

SELECTIVITY OF OUT-MIGIRANTS: A CASE OF SIX VILLAGES STUDY IN KOREA

Hyun-Ho Seok

1. Introduction

Urban population in Korea has grown rapidly in the recent past years. According to the preliminary report of the 1970 census, the urban population is estimated as about 13 million, which constitutes 43% of the total population of Korea. The corresponding figure of the year of 1949 was only 17%. Table 1 shows that urban population has steadily grown since 1949. Rural-to-urban migration in Korea accounts for a significant portion of this increase in urban population.

Table 1. Population of Korea by Census Year, Whole Country and Urban Areas, 1949—1970

	Total Population (in 1,000)	Urban Population (in 1,000)	% of Urban Population
1949 ¹⁾	20,189	3,474	17.2
1955 ¹⁾	21,526	5,281	24.5
1960 ²⁾	24,989	6,999	28.0
1966 ²⁾	29,193	9,807	33.6
1970 ²⁾	31,469	12,955	43.2

Source: 1) Economic Planning Board, *Korea Statistical Yearbook, 1963*, (1963), Table 31, Population by Urban(Shi) and Rural (Gun), p. 21.

2) Bureau of Statistics, Economic Planning Board, *Preliminary Count of Population and Housing Census, 1970*, (1971), Table 6, Population of Cities, p. 10.

A number of articles have appeared in professional journals concerning the selectivity and process of rural-urban migration. Some of these are concerned with an estimation of volumes and rates of inter-provincial and rural-urban migration. Others are concerned with characteristics of in-migrants to cities and their adjustment processes for city life. Still further most of the studies on migration selectivity are carried out by asking questions to those migrants who are already in the areas of destination. Few have attempted to study the characteristics and the processes of

out-migration in the context of the place of origin. The motives, conditions, and characteristics of out-migrants can not be adequately understood unless they are studied comparatively with non-migrants in the context of the total community setting in the place from where they depart.

This paper attempts to study some sociological factors related to the rural out-migration. Specifically, this study is concerned with the personal network of out-migrants in the village community and their socio-economic characteristics as compared with those who left behind by using the data from a longitudinal survey for six villages.

2. Data and Method

The data was obtained as a by-product of a longitudinal survey on the social structure in six villages conducted by Professor Man-Gap Lee in 1958 and 1969.¹ These are located about 10 to 15 miles away from Seoul in Kwangju-gun, a county of Kyonggi Province. Each village forms a hamlet with a relatively small number of households ranging from about 30 to 90. Most of people in the villages are farmers. As in other villages in Korea, they are closely related to each other in everyday life. They also have a strong sense of group consciousness.

Structured questionnaire were utilized for the survey. In 1958, all of 346 household-heads in the villages had been interviewed. Major problems in the survey include basic demographic information, land-ownership, income, migration, occupational mobility, group activities, kinship-ties, and neighborhood relationships.

In revisit survey in 1969, it was found that 82 of the 346 original households in the 1958 survey had left the villages by the time of the reinterview. Because of close personal ties these people had maintained, the areas of destination for most of out-migrants were known to the villagers. Somewhat detailed information on where they went to have been obtained from Ri-chiefs and other related persons in the villages. Of the 82 households, 41 are known to have moved to Seoul, 5 to other cities, 23 to rural villages, and 13 to unknown destinations. Table 2 shows original households in

1. Professor Lee conducted a survey on "Social Structure of Korean Rural Community" in December, 1958. The result was published in 1960 under the title of "Social Structure of Korean Rural Community." He carried out a revisiting survey focused on social change in rural community in December 1969.

the six villages by migration status as of 1969.

Table 2. Original Households in the Villages by Migration Status

Destination	Number	Percent
Total Original Households	346	100.0
Out-migrant Households to		
Urban Areas	46	13.3
Other Rural Areas	23	6.6
Unknown Destination	13	3.8
Non-migrant Households	264	76.3

Source: Interviews with Ri-chiefs and other related persons.

By using data from the original and follow-up survey, I was able to compare some important characteristics of out-migrant households with those of non-migrant households. The comparisons were made with respect to personal network and socio-economic characteristics. As for the personal network, neighborhood relationship, kinship tie, and participation of group activities are comparatively analyzed. As for the socio-economic characteristics, migration experience, social mobility, and occupational mobility of out-migrant households are compared with those of non-migrants.

It was not possible to obtain information directly from out-migrants on why they had left the villages. Nor the data from the 1958 and 1969 structured questionnaire survey provided information on direct motives and reasons of out-migration. However, I was able to indirectly obtain information on conditions and reasons why they had moved out by analyzing social and economic characteristics of out-migrant households at the time of the first survey comparatively with those who did not migrate. Additional information on conditions of out-migration were obtained by asking to the persons who had maintained close relationships with them.

