

ANTHROPOLOGICAL APPROACH IN FERTILITY AND FAMILY PLANNING RESEARCH IN KOREA*

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Present paper reviews the current status of anthropological type of research on fertility and family planning in Korea and introduces the major findings from the study, "Social, Cultural and Ecological Factors Affecting Population Processes in Korea", the only full-fledged anthropological research in the field ever conducted in Korea.

The study disclosed many new and valuable pieces of information on the fertility behaviour of Korean women in the societal as well as environmental context. These include seasonal variation in the frequency of births which is in turn related to the pattern of subsistence economy, the relationship between perception of mortality and fertility, the impact of stability of marriage and community system on the value of children, the association between the pattern of child-rearing and the ideal family size, inadequacy of the current family planning service on the community level, relatively minor significance of son-preference in determining the level of fertility on an aggregate level, and so forth. Some of them appear to have direct and immediate policy implications, while others have broad and long-range policy meanings in connection with the societal transformation of the country.

INTRODUCTION

The original aim of this paper was to review the status of antropological studies on fertility and family planning in Korea, their major contributions to the accumulation of knowledge on the reproductive behaviour of Koreans, and the implications of their major findings upon population control policy. However, a revision of the format is found to be inevitable because of the extreme pausity of antropological type of research in the field of population in Korea.

Researchers may disagree on this point depending upon how they define the term, "anthropological". No particular attempt is made in this paper to clarify the concept, but implicitly the terms, "anthropological" research is applied to works either conducted by persons who [are classified anthropologist in the academic community, or utilized extensively such techniques of data clection as field-work for a certain period of time, participant observation, in depth interview and case studies.

Adopting this vague criterion, three of four studies could be identified as having anthropological nature at least partially. However, only one research fits fully to the implicit definition. The study is entitled "Social, Cultural Factors Affecting Population Processes in Korea." Furthermore and anthropological type of data from other studies remained unanalyzed. Such availability of data inevitably restricts the scope of present discussion to what was observed in the only antropological study. Accordingly major

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findings of this particular study. However, as an introduction, brief discussions on the trend of fertility and family planning in Korea are also presented

NOTES ON FERTILITY RESEARCH IN KOREA

Understanding the fertility behaviour of Koreans is an enterprise with a relatively short history, which began in the early 1960s. However, research on fertility and family planning has flourished since the mid-1960s. The first academic work in this regard may be the case studies on fertility in three Korean villages by Lee Hae-Young (1963). The study was conducted during 1960-61 in conjunction with three separate anthropological field works which have no links with each other. Beside this, virtually all other early studies on fertility and family planning were conducted after the initiation of the national family planning programme in 1962, with purposes to aid the programme implementation and to collect first-hand materials on the knowledge, attitude and practice of family planning of Korean women. In other words, the early fertility studies in Korea are characterized as "action-oriented". The major surveys on fertility and family planning in the 1960s are listed below (Kwon, 1977:6-7):

The National Survey on Family Planning, 1964, 1965, 1966, by the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs;

A Study on Urban Population Control (Seoul), 1964-66, by the School of Public Health, Seoul National University (SNU);

Rural Society and Family Planning, 1962-64, Medical School, Yonsei University;

Differential Fertility in a Korean Middle-Sized Town (Ichon Eup), 1965, Population and Development Studies Center, SNU;

Induced Abortion, 1964 (in Seoul), 1965 (in rural areas), by S. B. Hong, Medical College, Korea University.

Fertility and Migration of Seoul City, 1966, by the Institute of Population Problems.

Among the surveys listed above, *Ichon Survey* is the only one which utilized any anthropological techniques of data collection; indepth interviews were conducted to about 100 selected women. The interview was based on detailed interview guidelines prepared separately for each selected informant with the prior responses to the structured questionnaire, and concerned mainly with the underlying family and marriage system, the consequences of various childbearing experiences upon the family life of the couple, and the type and prevalence of traditional methods of fertility regulation. However, the materials have never been utilized so far. All other early surveys listed above were to collect information on the KAP status of contraceptives and abortion in order to aid either the experimentation or demonstration projects of the family planning programme in the survey area, or the evaluation of the progress of the programme in the country as a whole. Those surveys paid relatively little attention to the reproductive behaviour of the respondents.

