrants' experiences of city life, particularly concerning the aspects addressed in the quantitative measures listed above.

Results

To address the first research question, perceptions of city life measured in 2005 for those who subsequently moved to the city and those who stayed in rural Kanchanaburi are presented in Table 1.

Only one perception differs significantly between migrants and the rural comparison group. Before they moved, 73.4% of the rural-to-urban migrants agreed that “earning income in urban areas is easier than in rural areas” – compared to 64.1% of rural residents. This underscores the prominence of economic motivations as a key determinant of rural-to-urban migration. There is also a significant difference among females for the perception that “people who move to the city get help from friends.” Before moving, only 41.3% of female migrants agreed with the statement, compared to 50.9% of females in the rural comparison group. The proportion of female migrants is also much lower than the proportion of male migrants who agreed with the statement prior to migrating (41.3% vs. 63.5%).

We use cross-sectional logistic regressions to test the association between subsequent migration and *a priori* perceptions of city life (measured in 2005) while controlling for socio-demographic factors and social support. The coefficients for the key independent variable, migration status, are listed in Table 2 for each of the perceptions of city life. (Coefficients for the control variables are not shown.) The multivariate results show a significant association between subsequent rural-to-urban migration and the perception that it is easier to earn income in the city. This finding is not surprising since economic motivations are often central to the decision to migrate, particularly for rural-to-urban migration. For females, no other perceptions of city life were significant predictors of migration. Males who subsequently moved to the city were less likely to perceive that urban areas are more dangerous than rural areas, compared to males who stayed in the rural origin villages. For males, the combination of expected economic benefit coupled with low risk perception in terms of dangers in the city seems to encourage rural-to-urban migration.

Collectively, the results in Tables 3, 4 and 5 address our second research question: Do perceptions of city life change with rural-to-urban moves? Table 3 shows pre- and post-migration perceptions of city life for rural-to-urban migrants as well as the direction and magnitude of changes in perceptions. In Table 4, changes in migrants’ perceptions of city life are compared with changes observed for the rural comparison group during the same timeframe. A significant difference between the groups suggests that the change observed for migrants is potentially related to the rural-to-urban migration experience, as the observations for the rural comparison group represent changes (or lack thereof) that occur in the absence of migration. For the rural comparison group, changes in perceptions of city life could be due to the influence of migrants who move back or visit from urban areas on the perceptions of those in rural communities; or indirect exposure to city life through various forms of media.

The most dramatic change is for the perception that “people who move to the city meet new girlfriends/boyfriends” (see Table 3). The proportion of rural-to-urban migrants who agreed with this statement decreased by about 24 percentage points from pre- to post-migration (and the change is about the same for men and women). The formation of romantic and sexual relationships is a key component of the transition to adulthood. It has been shown in many contexts that migrants are more likely to be to be single than married. In our sample, about two-thirds of the migrants are single. The expectation that there would be more prospective partners in the city than in the village seems to precede migration but does not necessarily persist after moving to the city (perhaps suggesting that migrants’ expectations of finding a partner are not met).

The direction and magnitude of changes in perceptions of city life from 2005 to 2007 are shown in Table 4 for those who migrated during that timeframe and those who stayed in rural Kanchanaburi. Again, the largest difference is in the perception that “people who move to the city meet new girlfriends/boyfriends.” In contrast to the 24 percentage point decline observed for rural-to-urban migrants, the proportion of rural residents who agreed with this statement decreased by 8 percentage points. For males migrants, the perception that “urban life is more expensive than rural life” increased

by almost 6 percentage points, while there was a small decrease in the proportion of men in the rural comparison group who agreed with this statement.

To determine whether changes in perceptions of city life can indeed be attributed to rural-to-urban migration, we employ fixed effects regression using the longitudinal data. This analytic method mitigates potential bias due to migrant selection by controlling for all time-invariant characteristics of the respondents. Because migration is not a random process, those who choose to move may differ from their non-migrating peers in fundamental ways – some of which can be measured, such as educational attainment and economic status, while others are subjective qualities that are difficult to quantify. Even unobserved characteristics are controlled in fixed effects regressions, which reduces the potential for confounding factors to bias coefficient estimates. The models include control variables for factors that may change over time, particularly in the context of migration, including marital status, educational attainment, employment status, and social support. The coefficients for the key independent variable, migration status, are shown in Table 5 for each of the perceptions of city life. (Coefficients for the control variables are not shown.)

