

**RURAL-URBAN MIGRATION AND THE SOCIAL MOBILITY OF  
INDIVIDUALS IN THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA:  
AN ANALYSIS OF LIFE HISTORY DATA\***

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*This paper explores the impact of rural-urban migration on the social mobility of individuals, comparing rural-urban migrants with rural and urban natives. Using life history data from the 1983 Korean National Migration Survey, we examine the pattern of migrant adjustment by estimating the first difference form of the autoregressive equation. We find a disruptive effect of rural-urban migration that disappears gradually after migration. This study provides strong evidence that most rural-urban migrants successfully adapt to urban life through upward occupational mobility relative to both rural and urban natives. This finding sharply contrasts with previous studies on the urban informal sector, which emphasize selective rural-urban migration or to inability of migrating individuals to adapt to city life. Moreover, this study shows that a principal cause of the rapid expansion of Seoul is that migrants are more likely to be upwardly mobile when they are destined for Seoul rather than other cities.*

**INTRODUCTION**

The Republic of Korea, since its liberation from colonial rule, has experienced unprecedented urbanization in the process of economic development, and political disturbance (Kwon 1977, 1984; Kwon and Kim 1990, pp. 242-7). In Korea, as in Western Europe, a rapid and massive flight of rural surplus labor toward cities has coincided with the development of capitalism. In the case of Korea, rural surplus labor has moved towards the national capital. Consequently, Seoul and its neighboring province currently contain more than 40 percent of the total national population. Moreover, overcrowding in cities and the concentration of power and wealth in large metropolitan areas have brought about severe social problems, such as unemployment, poverty, housing shortages, pollution, and a deteriorating living environment.

The phases of the mobility transition are intricately interwoven with the processes of urbanization and urban population growth. Zelinsky (1971), in his hypothesis of the mobility transition, has delineated five phases of geog-

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raphical mobility within a spatio-temporal framework.<sup>1</sup> In Korea, until the mid-1950s rural-rural migration was the dominant stream, followed by rural-urban migration, while between 1955 and 1985 rural-urban migration was the most important stream, followed by urban-urban migration. According to Zelinsky's hypothesis, Korean society currently appears to be at the fourth phase of the mobility transition. If it reaches his so-called fifth phase in the near future, there will be a relocation of populations from overcrowded metropolitan areas to less crowded farming and fishing villages, as well as marked increases in interurban and intraurban movement. This future pattern of internal migration in Korean society would closely approximate the observations made in the early 1970s in the advanced capitalist societies of Japan, the United States, and western Europe (Jeong 1988).

The Republic of Korea has also undergone a major shift in its occupational and class structure since the 1960s in the process of modernization and economic development. One of the most significant changes is the decline in the agricultural population, which has been sustained over the last thirty years in the process of rural-urban migration. Together with this, however, an important issue is the nature of the occupations and classes into which the urban-bound agricultural population has been absorbed in the cities, particularly in the national capital. In Korea, rapid rural-urban migration and the expansion of the urban capitalist sector have closely accompanied with the shift in the occupational and class structure, as represented by increases in new middle and working class populations. The reduction of farming occupations has necessarily led to a quantitative expansion of the so-called 'urban' occupations, and farm laborers, as well as independent farmers, have been incorporated into the ranks of blue collar workers (whose jobs involve manual labor) and white collar workers (whose jobs involve more mental rather than manual labor). It is noteworthy, however, that there has been a minor increase over this time in the upper-class occupations of professionals, managers, and administrators in the Republic of Korea (Hong 1983, 1987).

Social mobility of individuals between occupations in capitalist industrial societies takes place from generation to generation and within a specific generation, the latter being more vigorous when the society undergoes a rapid structural transformation. In Korean society this occupational mobility has been caused for the most part by such structural factors as sudden socio-

<sup>1</sup>According to his description, the phases of geographic mobility consist of the first phase, in which residential mobility rarely takes place; the second phase, in which rural-urban migration takes place on a massive scale; the third phase, in which rural-urban migration declines, but still remains an important stream; the fourth phase, in which rural-urban migration declines significantly and interurban, as well as intraurban, mobility increases; and the fifth phase, in which long-distance geographical mobility declines significantly, and movement takes place for the most part within and between cities.

political upheavals, industrialization, urbanization, and the advance of science and technology (Hong 1980). Urbanization and rural-urban migration have served as important catalysts through which the agricultural population can be absorbed into a so-called 'urban' order of occupational stratification. Upward mobility of individuals is usually achieved either through the track of normal education or through self-employment in middle-class occupations. It is particularly noteworthy that the social mobility of individuals, made possible through the expansion of higher educational institutions, has greatly exceeded the expectation of most Koreans. All these changes in Korean society are perceived as having made a considerable contribution to the diffusion of an egalitarian principle in the society as a whole.