Two groups of researchers at large were participated in fertility and family planning research in the 1960s; sociologists and medical doctors trained in public health (Kim, et. al., 1972: 39-44). The former was involved only in research, while the later was actively engaged in the national family planning programme. Though population researchers are of diverse background nowadays, this set a tradition in population research

and training, and has influenced greatly the contents and methods of fertility research in Korea. This also explains partly why there were few anthropological type of fertility research in the 1960s. Late development of anthropology in Korea as a discipline in social science which started in the early 1970s also accounts for the paucity of anthropological concerns in fertility studies.

One other important aspect of fertility research in Korea in the 1960s is the fact that most research works were supported financially by foreign donors except for a series of the national fertility and family planning surveys conducted by the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs. International funding agencies helped the establishment of population research institutions and thus played, though indirectly, a decisive role in initiating population research in the country (Caldwell, 1967). Accordingly, the interests of foreign donors influenced greatly the selection of topics and the contents of research. Thus, the major aim of the early studies became the collection of practical information on family planning rather than the comprehensive understanding of fertility behaviour of Koreans in varying societal contexts.

In the 1970s, many new research institutes dealing with, totally or partly, population related problems were established. Among them most important is the founding of the Korean Institute for Family Planning. As a result, the population research activities were multiplied. In addition, the national family planning programme, which was characterized as clinically oriented, was reported to have reached a plateau around 1970 and there was a growing urge for a new viable policy. In response to this, the interests in fertility research were diversified. Apart from the KAP type of surveys, the value of children or son-preference, the information, education and communication (I.E.C) approach, and the attempt to integrate the family planning programme with development projects were received great attention (see, Han & Lee, 1979; Park H. S., 1979: 111-112).

Unlike the diversification of research interests, the objectives of research have been more or less converged to the policy implication aspect of the national family planning programme. In a word, the studies on fertility in the 1970s were mostly *policy research oriented*. Although the distinction between pure and applied (or academic and policy) research is arbitrary in most cases, it can not be denied altogether that the all-effort emphasis on policy implications has brought about many undesirable impacts on the balanced development of population or fertility research in Korea. Basic research, long-term study, indepth approach and extensive analysis of data were generally discouraged because of their apparently less significance for solving immediate problems in the national family planning programmes. The criterion, 'policy orientation' was pushed equally by both the government and international funding agencies.

But a very few pure demographic works, most studies on fertility and family planning have been almost entirely relied social surveys with structured questionnaire. In the early 1970s, the need for an anthropological type of studies was expressed among population researchers with growing interests in the traditional cultural factors in fertility behaviour which were assumed to hinder the further fast decline of fertility and blamed for the bottleneck in the family planning programme (Lee, 1972). However, extensive field work, participant observation, indepth interview, and other major tools of anthropologists for data collection were seldom utilized in family planning and fertility research. As stated above, the first, and only, fertility study of this nature is "Social, Cultural, and Ecological Factors Affecting Population Processes in Korea".¹

1. The Population and Development Studies Center conducted the research. The principal investigator was Han Sang-Bok (Han, 1977:167-170)

The study carried out extensive field work and participant observation in four ecologically distinct villages during 1975 and 1976, and provided the novel, as well as basic, understanding of the fertility behaviour of Koreans on a grass-root level. The 1974 Ichon Resurvey on fertility and the family may be listed as an important survey which adopted anthropological perspectives and methods partially (see, Kwon *et al.* 1977: 17-19). As the first Ichon survey mentioned above, this survey also conducted indepth interviews to about 100 selected women, to collect substantive information on the workings of the traditional factors and social change in the decision making and adoption of individuals in their reproductive behaviour. The findings were partially reported (*ibid*), but the substantive part of the analysis is yet to be waited.

In sum, anthropological approach is still alien to most of the population researchers and planners in Korea, despite the growing awareness of its great potency for enhancing knowledge on the reproductive behaviour of Koreans and thus aiding the government to control population growth.

In the following, we will introduce the major features of the research "Social, Cultural, and Ecological Factors Affecting Population Processes in Korea" and will then summarize the major findings from the survey, as a way to examine the potential utility and need of an anthropological type of study in the field of population research and policy.