The results of fixed effects analyses indicate that the decline in the perception that “people who move to the city meet new girlfriends/boyfriends” is attributable to rural-to-urban migration. This finding further supports the conjecture that migrants anticipate that there will be more prospective partners in the city than in the village but their actual experience in the city does not necessarily meet this expectation. For males, rural-to-urban migration is associated with an increase in the perception that city life is more expensive than rural life. Overall, the changes in migrants’ perceptions of city life from pre- to post-migration reflect a contrast between optimistic expectations before they move and perhaps more practical perceptions after moving to the city. This suggests that rural-to-urban migrants may experience a ‘reality check’ of sorts as they assimilate to life in the city.

To address the third research question, we compare perceptions of city life measured in 2007 for recent rural-to-urban migrants (now living in urban areas) and longer-term urban residents in Table 6. Cross-sectional logistic regression models test the association between rural-to-urban migration – versus being a longer-term urban resident – and perceptions of city life measured in 2007 while controlling for socio-demographic factors and social support. The coefficients for the key independent variable, migration status, are shown in Table 7a for each of the perceptions of city life. (Coefficients for the control variables are not shown.) The results differ for men and women.

A higher proportion of male migrants than urban residents agreed with the perceptions that urban people are more lonely than rural people and urban areas are more dangerous than rural areas (see Table 6). The multivariate results confirm that male migrants were more likely than their urban counterparts to agree with these statements. The perception that urban life is more stressful than rural life is also associated with rural-to-urban migration for males, versus being a longer-term urban resident (see Table 7a). For females, recent migrants were more likely than longer-term urban residents to have the perception that urban life is more expensive than rural life.

Female migrants were less likely than longer-term urban residents to perceive that urban people work harder than rural people (see Table 7a), and this perception had not changed significantly from pre- to post-migration for females (see Table 3). In contrast, the findings suggest that, for men, migrants’ and urban residents’ perceptions pertaining to this statement are converging. The proportion of male migrants who agreed increased by more than 10 percentage points from pre- to post-migration (a borderline significant change; see Table 3), and in 2007, there is not a significant difference between

male migrants and longer-term urban residents in the proportion who agreed that urban people work harder than rural people (see Table 6).

Collectively, these findings reflect important aspects of the migration experience and adaptation to the urban environment. As migrants assimilate into city life, they become more aware of some contrasts between urban and rural life, such as the higher cost of living, more stressful lifestyle, and more dangerous environment in urban areas. Because of their relatively recent experience in both rural and urban settings, migrants may be more attuned to these differences than longer-term urban residents.

The perceptions of city life (measured in 2007) for those who stayed in rural Kanchanaburi are also shown in Table 6. Before they moved, rural-to-urban migrants' perceptions of city life were similar to the perceptions of rural residents. In Table 1, only two perceptions are significantly different between the two groups. However, after moving to the city, migrants' perceptions become more distinct from the perceptions of their rural counterparts. In Table 6, five perceptions of city life are significantly different between recent rural-to-urban migrants and rural residents.

Cross-sectional logistic regression models test the association between rural-to-urban migration – versus staying in rural Kanchanaburi – and perceptions of city life measured in 2007 while controlling for socio-demographic factors and social support. The coefficients for the key independent variable, migration status, are shown in Table 7b for each of the perceptions of city life. (Coefficients for the control variables are not shown.) Recent rural-to-urban migrants were more likely than rural residents to perceive that it is easier to earn income on the city. This positive association also existed prior to migration (see Table 2). Despite perceiving that it is easier to earn income in the city, males who recently moved to the city were more likely than their rural counterparts to perceive that urban people work harder than rural people (see Table 7b). After moving to the city, both male and female migrants were less likely than rural residents to agree that people who move to the city meet new girlfriends/boyfriends. This finding is to be expected, as the decline in this perception was significantly associated with rural-to-urban migration in the fixed effects analysis (see Table 5).