3. Analysis of Data

1) Personal Network of Out-migrants

Most of Korean villages are geographically isolated, small, and compact. Individuals who live within the boundary of a compact village are known to have a close contact with each other. Their social and economic lives have not only been in need of a cooperative system but also greatly influenced by group cohesiveness based on neigh-

borhood relations or kinship-ties.² Accordingly, individuals in Korean villages have had a strong sense of group consciousness, which has strongly influenced individual behavior of the villagers.

Out-migration of rural residents, however, takes place in the context of industrialization and urbanization of the larger society which affect the inner-solidarity of the village and hence weaken the forces which have bound the members together within the boundary of the village. Furthermore, the fact that out-migration of rural residents takes place in the process of weakening inner-solidarity of the village suggests that an analysis of rural-to-urban migration would be greatly related with the personal network of out-migrants within and outside villages.

Above perspective leads us to hypothesize that migration from a rural village to other area will be strongly influenced by neighborhood relationships or kinship-ties within the village, since most members in the Korean village, whether it is clan village or not, have a strong sense of group consciousness. This hypothesis is tested by examining personal network such as sociometry choices, degree of social and economic participation, and kinship-ties.

Contending that those who are alienated from the village solidarity are more likely to out-migrate than others, degrees of group solidarity as measured by sociometric method are compared between the migrant and non-migrant group. Sociometric network was constructed by asking household-heads, "Whom do you feel as the most intimate neighbor among the villagers?" Persons received high score for the question were considered as having a strong group solidarity and those received a low score were considered as maintaining a weak group solidarity. Table 3 shows that about

Table 3. Households by Migration Status and Sociometric Score of the Household-heads

	Out-migrant Households				Non-migrant Households		Total	
	Urban Area	Other Rural	Unknown Destination	Total N. %	N.	%	N.	%
No Score	32	18	13	63 (35.8)	113 (64.2)		176 (100.0)	
1 and more Score	14	5	—	19 (11.2)	151 (88.8)		170 (100.0)	

Source: Data from interviews with Ri-chiefs and other related persons and the 1958 Survey on the Social Structure of Korean Rural Community.

2. Robert Redfield, "The Folk Society," *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. LII, January 1947, pp. 293—308 and R.P. Dore, *Land Reform in Japan*, (Oxford University Press, 1959), Chapter XIV.

36% of the total original household-heads who were not chosen as "intimate neighbor" out-migrated, whereas only 11% of those who were chosen as "intimate neighbor" moved out. X^2 test indicates that the migration status is significantly related to the degree of group solidarity as measured herein. ($X^2=29.02$; $P<.001$)

It is also noted that those who moved into other rural areas recorded lower score in sociometry than urban-ward migrants. Those whose destination were not followed up are found to have no close personal ties with people in the village.

Among six villages covered in the survey, one village was largely composed of members of a clan. Table 4 shows that among 40 clan-households only 3 left the village by 1969. On the other hand, 8 of 17 non-clan households left the village by the time. It is clear that those who do not belong to the clan group in a village are more likely to out-migrate than those who belong to.

Table 4. Households by Migration and Clan Membership Status

	Out-migrant Households	Non-migrant Households	Total
Clan Members	3	38	40
Non-clan Members	8	9	17

Source: See Table 3

In addition to the above aspects of personal ties within villages, other aspects of personal contact such as exchange work and mutual financing association (*key*) may be related to out-migration of rural residents. In Korean villages it is quite common that individuals who live in a village have participated in various activities within the village because most of villages are geographically isolated, compact, and small, and each village has functioned as a self-contained economic unit. Thus, the degree of participation in group activities within the village may be another factor related to migration. In fact, it was found that those who had participated less in group activities out-migrated more than those who had participated more, as shown in Table 5. X^2 test indicates that the migration status by out-migration and non-migration is significantly related to the degree of participation of exchange work ($X^2=15.55$: $p<.001$) and mutual financing association ($X^2=8.13$: $p<.001$). However, those who moved into other rural areas participated more in exchange work than those who moved into urban areas. This seems to be due to the fact that most of the out-migrants towards other rural areas were employed in tenant farming.

It would appear that in the process of weakening group solidarity those who con-

Table 5. Households by Migration Status and Participation of Group Activities

a. Participation of Exchange Work

	Out-migrant Households				Non-migrant Household		Total	
	Urban Areas	Other Rural	Unknown Destination	Total N. %	N.	%	N.	%
Participated	23	19	3	45(18.1)	204(81.9)		249(100.0)	
Not Participated	23	4	10	37(38.1)	60(61.9)		97(100.0)	

b. Mutual Financing Association (key)

	Out-migrant Households				Non-migrant Households		Total	
	Urban Areas	Other Rural	Unknown Destination	Total N. %	N.	%	N.	%
Participated	12	6	1	19(15.1)	107(84.9)		126(100.0)	
Not Participated	34	17	12	63(28.6)	157(71.4)		220(100.0)	

Source: See Table 3

tact less with their neighbor through group activities may be alienated from villages and more likely to out-migrate than those who participated more. The concept of "marginal situation"³ with respect to migration developed by Park may be applied to the findings of our study. We may say that those who are alienated from their community lives in marginal situation. And these marginal men may be more likely to accept a motivation such as 'better life condition'.