Problems of adjustment facing rural-urban migrants in their city life require special attention if we are to understand the relationship between migration and the social mobility of individuals within Korean society. Rural-urban migrants are usually compared with the rural-born rural population (rural natives) or the urban-born urban population (urban natives). Occupational group membership, or prestige scales, can help capture the pattern of migrant adjustment in the process of rural-urban migration and urbanization.

Hypotheses concerning the pattern of migrant adjustment are usually classified under three major models or theoretical perspectives: adaptation, selection, and disruption.<sup>2</sup> The selection model views the differentials in occupational or class membership as having existed prior to the migration or having persisted even after migration. The adaptation model regards differentials as arising in the place of destination in direct response to income and other opportunity constraints of the host population. Still another perspective, the disruption model, argues that the migration process itself largely accounts for whatever mobility differentials exist between migrants and natives at origin and destination.

In this study, we aim to estimate a set of first difference forms of the autoregressive equation for the purpose of analyzing the relationship between migration and social mobility and, based upon this analysis, attempt to explain the pattern of adjustment facing rural-urban migrants in their city lives. Two major populations to be compared with rural-urban migrants are rural natives (the rural-born rural population) and urban natives (the urban-born urban population). The primary data to be used for this study are from the life history matrix of the 1983 Korean National Migration Survey, which was carried out by the Economic Planning Board of Korea and the Korean Insti-

<sup>2</sup>See Goldstein and Goldstein (1982), for more detail. These three perspectives were initially proposed for explaining differentials in fertility between migrants and nonmigrants in developing nations. Still another perspective — the socialization model — states that adjustment takes place from generation to generation, rather than within a specific generation.

tute of Population and Health.

Analyses of the interrelation between population movement and social mobility in developing nations are often severely limited. For example, there have been great difficulties with previous migration research because census data have the limited information on migration, such as place of birth, place of residence five years before the census, and duration of residence at current location. Moreover, census data do not permit any meaningful analyses of the lifetime pattern of the social mobility of rural-urban migrants and the reference population of rural and urban natives. And we obtain only a skimpy picture of individual movement across class or occupational group membership by observing through aggregate shifts in class or occupational structure over time

Among recent studies using the Korean National Migration Survey are Nam (1988), Lee H-Y (1986), and Yoon (1986). Barringer (1980) has utilized surveys for Seoul, Daegu, and Jeonju to determine the social mobility of migrants. All these analyses, in contrast to previous research, have made significant contributions to our understanding of the relationship between rural-urban migration and the social mobility of individuals. Still, we had great difficulties interpreting the major findings because of severe limitations, e.g., failure to differentiate first-order from second- and higher order migrations, and the use of simplistic cross-classification techniques. As a consequence, we attempt in this study to overcome the limitations of previous research, and to present a more genuine picture of the relationship between rural-urban migration and the social mobility of individuals in the Republic of Korea.

## ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

The modelling of social mobility can be broadly classified into two perspectives. The first uses nominal- or ordinal-level measurement, usually class (Marxian or Weberian) or occupational group membership. According to this perspective, individuals are the unit of observation, and variations of the models are often subsumed under cross-tabulation techniques. In this perspective, two foci dominate. One deals with a single pattern of movement (e.g., from father's to ego's category). The other deals with a sequence of patterns of movement (e.g., from grandfather's to father's to ego's category) and with the interdependencies between patterns more than the interdependencies within specific patterns.