Conclusions

Four general conclusions can be drawn from the results of this study:

1. *A priori* perceptions of city life that are associated with subsequent rural-to-urban migration reflect the prominence of economic motivations for migration.
2. Changes in perceptions of city life that can be attributed to rural-to-urban migration highlight the link between two important aspects of the transition to adulthood: leaving the family home and home community (*i.e.*, migration) and the seeking and formation of romantic relationships.
3. Differences in post-migration perceptions of city life, relative to the perceptions of longer-term urban residents, suggest that migrants are more attuned to contrasts between urban and rural life, particularly concerning some of the less-appealing realities of city life. This is probably due in part to their relatively recent experience in both rural and urban settings.
4. After moving to the city, migrants' perceptions of city life become more distinct from the perceptions of their rural counterparts.

Next Steps

We have rich qualitative data that describe migrants' experiences living in the city as well as their previous rural lifestyles. We will use qualitative findings to expand upon the quantitative results and provide a more illustrative description of migrants' perceptions of city life.

Table 1. Perceptions of city life at T₀ (in 2005) for rural residents of Kanchanaburi province and those who subsequently migrated to urban destinations

<i>Perceptions</i>	<i>Rural-to-Urban Migrants</i> %	<i>Kanchanaburi Residents</i> %
<i>Whole sample</i>	(N=177)	(N=2210)
Earning income in urban areas is easier than in rural areas	73.4**	64.1
Urban people work harder than rural people	28.2	30.5
Urban life is freer than rural life	41.2	41.5
Urban people are more lonely than rural people	67.2	66.0
Urban life is more expensive than rural life	93.8	93.2
Urban areas are more dangerous than rural areas	86.4	88.3
Urban life is more stressful than rural life	85.3	84.2
People who move to the city make a lot of new friends	74.6	77.7
People who move to the city meet new girlfriends/boyfriends	68.9	65.6
People who move to the city get help from friends	52.0	53.0
People who move to the city have free time to learn new things	65.0	62.7
<i>Males</i>	(N=85)	(N=816)
Earning income in urban areas is easier than in rural areas	72.9*	62.1
Urban people work harder than rural people	28.2	26.5
Urban life is freer than rural life	40.0	37.5
Urban people are more lonely than rural people	69.4	64.1
Urban life is more expensive than rural life	90.6	94.0
Urban areas are more dangerous than rural areas	82.4 ^b	88.2
Urban life is more stressful than rural life	87.1	83.9
People who move to the city make a lot of new friends	80.0	80.0
People who move to the city meet new girlfriends/boyfriends	76.5	69.6
People who move to the city get help from friends	63.5	56.6
People who move to the city have free time to learn new things	72.9	66.7
<i>Females</i>	(N=92)	(N=1394)
Earning income in urban areas is easier than in rural areas	73.9 ^b	65.2
Urban people work harder than rural people	28.3	32.8
Urban life is freer than rural life	42.4	43.9
Urban people are more lonely than rural people	65.2	67.1
Urban life is more expensive than rural life	96.7 ^b	92.7
Urban areas are more dangerous than rural areas	90.2	88.3
Urban life is more stressful than rural life	83.7	84.4
People who move to the city make a lot of new friends	69.6 ^b	76.3
People who move to the city meet new girlfriends/boyfriends	62.0	63.3
People who move to the city get help from friends	41.3*	50.9
People who move to the city have free time to learn new things	57.6	60.3

Significance: ^bp<0.10, *p<0.05, **p<0.01

Table 2. Association between subsequent rural-to-urban migration (vs. staying at rural origin) and perceptions of city life at T₀ (in 2005), controlling for socio-demographic characteristics