THE SURVEY AND SURVEY AREAS

The main purpose of the study, "Social, Cultural, and Ecological Factors Affecting Population Processes in Korea", was to measure, examine, and explain the ecological and socio-cultural factors affecting population processes in diverse settings of the Korean society. Along this purpose, four ecologically and socio-culturally distinctive communities were selected as research sites: they are a rice-farming village, a mountainous farming village, a fishing village, and a middle-sized town community, scattered all over the country. The rice-farming village is located in the southern part of Honam Plain, south-west of Korea, which is known as the rice-bowl of the nation. This village is in about one hour's distance by bus from Gwangju, one of the large cities in Korea and in about thirty minutes' distance by bus from a middle-sized town, Naju Eup. The fishing village is on Chindo Island off the southern coast of the Korean Peninsula. It takes at least 40 minutes by bus from the village to reach the nearest local town, and two hours to get to the nearest city. The mountainous village is one of the most geographically isolated area in the south-eastern part. The distance between the local center and the nearby cities is approximately the same with that of the fishing village, but the transportation is much more frequent here. The middle-sized town is situated in the middle part of the country and near a small city, Chungju. The town is also in one-and-half hour distance from Seoul, the largest city of the nation.

In order to collect quantitative demographic data, a base-line survey was conducted during July-August 1975. The base-line survey utilized three different forms of structured interview schedule; household enumeration form, questionnaire on family structure and living, and fertility and family planning questionnaire. After the base-line survey, the main field work was carried out for one year from September 1975 through August 1976, by employing such techniques as participant observation, direct and non-direct interviews, sampling, mapping, and intensive case studies. To maintain the consistency in data collection, an observation guide was used and "in-group conference"

was held frequently among the project participants.² There, the findings and observations of each participant were presented and their significance was discussed. At the end of the field work a follow-up survey was carried out to identify the demographic change during the period of twelve months and to evaluate the reporting errors in the base-line survey.

General characteristics of the survey villages and respondents are summarized in Table 1. Each village community had around 100 households and 500 population at the time of survey, and was found to be distinctive from the others in the socio-ecological setting consisting of the type of subsistent economy, family structure, level of educational attainment, mobility and so forth.

In the middle-sized town community, about 90 percent of the work force was engaged in non-farm occupations, largely in un-skilled or semi-skilled craftworks and sales services. In both the rice-farming community and the mountainous village, absolute majority of the population worked on farm. But rice-farming was dominant over dried land farming in the former and *vice versa* in the latter. In the fishing village, the proportion of the households who lived on fishing only was about 15 percent and more than 50 percent were occupied in both fishing and farming. Also during the winter season, most households worked for the cultivation of sea vegetables.

The average size of households was largest in the mountainous village, and smallest in the middle-sized town. However, the sizes reported in the survey are much greater than the average for the nation and also than those for the equivalent areas from the census.³ The differences in household size among the villages are clearly reflected in the type of family. Smaller size was associated with proportionally more nuclear families in the village.

The level of educational attainment was also highest in the middle-sized town and

Table 1. **Socio-Economic Characteristics of the Communities**

area Characteristics	Middle town	Fishing village	Mountain village	Farming village	Total
Number of households	106 (4,852)*	98	88	108	400
Size of population	504 (24,888)*	494	504	535	2,037
Mean size of family	5.4	6.3	7.3	6.6	6.4
Percent type of family					
Nuclear family	85.8	77.6	62.5	64.8	73.0
Percent lived 5 or more years in the community	56.9	90.7	100.0	88.2	82.8
Percent no formal education of household head	23.5	40.9	64.7	55.6	44.2
Percent occupation of household head					
Farming	12.9	22.5	92.8	84.5	53.3
Fishing		13.5			3.3
Farming-Fishing		52.8			12.8
Others	87.1	11.2	7.2	15.5	30.6
Percent those who own farm land 1,500 or more pyong	14.1	41.5	51.7	43.4	37.3

* Total size of the town

2. The research team consisted of 5 researchers, 5 assistants and 8 women interviewers.

3. The 1975 census estimates of the average size of households is 5.04 for the nation, 5.06 for the middlesized towns and 5.32 for rural area.

the lowest in the mountainous village. However, the differences in educational level are partly balanced off if the age structure of the population is standardized. With this crude background information, let us now turn to the basic research findings on the fertility behaviour of the resident population.

BIRTH

Because of the anthropological nature of the research, the survey population in each village community was very small. This restricts the extent of our analysis of demographic analysis severely. However the traditional level of fertility or the natural completed family size, can be roughly indicated by the total number of children ever-born to the ever-married women age 50 and over.⁴ The mean number of births in this age group was very large in all the communities, ranging 7.3-8.0 children per currently married woman. The level is much higher than those reported in other fertility and family planning surveys for the approximately same age cohorts. The discrepancy is greatly reduced if the current survey results are compared with the estimates based on the census data.⁵ The gap with the census estimates for the nation may be blamed partly for the small sample size, but more for migration selectivity which is in favour of a smaller family size. All the survey communities had lost population through migration since 1960. The relatively lower level of fertility reported in other surveys may be caused partly by under-enumeration which is characteristic in the one-round social surveys on fertility and family planning.