Out-migration of rural people may also be related to personal network outside the village. That is, out-migration of rural dwellers may be facilitated by the existence of traditional primary inter-personal relations, especially those based on kinship-ties, with persons in the area of destination. There are many families in Korean rural villages which have a separated member or members who live in urban area.⁴ When the separated members in urban area successfully settle down, the rest of the members of families usually follow and migrate in that area. This type of family move may be called as a "delayed family migration".⁵ According to our revisiting survey,

3. Robert E. Park, "Human Migration and the Marginal Man", *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. XXXIII, May 1928, pp. 881-893.

4. Man-Gap Lee, "Change in Korean Rural Community," paper presented at the 4th Conference on Problems of Modernization in Korean Rural Society, sponsored by Asian Research Institute, held in Kyoungju, Korea, 1970, p. 5.

5. John S. MacDonald and Leatrice D. MacDonald, "Chain Migration, Ethnic Neighborhood Formation and Social Networks", *The Milbank Memorial Fund Quarterly*, Vol. XIII, No. i, January 1964, pp. 89-90.

the percentage of the delayed family migration was about 30% of all migrant families who went to urban areas.

It is also conceivable that, similar to the above process, broader kinship-ties call forth migration from rural to urban area. In several cases in this survey, a family who had migrated in urban area achieved some wealth and community power, this family influences their relatives to migrate in that area. This type of migration may be called a "chain migration",⁶ as MacDonald puts it. Case study of three Eastern Kentucky neighborhoods conducted by James S. Brown and his colleagues⁷ reveals similar findings to this.

2) Socio-economic Characteristics of Out-migrants: an Aspect of Social Mobility Experience

In this section, process of out-migration will be analyzed in relation to migrants' mobility experience such as repeated migration, socio-economic status mobility, and occupational mobility.

Goldstein in his Norristown Study⁸ tested a hypothesis that out-migrants, tended in large measure to be the persons who were previous in-migrants. In that study, data confirmed the hypothesis that out-movement from Norristown consisted in large measure of persons who had moved into Norristown in the earlier decades. He pointed out, "Since the continuous in-and out-movement is composed largely of the same persons, the great majority of migrant must at any given point in time be somewhat marginal persons in the community with little interest in or time available for integration into its core social organization".⁹ Migrants are likely to be alienated from their community. Thus, it is probable that the migration itself becomes a self generating force for repeated migration.

In our data it is shown that those who had moved into the village recently tended to move out more than those who had lived in the village longer. As Table 6 shows,

6. *Ibid.*, p. 82.

7. James S. Brown, Harry K. Schwarzweller, and Joseph J. Mangalam, "Kentucky Mountain Migration and the Stem-Family: An American Variation on a Theme by Le Play," in *Selected Essays and Research*, Kenneth C. W. Kammeyer (ed.), (Rand McNally & Company, Chicago, 1969), p. 232.

8. Sidney Goldstein, *Pattern of Mobility 1910—1950, The Norristown Study*, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1958, Chapter 10.

9. Goldstein, "Repeated Migration as a Factors in High Mobility Rates", *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 19, No.5, October 1954, p. 540.

while 35 percent of those who moved into the villages after the World War II out-migrated, only 17 percent of those who were living in the area before the War did so.

Table 6. Households by Migration Status and Duration of Residence

	Out-migrant Households		Non-migrant Households		Total	
	N.	%	N.	%	N.	%
Before 1945	40	(17.1)	194	(82.9)	234	(100.0)
After 1945	34	(38.6)	54	(61.4)	88	(100.0)

Source: See Table 3

$X^2=16.77$ ($P<.001$)

Twenty four No Responses excluded from X^2 analysis.

Second, in a sense that migration implies not only geographical mobility but also change in socio-economic status, it is important to examine the experience of vertical mobility of out-migrants. A hypothesis can be proposed that the rate of out-migration from rural area will be among those who have experienced downward mobility greater than among those who have been upwardly mobile, because the former would be more deprived and dissatisfied in the present residence. This hypothesis is confirmed by our data. As Table 7 shows, those whose current economic level are relatively lower than previous level are more likely to out-migrate than those who have been upwardly mobile.