The second major perspective uses interval-level measurement, usually occupational prestige scores. Again individuals are the unit of observation. This perspective is regarded as extremely useful because multiple regression

can be utilized, and because it permits the incorporation of socioeconomic attributes of individuals and a fairly sophisticated analysis. This perspective has several limitations when applied to societies of a particular type. First of all, when prestige ranks or status scores are assigned to occupations, the question is about whether or not farming and urban occupations can be identically scaled in index construction. Second is the question of how this perspective treats individuals who do not have specific occupations but are very affluent, or those who are unemployed permanently or semi-permanently. If this perspective resolves the two questions, it will substantially advance research on social mobility in occupational status in developing nations.

In this study, we use the second perspective for assessing the relationship between migration and the social mobility of individuals in the process of urbanization. The populations of primary concern here are rural-urban migrants, and the two groups for estimating patterns of migrant adjustment are the rural-born rural population (rural natives) and the urban-born urban population (urban natives). Hong (1983), in his stratification research, has reviewed critical issues and constructed status scales of occupations. He employed the technique which Duncan (1961) used for his index construction: develop a regression model which can estimate the socioeconomic status of occupations through the use of education and income variables. What follows is a range of status scores for the three-digit classification system of occupations in Korea, as estimated by Hong (1983);

1. professional and technical workers  
max ... lawyers and public prosecutors (86.9)  
min ... photographers and cameramen (39.3)
2. administrators and managerial workers  
max ... general managers (69.5)  
min ... government administrative officials (63.7)
3. clerical workers  
max ... clerical supervisors (68.9)  
min ... traffic guides (29.0)
4. sales workers  
max ... sales supervisors (59.4)  
min ... peddlers, salesmen, and newspaper men (30.9)
5. service workers  
max ... restaurant business, and lodging supervisors (48.5)  
min ... garbagemen and kindred workers (24.8)
6. agricultural workers  
max ... horticulturalists (30.4)  
min ... timber cutters (11.0)
7. laborers and operatives  
max ... production superintendents (48.7)  
min ... basket handiworkmen and brush manufacturers (21.2)

Rural-urban migration brings changes in the socioeconomic status or social mobility of migrants in terms of strata or class membership, since migration requires changes in occupations and class membership in the process of urbanization. Usually, however, it is not easy to assess relations between migration and social mobility, because rural-urban migration occurs on the premise, or in the expectation, of changes in socioeconomic status. As mentioned earlier, three perspectives or models were proposed to explain the social mobility of rural-urban migrants, i.e., adaptation, selection and disruption, as compared with the reference populations (see Goldstein and Goldstein 1982; Lee B-S *et al.* 1982; and Jun 1987 in fertility research). Goldstein and Goldstein (1982) argue that all these three perspectives are potentially valid and not mutually exclusive. To capture the process of migrant adaptation to city life, we refine an autoregressive equation to its first difference form in the following:

$$\begin{aligned}
 Y(t) - Y(t-1) = & a(1) \times (Y(t-1) - Y(t-2)) + a(2) \times AGE(t) \\
 & + a(3) \times ASQ(t) + b(1) \times MIG(-1944) \\
 & + b(2) \times MIG(1945-49) + b(3) \times MIG(1950-54) \\
 & + b(4) \times MIG(1955-59) + b(5) \times MIG(1960-64) \\
 & + b(6) \times MIG(1965-69) + b(7) \times MIG(1970-74) \\
 & + b(8) \times MIG(1975-79) + c(1) \times DUB4 \\
 & + c(2) \times DUB3 + c(3) \times DUB2 \\
 & + c(4) \times DUB1 + d(1) \times DU1 + d(2) \times DU2 \\
 & + d(2) \times DU3 + d(4) \times DU4 + d(5) \times DU5 \\
 & + d(6) \times DU6 + d(7) \times DU7 \qquad (1)
 \end{aligned}$$

In equation (1),  $Y(t)$  refers to the observed occupational status score by year  $t$ , and  $Y(t) - Y(t-1)$ , as our dependent variable, is the change in the level of status score for a fixed period of observation ( $t-1$ ,  $t$ ). This equation, which is expressed in the first difference form, does not contain constant terms. In other words,  $a(t) - a(t-1) = 0$ , i.e., constant terms take identical values in the autoregressive equation; otherwise we may have to face statistical problems in using the first difference form equation and estimating regression coefficients.  $AGE(t)$  refers to age by  $t$ ,  $ASQ(t)$  is a variable which is used to capture the nonlinear form of the social mobility of individuals over age and time.  $Y(t-1) - Y(t-2)$  is a variable which is utilized to control for a composite aspect of occupational behavior obtaining over time, i.e., differentials between migrants and nonmigrants in changes in the level of status scores for occupations in the process of population movement.

