

The Contributions of Different Patterns and Periods of Mobility in Sustaining Fish Cage Farming in the Ping River

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ABSTRACT

Rural change has significant, but often overlooked, effects on the capabilities, incentives and options for the movement of members in and out of rural households. This study explores the contributions of mobility at different times in a households' history to commencing and sustaining fish cage farming in the face of climate-related and socio-economic risks and uncertainties in the context of significant rural change in northern Thailand. Data was collected from 42 fish farming households in upstream, midstream, and downstream sections of the Ping River Basin to trace important movements of household members in the past, the decision to first begin fish cage farming, and the key actions they have taken to sustain their business. Mobility prior to commencing fish farming often played a role in generating the wealth needed to invest in new enterprises like fish farming. Fish farming households which have at least one mobile member tend to have larger farms; and, are therefore able to adapt to risks from climate-related and socio-economic factors better than households which don't have mobile members. Mobility after commencing fish farming, although often less than in the pre-farming period, has remained an important way for some households to cope with extreme climate events like severe dry season droughts, and in longer-term, adapt to significant variability and uncertainties in river flow conditions, regulations and markets. Overall, maintaining mobility is likely to be a good household strategy for the long-term survival of fish cage farming located in rural areas of Thailand.

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