When different quinquennial age cohorts between ages 45 and 59 are compared a continuous decline of fertility is observed in all survey communities. The decline is more marked for the middle-sized town than the fishing and farming villages, as is shown in Table 2. The same kind of change is also found among the younger age cohorts after marriage duration is controlled.

level of fertility has been relatively low though the age at marriage and the rate of

Table 2. Mean Number of Children Ever Born per Woman by Age Groups

area \ age group	20—24	25—29	30—34	35—39	40—44	45—49	50—54	55—59
Middle town	1.3	2.5	3.4	4.9	4.9	4.4	6.9	7.9
Fishing village	1.4	2.7	4.3	4.5	5.7	6.4	6.5	8.6
Mountain village	1.3	2.7	3.7	5.3	5.8	8.1	7.5	8.5
Farming village	2.0	3.0	4.5	5.0	6.9	6.4	7.8	6.8

Such changes in fertility are accounted for mostly by the postponement of marriage and the dissemination of fertility control methods within each survey community. The former was the almost sole determinant of the level of fertility for older women, while the fertility of younger cohorts was influenced by both factors. The close relationship between the level of fertility and age at marriage, and the important contribution of rising age at marriage to the decline of fertility in Korea since 1960 are well documented (Kwon, 1980: 65-71). The same confirmation has been made with the dissemination of contraceptive use (*ibid*). However, one important observation from the survey is that no such significant relationship is discerned between the level of fertility and age at marriage or the degree of family planning acceptance when the different types of communities are compared: In the case of the fishing village, the

4. See, section on fertility control in this paper.

5. According to a series of census estimates, the equivalent figure for the nation is about 7.0 while the figure for the ever-married is 6.5 (Kwon, 1977:348-351).

family planning practice were not high, and *vice versa* with the rice-farming village. This seemingly contradictory observation may be explained by the ecological or circumstantial factors of each survey community, more specifically by the degree of stability of family life and structure which is, in turn, related to the pattern of subsistence economy of the villages.

In the fishing village, at least half of the male population was engaged in sea fishing which usually accompanies a great deal of risk of dying. Because of high mortality of adult men, family dissolution took place very frequently and, as a result, the remarriage of women was accepted as 'inevitable', met little social resistance in the village, and the rate of remarriage of women turned out to be very high: about 90 percent of currently married women were married more than once in the village. On the other hand, rice farming is least involved in the risk of dying and the proportion of widowed and remarried women is very low in farming areas. According to our survey results, the proportion of women remarried in the farming communities was reported to be less than 10 percent. The type of work which adult men are supposed to be engaged in and the frequency of family dissolution due to the death of either part of spouses appears to have resulted in completely different family structure and living between the fishing and the the farming communities. In the fishing village, concubinage, desertion of spouse by either side, and separation of the couple were very common. No such tendency was discerned in the rice-farming village. Probably family solidarity and stability would have been strengthened by the tradition of clan-village in this farming area.

Again in the fishing village, people live on upland farming from spring to fall, sea farming during winter and fishing throughout the year. Men were supposed to work only at sea, leaving the land farming almost exclusively to the women. Unlike agricultural villages, winter was the busiest season there. All available hands except very young children and very old persons were put to work from early in the morning till late at night. Relatively low labour demand of women was noticed in October and April. However, winter is a slack season in farming areas. The survey reveals that the frequency of pregnancies is clearly associated with the type of subsistence economy and the seasonal variation in labour demand (Chun, 1977). In the farming villages, pregnancies occurred most frequently during the winter slack season: on the other hand, pregnancies were highly concentrated in October and April in the fishing village and relatively even monthly distribution was seen in the town community.

From the above observations, we can easily and safely conclude how much the ecological factors are important to determine the level of fertility of a community. It is well documented in Korea that socio-economic factors such as differential level of educational attainment, the degree of contacting urban way of life and income are of great power in explaining the fertility differentials of individuals. However these factors appear to explain, to a very limited extent, the community differences in fertility (Hong, 1976, Lee *et. al.*, 1978).