The dependent variable,  $Y(t) - Y(t-1)$ , is observed for four years in the period 1980-83, and we adjust it to five-year values in our analyses, using a

multiplication factor, 1.25. MIG (-1944), MIG (1945-49), MIG (1950-54), MIG (1955-59),..., and MIG (1980-83), respectively, refer to the migration cohorts who moved from villages to cities during the years before 1944, between 1945 and 1949, between 1950 and 1954, between 1955 and 1959,... and between 1980 and 1983. DUB1, DUB2, DUB3, and DUB4, respectively, refer to the periods of 1-5, 6-10, 11-15, and 16-20 years before migration, and reflect situations concerning the selection process of rural-urban migration. DUB4 includes the period of more than 20 years prior to migration. DU1, DU2, DU3, DU4, DU5, DU6, and DU7 respectively refer to the periods of 0-4, 5-9, 10-14, 15-19, 20-24, 25-29, and 30-34 years after migration takes place, and reflect situations concerning patterns of adaptation after migration. This model limits the duration of urban residence to a maximum of 35 years, since migrants above age 50 usually do not experience any significant changes in occupations and educational attainment, or reach deadlocks in mobility opportunities accruing from the use of human capitals. We drop MIG (1980-83) from this equation, and the coefficients for other migration cohorts are compared with those for the migration cohorts who moved between 1980 and 1983.

Equation (1), as a partial stock adjustment model, is a standard analytical tool which sociologists, economists, and biologists use for exploring the stochastic nature of socioeconomic and biological phenomena.<sup>3</sup> In studying the impact of rural-urban migration on the social mobility of individuals, we adopt the following assumptions: (1) there is no difference between migrants and nonmigrants in individual motivations or preferences for social mobility in occupations, i.e., migration is a random event in the absence of selectivity factors such as education or occupational skills in the place of origin; and (2) migration status, or the duration of urban residence, directly operates to affect the observed level of social mobility of individuals; the effect will be additive with no age interactions. These two assumptions are needed since there are a host of selectivity variables which are neither observable nor measurable but which directly operate to affect the process of migrant adaptation in urban areas.

## THE 1983 KNMS AS A DATA SOURCE

The primary data in this study come from the 1983 Korean National Migra-

<sup>3</sup>This equation has been developed by Lee B-S (1982) and Jun (1987) for the purpose of describing the reproductive behavior of rural-urban migrants, as compared with the rural-born rural population and the urban-born urban population. The first difference form is the most widely used and/or suggested procedure when we face autocorrelation. See Ostrom (1978) for more details.

tion Survey (KNMS), which provides a useful example of how a single survey can include a large amount of historical background information gathered from retrospective questions.<sup>4</sup> In the 1983 KNMS life history data, the questions are organized around places of residence. For individuals who have never moved, all the information refers to one place of residence. At each place of residence for migrants, information is gathered on the duration of residence, labor force activity status and occupations (including schooling), marital status, and the births and deaths of children.

A major advantage of the 1983 KNMS life history matrix is that all of the events for which data are collected can be analyzed for interactions. This advantage is extremely important for assessing the determinants and consequences of social mobility, since the 1983 KNMS life history matrix permits meaningful analysis of the relationship between geographic movement and other life cycle events and changes in environmental conditions. As a consequence, the 1983 KNMS life history matrix is an invaluable instrument for studying the impact of migration behavior on the social mobility of migrating individuals, in conjunction with their other life cycle events.