<i>Perceptions</i>	<i>Whole Sample</i> (<i>N</i> =2387)		<i>Males</i> (<i>N</i> =901)		<i>Females</i> (<i>N</i> =1486)	
	<i>O.R.</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>O.R.</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>O.R.</i>	<i>p</i>
Earning income in urban areas is easier than in rural areas	1.665	.006	1.819	.027	1.585	.078
Urban people work harder than rural people	1.013	.946	1.102	.719	0.931	.783
Urban life is freer than rural life	0.990	.955	0.999	.996	0.995	.983
Urban people are more lonely than rural people	1.057	.748	1.219	.448	0.910	.704
Urban life is more expensive than rural life	0.955	.893	0.505	.108	2.063	.246
Urban areas are more dangerous than rural areas	0.832	.459	0.507	.039	1.403	.385
Urban life is more stressful than rural life	1.201	.441	1.227	.563	1.154	.658
People who move to the city make a lot of new friends	0.947	.783	1.060	.847	0.857	.554
People who move to the city meet new girlfriends/boyfriends	1.146	.454	1.404	.230	0.966	.884
People who move to the city get help from friends	1.043	.807	1.139	.610	0.930	.760
People who move to the city have free time to learn new things	1.297	.145	1.433	.185	1.204	.441

Control variables include: sex (for whole sample models), age, marital status, level of education, employment status, and a composite scale measure of social support

Table 3. Changes in perceptions of city life from pre- to post-migration for rural-to-urban migrants

<i>Perceptions</i>	<i>Pre-migration 2005</i>	<i>Post-migration 2007</i>	<i>Change</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
<i>Whole sample (N=177)</i>	%	%	%-points	p-value
Earning income in urban areas is easier than in rural areas	73.4	69.5	- 3.9	.364
Urban people work harder than rural people	28.2	32.2	+ 4.0	.355
Urban life is freer than rural life	41.2	42.4	+ 1.2	.809
Urban people are more lonely than rural people	67.2	73.4	+ 6.2	.160
Urban life is more expensive than rural life	93.8	97.2	+ 3.4	.134
Urban areas are more dangerous than rural areas	86.4	89.3	+ 2.9	.355
Urban life is more stressful than rural life	85.3	87.6	+ 2.3	.467
People who move to the city make a lot of new friends	74.6	68.9	- 5.7	.141
People who move to the city meet new girlfriends/boyfriends	68.9	44.6	- 24.3	< .001
People who move to the city get help from friends	52.0	44.1	- 7.9	.118
People who move to the city have free time to learn new things	65.0	52.5	- 12.5	.009
<i>Males (N=85)</i>	%	%	%-points	p-value
Earning income in urban areas is easier than in rural areas	72.9	67.1	- 5.8	.387
Urban people work harder than rural people	28.2	38.8	+ 10.6	.083
Urban life is freer than rural life	40.0	38.8	- 1.2	.854
Urban people are more lonely than rural people	69.4	71.8	+ 2.4	.657
Urban life is more expensive than rural life	90.6	96.5	+ 5.9	.132
Urban areas are more dangerous than rural areas	82.4	89.4	+ 7.0	.181
Urban life is more stressful than rural life	87.1	88.2	+ 1.1	.783
People who move to the city make a lot of new friends	80.0	72.9	- 7.1	.203
People who move to the city meet new girlfriends/boyfriends	76.5	51.8	- 24.7	< .001
People who move to the city get help from friends	63.5	49.4	- 14.1	.051
People who move to the city have free time to learn new things	72.9	56.5	- 16.4	.019
<i>Females (N=92)</i>	%	%	%-points	p-value
Earning income in urban areas is easier than in rural areas	73.9	71.7	- 2.2	.697
Urban people work harder than rural people	28.3	26.1	- 2.2	.717
Urban life is freer than rural life	42.4	45.7	+ 3.3	.634
Urban people are more lonely than rural people	65.2	75.0	+ 9.8	.161
Urban life is more expensive than rural life	96.7	97.8	+ 1.1	.657
Urban areas are more dangerous than rural areas	90.2	89.1	- 1.1	.741
Urban life is more stressful than rural life	83.7	87.0	+ 3.3	.470
People who move to the city make a lot of new friends	69.6	65.2	- 4.4	.417
People who move to the city meet new girlfriends/boyfriends	62.0	38.0	- 24.0	< .001
People who move to the city get help from friends	41.3	39.1	- 2.2	.759
People who move to the city have free time to learn new things	57.6	48.9	- 8.7	.184