MARRIAGE

The age at marriage was reported to range 12 to 20 for women age 50 and over. The mean age was 14.8 in the mountainous community and 16.0-16.8 in the other three villages. The mountainous village shows the lowest age at marriage for all ages persistently. In the middle-sized town community, the most significant rise in age at marriage took place during 1950-55 which includes the Korean War years. The experience was followed by the other villages at intervals of five to ten years. The reversed

Table 3. Mean Age of Women at First Marriage by Current Age Groups

area \ age group	20—24	25—29	30—34	35—39	40—44	45—49	50—54	55—59
Middle town	20.9	20.7	22.4	20.9	18.6	19.4	16.1	15.9
Fishing village	18.9	20.1	20.0	19.7	18.8	16.6	16.7	16.5
Mountain village	18.8	20.8	19.1	17.1	16.7	15.4	14.7	14.9
Farming village	19.1	21.0	21.2	20.0	18.1	16.9	16.3	16.5

trend for ages 20-29 should not be interpreted as what is shown. The relatively young age at marriage in these age groups is ascribed mostly to the low proportion of ever-married women. In other words, those married early are only included in the calculation of the mean age at marriage while those who would marry afterward are excluded. Compared to the national averages from the 1974 Korean National Fertility Survey (KNFS), the women at the crucial reproductive ages in the current survey villages appear to have married at a relatively late age. For example, the average age at first marriage for women age 30-34 was reported as 20.5 for middle-sized towns (Eups) and 20.4 for rural area in the 1974 KNFS (FPB; BOS & KIFP: 69).

Despite the original differences in age at marriage and the different timing on which marriage began to be deferred, no consistent pattern of differences in age at marriage among the four communities were observed since the mid-1960s. This indicates that age at marriage has been less important in determining the level of fertility since the mid-1960s.

The major functions of marriage are found to differ somewhat among the communities surveyed. The alleged traditional functions of marriage which are largely postulated by Neo-confucian ideology, such as succession of family name, continuation of ancestor worship, strengthening family unity and filial piety, were still the main concerns of people in marriage in the farming villages. On the other hand, as suggested in the above, family unity or succession of the family name was of only secondary importance in marriage in the fishing village. Dependency in old ages and to obtain personal security were the more important functions in the community.

The mode of mate selection differs significantly between the villages. The so-called 'free marriage' was most frequently found in the fishing village and the next was in the middle-sized town community, though the cases are few for old age women. With the increasing age at marriage, free marriage began to occur more frequently. Even in the case of arranged marriage, the process is hardly similar between the fishing and the farming villages. Unlike in the farming village there was very little involvement of the family and community in marriage in the fishing community and accordingly, the stability of married life or family was very weak. The middle-sized town largely conforms the patterns of the farming villages, but to a much lesser extent. These observations on marriage system do not confirm the idea that childbearing is the most crucial function of marriage, which is known to constitute a high fertility pressure in family living, throughout the entire Korean society, and rather do suggest that the major functions of marriage may differ in accordance with ecological settings of an area.

FERTILITY CONTROL

The national family planning program was introduced in Korea in 1962 as part of the first economic plan for development. However, the dissemination of the idea of fertility control had to wait until the late 1960s in remote areas. Such was clearly reflected in the survey areas. According to the survey results, contraceptive began to

Table 4. Status of Using Family Planning Methods and Induced Abortion

Area	Family Planning Methods			Women experienced induced abortion
	Never used	Ever used	Currently using	
Middle town	30.9	27.1	42.0	23.8
Fishing village	61.4	22.8	15.8	8.9
Mountain village	48.4	22.6	29.0	10.0
Farming village	42.4	18.6	39.0	20.4

be noticed in 1963 and 1964 in the middle-sized town and the rice-farming village which are adjacent to big cities. Contraceptive practice began to spread in 1968 in the fishing village, and in 1969 in the mountainous village.

The proportion of current contraceptive users parallels the timing of the dissemination of family planning methods, as clearly shown in Table 4. The same pattern is seen with induced abortion. In the middle-sized town and also in the rice farming communities, more than 20 percent of the ever-married women at age 15-49 was reported to have experienced induced abortion at least once, while the proportion was less than 10 percent in the other two communities, where the dissemination of the idea of fertility control was delayed. We may expect from these observations that the level of fertility for young women is much higher in the remote areas than the town or the village near a big city. But as mentioned earlier, the survey findings do not confirm this seemingly obvious association between fertility and family planning practice. This may point to the fact that there existed some traditional mechanisms, though involuntary, to regulate fertility behaviour in each village in relation to their socio-economic and environmental circumstances. The mechanisms would include the type of housing, the pattern of relationships among family members, the degree of women's labour participation, community health and nutrition conditions and so forth.