Table 7. Households by Migration Status and Degree of Improvement of Household Economic Level after the Land-Reform

	Out-migrant Households		Non-migrant Households		Total	
	N.	%	N.	%	N.	%
Worse after Land Reform	30	(31.9)	64	(68.1)	94	(100.0)
No Change	25	(25.0)	75	(75.0)	100	(100.0)
Better after Land Reform	21	(15.4)	115	(84.6)	136	(100.0)

Source: See Table 3

$X^2=11.08$ ($P<.005$)

Sixteen No Responses excluded from X^2 analysis.

However, this does not necessarily imply that the migrants are generally from the lower economic stratum. As shown in Table 8, out-migrants are composed of persons from almost every level of economic ladder.

Finally, we turn to the problem of relationships of migration with occupational mobility. A comparison of the urban-ward out-migrant households with non-migrant households shows that the migrant households are more likely to be from those who

Table 8. Households by Migration Status and Economic Stratum
a. Land Ownership

	Out-migrant Households		Non-migrant Households		Total	
	N.	%	N.	%	N.	%
Landed Farmer	30	(17.2)	144	(82.8)	174	(100.0)
Partly Landed and Partly Tenant Farmer	13	(20.0)	50	(80.0)	63	(100.0)
Tenant Farmer	16	(28.6)	40	(71.4)	56	(100.0)

b. Yearly Income

	Out-migrant Households		Non-migrant Households		Total	
	N.	%	N.	%	N.	%
300,000 Won or more	13	(20.0)	51	(80.0)	64	(100.0)
100,000—300,000 Won	31	(19.9)	125	(81.1)	156	(100.0)
Less than 100,000 Won	29	(26.9)	79	(73.1)	108	(100.0)
Unknown	9		19		28	

Source: See Table 3

were engaged in non-farm occupation or farming with additional non-farm occupation, whereas the non-migrant households were mostly engaged in farming occupation. As shown in Table 9, only about a quarter of total out-migrant households to urban areas were farm households before migration. And it is also found that out-migrant households who had non-farm occupation in their previous residence tend to get the similar kind of occupation. This fact means that those who are capable of occupational adjustment in their destinations are more likely to out-migrate.

Table 9. Previous Occupation of Out-migrant Households by Destination

	into urban		into other rural	
	N.	%	N.	%
Farming only	12	(26.1)	18	(78.3)
Farming with Non-farm Occupation	15	(32.6)	—	
Non-farm Occupation	16	(34.8)	5	(21.7)
No Occupation	3	(6.5)	—	
Total	46	(100.0)	23	(100.0)

Source: See Table 3

4. Summary

Internal migration is traditionally viewed as a process of population adjustment

within a whole society. This view holds that internal migration as a process of population adjustment is caused by social and economic imbalance existing among various regions. "Whatever the reasons, the important point is that when a region or a community in a society does experience economic decline, the migration of native population out of that area and into a more prosperous or promising one serves to improve the economic and social balance of the society."¹⁰ This perspective on migration is mainly concerned with a functional interpretation of migration as a social change.

However, though this perspective well suggests that rural to urban migration occurs from social and economic imbalance between two areas, it is not appropriate enough for analyzing the process of migration itself. In this paper, migration is viewed as a process occurring in the context of personal network within and outside the village and as being closely related with the previous experience of social mobility.

In this perspective, variables concerning with the process of migration are categorized into following four sets;

- 1) Inner-solidarity within the village of origin
- 2) Personal ties with people in the place of destination
- 3) Previous mobility experience
- 4) Potential capacity for migration in terms of occupational adjustment.

The relationships of these variables with the process of migration are examined separately by comparing characteristics of out-migrants with non-migrants in the rural village. The major findings are;

- 1) Out-migrants from the rural village tend to be marginal in the inter-personal network of the village
- 2) While out-migration of villagers takes place in the process of weakening group solidarity within the village, it also appears to be facilitated by primary relations with those who have settled in the place of destination
- 3) Those who lived in the village for a shorter period are more likely to out-migrate than those who lived in the village longer
- 4) Those who have experienced downward mobility are more likely to out-migrate than others

10) Kammeyer (ed.), op. cit., p. 192.

5) Those who have engaged in non-farm occupation in one way or another are more likely to out-migrate than those who have engaged in farm occupation only. Most of previous researches on the out-migration selectivity of rural areas have been conducted by surveying urban residents who had moved into the urban area and have settled down in the area for some time. In that case, as noted earlier, it is difficult for researchers to find the objective conditions of migrants in the place of origin at the time of their move.

A more desirable method of research for analyzing the process of migration is a comparative study of out-migrants with continuous residents in the social and economic context of the place of origin. In this paper, it has been shown that the research on migration can be successfully conducted by comparing both groups in the village as an out-migration area. In this way, some important sociological factors, especially in terms of personal inter-relationship, are found to be closely related to the process of migration.