As seen in Equation (1), one of the principal reasons for incorporating the life history matrix in the 1983 KNMS is to compare the migrants' characteristics before and after migration, in order to evaluate whether migration led to positive or negative changes, and to relate these changes to those experienced by nonmigrants at places of both origin and destination. Unfortunately, experience with this life history matrix approach is still limited (Balan *et al.* 1969, 1973; Perlman 1976). In studies completed so far, only a small fraction of the data collected has been analyzed, often in simple cross-tabulations. Fortunately, growing attention has been given to the methodological concerns associated with this life history approach in social mobility research. The new methods, together with the increasing use of the approach, should provide plenty of opportunities for assessing the impact of population movement on the social mobility of individuals (see, in the case of Korea, Barringer 1980; Nam 1988; Lee H-Y 1986; Yoon 1976, 1986).

Table 1 presents the number of rural-urban migrants and the populations to be compared with them in the first difference form, by year of observation

<sup>4</sup>See the sampling scheme for the National Bureau of Statistics, Korean Economic Planning Board (1985). This survey used a non-proportionate sampling technique. As a consequence, sample weighting is needed to grasp a complex facet of population movement in each region at the national level. Seoul and cities in Kyonggi province are oversampled and sample weights are rather small (1.430 and 1.480), while Pusan and Taegu, villages in Kyonggi province, and other villages are undersampled and sample weights are quite large (3.480, 3.470, and 3.450). The total sample weight is 2.110. Problems arising from sample weights require us to give special attention to statistical biases concerning the demographic and socioeconomic characteristics of survey respondents.



TABLE 1. DISTRIBUTION OF TOTAL RURAL-URBAN MIGRANTS AND COMPARISON GROUPS BY YEAR OF OBSERVATION AND MIGRATION COHORT

Migration Cohort	Year of Observation							
	1949	1954	1959	1964	1969	1974	1979	1983
prior to 1944	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35
1945-1949	27	27	27	27	27	27	27	27
1950-1954	65	94	94	94	94	94	94	94
1955-1959	124	166	208	208	208	208	208	208
1960-1964	75	100	125	153	153	153	153	153
1965-1969	77	113	160	206	258	258	258	258
1970-1974	116	171	228	309	412	509	509	509
1975-1979	58	79	113	152	206	279	349	349
1980-1983	38	57	83	123	164	235	313	402
Rural-Urban Migrants	615	842	1,013	1,307	1,557	1,798	1,946	2,035
Rural Natives	143	187	205	306	450	644	825	1,032
Urban Natives	130	179	245	303	415	568	758	948
Total	888	1,208	1,463	1,916	2,422	3,010	3,529	4,015

and migration cohorts. In our observation plan, we consider all migration events taking place after 15 years of age, and include first-order migrants but exclude second- and higher order migrants, i.e., those who moved more than once. Thus, rural-urban migrants refer to the individuals who moved from rural to urban areas only once during their lifetimes after they reached 15 years of age. Rural natives are rural nonmigrants and rural-rural migrants, both of whom were born in villages and were not exposed to urban life after they reached 15 years of age. On the other hand, urban natives are urban nonmigrants and urban-urban migrants, both of whom were born in cities and have not been exposed to rural life after they reached 15 years of age. Years of observation refer to the years of 1949, 1954, 1959, ..., 1979, and 1983; and migration cohorts refer to cohorts who moved in years prior to 1945, between 1945 and 1949, between 1950 and 1954, between 1955 and 1959, between 1960 and 1964, ..., and between 1980 and 1983.

## ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

We now examine the effect of rural-urban migration on the social mobility of migrating individuals in terms of occupational status scores, first comparing rural-urban migrants with rural natives, and then with urban natives. We standardize the magnitude of social mobility for rural-urban migrants, using our estimations of the basic equation (1).

*Rural Natives As a Reference Group*

Table 2 presents the coefficients of the effects of rural-urban migration across individuals and over time, using rural natives as a reference group.<sup>5</sup> In these pooled data, we estimate the magnitude of social mobility for the rural-urban migrants, as compared with rural natives, i.e., rural nonmigrants and rural-rural migrants, using both migration cohorts and the duration of urban residence dummy variables in the regression. The first column of Table 1, is a pooling of eight cross-sections over time, using rural-urban migrants and the rural-born rural population. The second and third columns, respectively, refer to rural-urban migrants whose destinations were toward Seoul and toward cities other than the capital. Kwon (1975, 1978, 1982, 1988) indicates that, despite differences in migration volume over time, approximately 45 percent of rural-urban migrants were destined to Seoul and the remainder moved to other cities. The regression coefficients reported here are used to standardize the effects of migration cohorts in estimating the magnitude of social mobility.