The commonly known methods of fertility control in the survey villages were condom, vasectomy, the Ota ring, loop, and oral pill. Most women appear to have some practical knowledge of how to use those methods. As illustrated in Table 5, the most

Table 5. Status of Knowledge and Practice of Family Planning Methods

Family planning methods	Middle town				Fishing village				Mountain village				Farming village			
	N	H	K	U	N	H	K	U	N	H	K	U	N	H	K	U
Loop	2	17	43	16	3	21	24	10	3	22	18	19	1	22	23	16
Oral pill		14	42	21	2	17	22	17	1	24	16	21	1	16	24	21
Vasectomy	2		73	2	7	1	50		15	5	40	1	1		56	4
Tubal ligation	9		67	1	30		26	2	42	1	18		13		48	1
Ota ring	21	19	36	1	27	14	17		15	20	26	1	29	17	15	1
Rhythm	14	10	41	12	31	15	11	1	38	13	8	3	18	28	9	7
Condom	3	18	44	12	9	13	33		21	19	21	1	10	10	36	6
Coitus interruption	21	5	41	10	31	7	15	5	43	4	12	3	15	7	24	16
Pessary	63	8	6		58				61	1			53	6	2	1
Jelly	57	3	16	1	56	2			54	2	6		55	3	3	1
Douche	49	3	21	4	52	3	4	1	58	2	1	1	51	5	5	1

N: Never heard

H: Heard, but do not know how to use

K: Know how to use, but do not use

U: Used

frequently used methods were oral pill, loop, coitus interruption, the rhythm method, and condom. There were several women reported who still used traditional folk methods, which are known to have no effect at all, such as 'drinking cold water, jumping or running backward after the coitus' to prevent pregnancy, and 'drinking of soy bean souce' to abort birth. The survey data also reveal that the methods adopted became diversified with the increasing proportion of women using contraceptives.

Through an extensive field work, it was identified that many women wanted to limit their family size, but were not using any methods. The most important barriers in the family planning program came on the local community level turned out to be 'inadequate service'.

The fishing village was reported to have been visited by a family planning field worker once a year at most.⁶ There was no women in the village who could give necessary consultation when need arose in connection with family planning clinics or health center in the nearby town which took one and half hours by bus. The situation was similar in the mountainous village though the intensity of the problem was much less felt. In the case of the rice farming village, a family planning worker visited the village once for two months on average. The worse was that the field worker could not see any women during the farming period from April to October, since they returned home late at night while the field worker works during the day time only: often, the field worker visiting the village stayed idle in the Li-chief's house. Consequently, it was found that most women had inadequate, or sometimes wrong, knowledge of the methods they had used or were currently using. This partly explains why there were so much suspicion about the contraceptives and distrust in the field workers in these communities. The lack of contact with family planning workers was the same in the middle-sized town. But women in the town had an advantage of easy access to the information and methods of fertility control because of the availability of many drug stores and private as well as public clinics within and near the town.

In all the communities, the effectiveness of contraceptive use was very low. This low effectiveness points to another major problem area in the current family planning programme; that is, the so-called 'rumors' about contraceptives and sterilization. The most commonly found suspicion was either that contraceptives cause some kinds of illness or that the person who undergoes sterilization becomes powerless and inenergetic. Such 'rumors' were not only prevalent in the survey communities but are known to have been wide-spread all over the country, and the family planning authorities treat them for long as one of the most important barriers to the family planning programme.

But it could be easily seen that these so-called 'rumors' are not simply rumors caused by the ignorance of villagers. In many cases, contraceptive practice caused illness or side-effects because of poor sanitary conditions, and in this sense the 'rumors' can be considered to be soundly grounded. To raise the effectiveness of family planning methods, consideration to various problems of the methods in actual living circumstances seems vital. The major concern of the programme authorities so far has been to persuade women not to listen to the 'rumors' because they are groundless. This kind of policy to tackle 'rumors' appears to have rather contributed to create between the field workers and the villages. In this regard, understanding the grass-root structure of communities will be of great significance to upgrade the performance of the national family planning programme.

6. According to the instruction to the field workers, they were supposed to visit each village more than once a month all over the country.