Table 4. Changes in perceptions of city life for rural residents and rural-to-urban migrants

<i>Perceptions</i>	<i>Rural Residents</i> %-points	<i>Rural-to-Urban</i> <i>Migrants</i> %-points	<i>Sig.</i> p-value
<i>Whole sample</i>	(<i>N=2210</i>)	(<i>N=177</i>)	
Earning income in urban areas is easier than in rural areas	- 4.3	- 3.9	.941
Urban people work harder than rural people	+ 2.1	+ 4.0	.693
Urban life is freer than rural life	- 1.7	+ 1.2	.549
Urban people are more lonely than rural people	+ 0.6	+ 6.2	.221
Urban life is more expensive than rural life	- 0.7	+ 3.4	.126
Urban areas are more dangerous than rural areas	- 0.1	+ 2.9	.377
Urban life is more stressful than rural life	- 1.0	+ 2.3	.367
People who move to the city make a lot of new friends	- 3.3	- 5.7	.579
People who move to the city meet new girlfriends/boyfriends	- 3.5	- 24.3	< .001
People who move to the city get help from friends	- 8.0	- 7.9	.991
People who move to the city have free time to learn new things	- 8.8	- 12.5	.461
<i>Males</i>	(<i>N=816</i>)	(<i>N=85</i>)	
Earning income in urban areas is easier than in rural areas	- 5.6	- 5.8	.972
Urban people work harder than rural people	+ 2.2	+ 10.6	.198
Urban life is freer than rural life	- 2.8	- 1.2	.804
Urban people are more lonely than rural people	- 0.7	+ 2.4	.645
Urban life is more expensive than rural life	- 2.2	+ 5.9	.039
Urban areas are more dangerous than rural areas	- 1.9	+ 7.0	.083
Urban life is more stressful than rural life	- 0.6	+ 1.1	.742
People who move to the city make a lot of new friends	- 2.7	- 7.1	.476
People who move to the city meet new girlfriends/boyfriends	- 2.9	- 24.7	.001
People who move to the city get help from friends	- 8.4	- 14.1	.442
People who move to the city have free time to learn new things	- 10.4	- 16.4	.941
<i>Females</i>	(<i>N=1392</i>)	(<i>N=92</i>)	
Earning income in urban areas is easier than in rural areas	- 3.5	- 2.2	.828
Urban people work harder than rural people	+ 2.1	- 2.2	.489
Urban life is freer than rural life	- 1.1	+ 3.3	.520
Urban people are more lonely than rural people	+ 1.3	+ 9.8	.184
Urban life is more expensive than rural life	+ 0.2	+ 1.1	.811
Urban areas are more dangerous than rural areas	+ 1.0	- 1.1	.627
Urban life is more stressful than rural life	- 1.3	+ 3.3	.362
People who move to the city make a lot of new friends	- 3.6	- 4.4	.900
People who move to the city meet new girlfriends/boyfriends	- 3.9	- 24.0	.003
People who move to the city get help from friends	- 7.7	- 2.2	.416
People who move to the city have free time to learn new things	- 7.7	- 8.7	.890

Table 5. Effect of rural-to-urban migration between 2005 and 2007 (vs. staying at rural origin) on changes in perceptions of city life using fixed effects regression

<i>Perceptions</i>	<i>Whole sample (N=2387)</i>		<i>Males (N=901)</i>		<i>Females (N=1486)</i>	
	<i>Coef.</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>Coef.</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>Coef.</i>	<i>p</i>
Earning income in urban areas is easier than in rural areas	0.007	.886	-0.002	.984	-0.004	.954
Urban people work harder than rural people	-0.010	.838	0.084	.229	-0.079	.252
Urban life is freer than rural life	0.014	.789	-0.034	.631	0.050	.502
Urban people are more lonely than rural people	0.027	.580	-0.025	.728	0.044	.533
Urban life is more expensive than rural life	0.047	.093	0.092	.023	0.028	.480
Urban areas are more dangerous than rural areas	0.032	.355	0.104	.058	-0.035	.459
Urban life is more stressful than rural life	0.005	.891	0.019	.747	-0.003	.959
People who move to the city make a lot of new friends	-0.042	.362	-0.038	.563	-0.045	.493
People who move to the city meet new girlfriends/boyfriends	-0.240	<.001	-0.295	<.001	-0.240	.001
People who move to the city get help from friends	-0.029	.584	-0.089	.258	-0.001	.995
People who move to the city have free time to learn new things	-0.055	.306	-0.080	.312	-0.039	.606