FERTILITY ATTITUDES

It has been alleged that the large family ideal and strong son-preference prevailed in traditional Korea. The most common ideal number of children in traditional Korea, though implicit, is known as five consisting of three sons and two daughters. According to various surveys, the average desired family size are reported to have been 4.5 at the turn of the 1960s which was reduced to 3.9 in 1965, 3.1 in 1973, and 2.8 in 1976, and 2.7 in 1978 (Song & Han: 30-34; Park et al., 85; Byun & Koh: 157). The overall result (3.1 children) from the current survey is in closed agreement with that of other national surveys as a whole. However some discrepancies are apparent if each community is compared to the national average of the same type of communities.

Also, significant differences in the ideal number of children are discerned among the four communities as is seen in Table 6. While the fishing village reveals the highest ideal size of 3.71, the middle-sized town community shows the lowest value of 2.57 on average. The desired family size for middle-sized town is one of the lowest reported throughout the country until the mid-1970s. On the contrary, that for the fishing village marks one of the highest level being currently observed all over the country. Such difference between the survey communities is usually explained by the degree of urbanity, economic conditions and level of modernity of the communities in question.

The survey has failed to document the relationship of desired family size with the fertility behaviour of the residents, while that with the status of fertility control is clearly established. However, we may expect that with the effective means to control fertility being available to all women and with the dissemination of comprehensive knowledge of contraceptive use, the family size value would be likely to be the most important factor to determine the level of fertility even in the survey areas. Such an assumption can be roughly tested by a comparison of the average family size and the would-be fertility of women which was measured from the responses to their preferred childbearing options in various specified conditions.⁷ The survey demonstrates that, if a community is taken as a whole and women can regulate reproductive behaviour as they desired in every specified conditions, actual fertility will end up, on average, in the number of children very close to what women desire to achieve in an ideal condition.

The differences in desired family size among the ecologically distinctive villages overshadow other differentials, including those by age. A significant decline in family size value from the traditional level is also observed in all the four communities. But the decline appears to have been greatest in the middle-sized town and least in the

Table 6. Average Ideal Number of Children and World-be family size, age 20-39

Area	Age Group	Average Ideal		Would-be	
		20-29	30-39	20-29	30-39
Middle town		2.50	2.63	2.49	2.86
Fishing village		3.35	3.80	3.16	3.80
Mountain village		2.85	3.13	3.29	3.05
Farming village		2.87	3.29	3.23	3.42
Total		2.82	3.16	2.92	3.24

7. This is measured by the responses to a series of questions on whether the respondents would stop at a given number of children together with a given sex combination or proceed to have at least one more child if they were put into such circumstances.

fishing village if the traditional ideal is assumed to have been similar among the survey communities. This observation may be taken as a partial indication that ecological factors are more important than socio-economic factors in the formation of fertility attitudes, as in the case of fertility behaviour discussed earlier. A close association can easily be demonstrated between family size attitudes and ecological factors such as patterns of subsistence activity, demand for labour, women's labour participation, and perception on public health conditions in the community. On the other hand, socio-cultural factors such as traditionalism, familism and community system do not have much power to explain the observed differentials in desired family size among the four villages. The relatively low level of births in the fishing community which is mainly attributed to their living circumstances and the perception of the villagers of high risk of dying as stated in the above would have somewhat boosted their desire for a large family size.

The community differentials in desired family size can also be related to differing perceptions on the value of children in economic terms: the less desire is apparently associated with the higher costs of child-rearing and the less utility of children's labour. In the fishing village, where the desired family size was the largest, children usually gave a direct help to women's economic activity; since women worked on farm assigned to perform most household duties. Besides, children's labour was utilized extensively during the winter sea-farming season in the village. Because the work opportunity for unskilled labourers in the city becomes very tight during the winter, many children in the fishing village who had migrated to cities tend to return to their family in the village temporarily to work on sea-farm. In the farming communities, no such kind of direct economic gain from children is expected. However, very low costs were involved in raising children, and the complaint was rarely heard in the farming communities as well as in the fishing village that women could not work because of young children. It was not unusual there that a six-year-old sister took care of her younger brothers and sisters while playing with other children. In the case of no helping hands being available within the family, children were taken care of by the community simultaneously. In a word, child-rearing is rarely considered as "burden" to the parents in these communities. But the way of life in the middle-sized town is completely different. People in the town are more rational economically and feel distance even from the neighbours. Expectation for proper child-rearing is high. Majority of the households used one or two rooms. All these seem to have contributed to generating the perception of children as a burden rather than an asset in the town at least in economic sense.

Unlike the changes in desired family size, strong preference of sons to daughters is found to have little attenuated during the last few decades (Kwon & Lee, 1976: 1-11; Kwon, 1976: 225-231). Also the degree of sex preference varies little among the survey communities when measured by Coombs sex preference scale (Coombs *et. al.*, 1975: 233-298). The clear differences in the changing trends and differential patterns between number preference and sex bias toward children point to an important theoretical proposition: the major factors associated with large family ideals are not necessarily identical with those supporting an extreme son-preference in traditional Korea. There is a common belief in Korea that son-preference is the most serious barrier to the effort for population control. However, contrary to this belief, an extensive analysis of the implications of son-preference on the level of fertility based on the current survey data discloses no substantive or significant relationship between the two (Kwon, 1976: 231-236). Still most women consider at least one son is an absolute requirement for a family no matter how many daughters they may have. This will certainly cause

a higher fertility than the level desired, to women without sons but achieved the desired family size. If the problem of decision whether a couple should stop pregnancy or proceed to have an additional child arises after the desired number of children is reached, this son-preference should certainly be considered as having high fertility propensity. However, the current survey discloses that the decision is often made at the family size less than the desired. Because of the relative unimportance of daughters, the majority of women stop childbearing when they have enough sons even though there is no daughter and accordingly the desired family size is not yet attained. In other words, son-preference results in lower fertility than what is expected in such cases. According to a detailed calculation on the would-be family size as mentioned in the above, the two conflicting effects are largely balanced off, indicating little impacts of fertility on an aggregate level.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

In the above, we have reviewed the current status of anthropological type of research on fertility and family planning in Korea and introduced the major findings from the study, "Social, Cultural and Ecological Factors Affecting Population Processes in Korea", the only fullfledged anthropological research in the field ever conducted in Korea.

The study disclosed many new and valuable pieces of information on the fertility behaviour of Korean women in the societal as well as environmental context. These include seasonal variation in the frequency of births which is in turn related to the pattern of subsistence economy, the relationship between perception of mortality and fertility, the impact of stability of marriage and community system on the value of children, the association between the pattern of child-rearing and the ideal family size, inadequacy of the current family planning service on the community level, relatively minor significance of son-preference in determining the level of fertility on an aggregate level, and so forth. Some of them appear to have direct and immediate policy implications, while others have broad and long-range policy meanings in connection with the societal transformation of the country.

All the fertility and family planning surveys in Korea have invariably demonstrated the relationship of fertility with such major socio-economic background of individuals as the level of educational attainment, residential background, the timing of marriage, and occupation. The current anthropological survey confirms the relationship, but reveals that ecological factors are more important than those personal background in explaining the community difference of fertility level. Furthermore, the confirmation of the relationship between socio-economic status of individuals and the level of fertility is known to be of very limited implications in formulating detailed programme for population control, though useful in evaluating the general directions of population policy. To change the socio-economic status of persons in reproductive age can not be pursued as a measure for the promotion of family planning. This does not point to the inadequacy of the programme, but to an urgent need for a new type of research which would generate the information required by the programme. The review of the findings from an anthropological study assures us that anthropological type of research is one of the most promising approaches in this regard. It will certainly bring about highly valuable knowledge on fertility behaviour and family planning on a micro level which can be directly accommodated into the population policy programme.

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<國文要約>

한국의 출산력 및 가족계획 연구에 있어서 인류학적 접근

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本稿는 한국의 출산력과 가족계획에 대한 인류학적 연구의 현 위치를 검토해보고, 이 분야에서는 유일하게 완전히 인류학적 연구인 ‘한국의 인구과정에 영향을 끼치는 사회·문화·생태학적 요인들’의 주요 발견 사실들을 소개한 것이다.

이 연구는 한국 여성들의 출산행위를 환경적·사회적 맥락에서 파악하여 새롭고 귀중한 많은 정보들을 밝혀내었다. 그 정보들은 생계유형과도 관계가 되는 출생 빈도의 계절적 변이, 사망에 대한 지각과 출산력의 관계, 자녀의 가치에 대한 결혼의 안정성과 지역사회 체제의 영향, 자녀 양육 유형과 이상적인 가족크기간의 연관, 지역사회 수준에서 현행가족계획 사업의 부적절성, 전체적 수준에서 출산력 수준을 결정하는데 남아선호가 별로 유의미하지 않다는 점 등이다. 이들 중 일부는 정책에 대해 직접적이고 즉각적인 함의를 가지며, 또 다른 것들은 사회변천과 관련되어 광범위하고 장기적인 정책적 의미를 함축하는 것으로 생각된다.