Control variables include: marital status, level of education, employment status, and a composite scale measure of social support

Note: Age and sex are fixed characteristics, so they are not included in the models.

Table 6. Perceptions of city life at T₁ (in 2007) for rural-to-urban migrants, rural residents of Kanchanaburi province and longer-term urban residents

<i>Perceptions</i>	<i>Rural-to-Urban Migrants</i> %	<i>Rural Residents</i> %	<i>Urban Residents</i> %
<i>Whole sample</i>	(N=177)	(N=2210)	(N=252)
Earning income in urban areas is easier than in rural areas	69.5 ^{**} ,n.s.	59.8 ^{***}	73.0
Urban people work harder than rural people	32.2 ^{n.s.} ,*	32.6 ^{***}	43.7
Urban life is freer than rural life	42.4 ^{n.s.} ,n.s.	39.8 ^b	44.4
Urban people are more lonely than rural people	73.4 ^{**}	66.6 [*]	61.1
Urban life is more expensive than rural life	97.2 ^{**} ,*	92.5 ^{n.s.}	92.5
Urban areas are more dangerous than rural areas	89.3 ^{n.s.} ,**	88.2 ^{***}	79.0
Urban life is more stressful than rural life	87.6 ^b ,n.s.	83.2 ^{n.s.}	84.1
People who move to the city make a lot of new friends	68.9 ^b ,*	74.4 ^{***}	59.1
People who move to the city meet new girlfriends/boyfriends	44.6 ^{***} ,n.s.	62.1 ^{***}	44.8
People who move to the city get help from friends	44.1 ^{n.s.} ,n.s.	45.0 [*]	38.1
People who move to the city have free time to learn new things	52.5 ^{n.s.} ,n.s.	53.9 [*]	48.0
<i>Males</i>	(N=85)	(N=816)	(N=121)
Earning income in urban areas is easier than in rural areas	67.1 [*] ,n.s.	56.5 ^{***}	72.7
Urban people work harder than rural people	38.8 [*] ,n.s.	28.7 ^{**}	43.0
Urban life is freer than rural life	38.8 ^{n.s.} ,n.s.	34.7 ^{n.s.}	40.5
Urban people are more lonely than rural people	71.8 ^b ,**	63.4 [*]	54.5
Urban life is more expensive than rural life	96.5 ^b ,n.s.	91.8 ^{n.s.}	91.7
Urban areas are more dangerous than rural areas	89.4 ^{n.s.} ,**	86.3 ^{**}	75.2
Urban life is more stressful than rural life	88.2 ^{n.s.} ,b	83.3 ^{n.s.}	78.5
People who move to the city make a lot of new friends	72.9 ^{n.s.} ,n.s.	77.3 [*]	68.6
People who move to the city meet new girlfriends/boyfriends	51.8 ^{**} ,n.s.	66.7 [*]	55.4
People who move to the city get help from friends	49.4 ^{n.s.} ,n.s.	48.2 ^{n.s.}	43.0
People who move to the city have free time to learn new things	56.5 ^{n.s.} ,n.s.	56.3 ^{n.s.}	56.2
<i>Females</i>	(N=92)	(N=1394)	(N=131)
Earning income in urban areas is easier than in rural areas	71.7 [*] ,n.s.	61.7 ^{**}	73.3
Urban people work harder than rural people	26.1 ^b ,**	34.9 [*]	44.3
Urban life is freer than rural life	45.7 ^{n.s.} ,n.s.	42.8 ^{n.s.}	48.1
Urban people are more lonely than rural people	75.0 ^{n.s.} ,n.s.	68.4 ^{n.s.}	67.2
Urban life is more expensive than rural life	97.8 [*] ,b	92.9 ^{n.s.}	93.1
Urban areas are more dangerous than rural areas	89.1 ^{n.s.} ,n.s.	89.3 [*]	82.4
Urban life is more stressful than rural life	87.0 ^{n.s.} ,n.s.	83.1 [*]	89.3
People who move to the city make a lot of new friends	65.2 ^b ,*	72.7 ^{***}	50.4
People who move to the city meet new girlfriends/boyfriends	38.0 ^{***} ,n.s.	59.4 ^{***}	35.1
People who move to the city get help from friends	39.1 ^{n.s.} ,n.s.	43.2 [*]	33.6
People who move to the city have free time to learn new things	48.9 ^{n.s.} ,n.s.	52.6 ^{**}	40.5

Significance: ^{n.s.}p>0.10, ^bp<0.10, *p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001

Table 7a. Association between rural-to-urban migration (vs. being a longer-term urban resident) and perceptions of city life at T₁ (in 2007), controlling for socio-demographic characteristics

<i>Perceptions</i>	<i>Whole Sample</i> (N=429)		<i>Males</i> (N=206)		<i>Females</i> (N=223)	
	<i>O.R.</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>O.R.</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>O.R.</i>	<i>p</i>
Earning income in urban areas is easier than in rural areas	0.912	.683	0.922	.806	1.069	.837
Urban people work harder than rural people	0.656	.048	0.913	.722	0.458	.011
Urban life is freer than rural life	0.867	.487	0.939	.842	0.858	.593
Urban people are more lonely than rural people	2.292	<.001	2.869	.002	1.824	.070
Urban life is more expensive than rural life	3.427	.021	2.710	.171	6.206	.043
Urban areas are more dangerous than rural areas	2.273	.006	3.295	.007	1.874	.139
Urban life is more stressful than rural life	1.429	.238	2.581	.030	0.959	.927
People who move to the city make a lot of new friends	1.348	.175	1.246	.515	1.458	.212
People who move to the city meet new girlfriends/boyfriends	0.925	.711	0.736	.346	0.887	.695
People who move to the city get help from friends	1.243	.295	1.284	.410	1.190	.560
People who move to the city have free time to learn new things	1.130	.553	1.113	.730	1.280	.393

Control variables include: sex (for whole sample models), age, marital status, level of education, employment status, and a composite scale measure of social support

Table 7b. Association between rural-to-urban migration (vs. staying at rural origin) and perceptions of city life at T₁ (in 2007), controlling for socio-demographic characteristics

<i>Perceptions</i>	<i>Whole Sample</i> (N=2387)		<i>Males</i> (N=901)		<i>Females</i> (N=1486)	
	<i>O.R.</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>O.R.</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>O.R.</i>	<i>p</i>
Earning income in urban areas is easier than in rural areas	1.640	.006	1.688	.047	1.574	.074
Urban people work harder than rural people	1.025	.885	1.705	.040	0.637	.083
Urban life is freer than rural life	1.141	.443	1.322	.279	1.027	.910
Urban people are more lonely than rural people	1.247	.248	1.226	.460	1.214	.468
Urban life is more expensive than rural life	2.153	.106	1.809	.346	2.679	.182
Urban areas are more dangerous than rural areas	1.213	.476	1.461	.342	1.055	.884
Urban life is more stressful than rural life	1.195	.476	1.634	.202	1.004	.990
People who move to the city make a lot of new friends	0.759	.136	0.840	.543	0.723	.186
People who move to the city meet new girlfriends/boyfriends	0.455	<.001	0.436	.001	0.439	.001
People who move to the city get help from friends	0.882	.460	0.921	.741	0.827	.421
People who move to the city have free time to learn new things	0.954	.779	0.863	.561	0.983	.942

Control variables include: sex (for whole sample models), age, marital status, level of education, employment status, and a composite scale measure of social support

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