In Equation (1), we assume that age effects are fixed over time and that the effects of historical periods (year of observation) are captured by the effects of migration cohorts. The coefficients for our lagged dependent variable,  $Y(t) - Y(t-1)$ , are  $-0.25$ ,  $-0.23$ , and  $-0.26$ , and statistically significant at the 0.01 level. This indicates that the first-difference form equation provides an adequate control for biases due to omitted variables, i.e., biases caused by selection factors dependent upon socioeconomic status in the process of migration, and for simultaneity biases caused by disruptive factors operating immediately before or after migration. The 1983 KNMS life history data do not contain the ideal information for studying the problems of adjustment facing rural-urban migrants. More specifically, estimation problems due to either omitted variables or simultaneity biases do not arise only if we can incorporate education attainment and all the other relevant variables in the first difference form equation.

In Table 2, note that the magnitude of social mobility, i.e., changes in occupational status scores, for rural-urban migrants tends to increase initially and then decrease over time (the period of migration cohort). That is, controlling for the duration of urban residence (DUBs and DUs), rural-urban migrants moving before 1954 appear to have a lower magnitude of social mobility than those moving between 1980 and 1983: the coefficient estimates

<sup>5</sup>See Sayrs (1989) for more detail. This is a pooled time series, i.e., time series (regular temporal observations on individuals) which are combined with cross-sections (observations on the individuals at single time points).

TABLE 2. REGRESSION COEFFICIENTS OF OCCUPATIONAL STATUS SCORES ON MIGRATION COHORT AND DURATION OF URBAN RESIDENCE: COMPARISONS OF RURAL-URBAN MIGRANTS AND RURAL-BORN RURAL NATIVES.

Variables	Col. 1		Col. 2		Col. 3	
	Rural-Urban Migrants		Rural-Seoul Migrants		Rural-non-Seoul Migrants	
	Raw Coeff.	t	Raw Coeff.	t	Raw Coeff.	t
Y(t-1) - Y(t-2)	-0.25	(-13.26)	-0.23	(-11.87)	-0.26	(-11.21)
AGE(t)	2.56	(75.14)	2.34	(52.14)	2.83	(57.17)
ASQ(t)	-0.37	(-49.15)	-0.41	(-59.13)	-0.43	(-34.14)
Migration Cohort						
-1944	-30.62	(-2.05)	-29.54	(-1.68)	-36.64	(-1.65)
1945-1949	-20.55	(-2.01)	-19.56	(-1.95)	-22.46	(-2.01)
1950-1954	-20.46	(-0.56)	-18.97	(-0.47)	-22.52	(-1.56)
1955-1959	5.45	(2.48)	6.54	(2.34)	8.36	(2.59)
1960-1964	11.70	(1.85)	11.81	(1.74)	9.64	(2.85)
1965-1969	5.25	(1.86)	8.35	(1.65)	3.13	(1.95)
1970-1974	3.75	(0.35)	5.86	(0.48)	2.18	(0.47)
1975-1979	2.40	(0.21)	4.50	(0.37)	1.39	(0.32)
Duration of Urban Residence						
-20--16	-15.02	(-1.87)	-16.30	(-1.63)	-13.12	(-1.96)
-15--11	29.17	(4.08)	51.18	(3.09)	27.18	(5.18)
-10--6	-0.67	(-1.47)	0.95	(1.54)	-1.92	(-1.95)
-5--1	9.70	(2.59)	12.28	(1.68)	6.80	(1.97)
0-4	12.80	(3.56)	14.92	(3.32)	11.70	(2.48)
5-9	-1.00	(-0.25)	-1.84	(-0.36)	-2.44	(-0.35)
10-14	8.50	(3.54)	5.67	(2.58)	8.37	(2.76)
15-19	10.10	(4.70)	8.20	(3.20)	11.55	(3.47)
20-24	15.46	(4.61)	18.56	(3.51)	12.19	(2.36)
25-29	22.08	(3.75)	25.18	(3.16)	18.13	(4.51)
30-34	10.12	(1.20)	10.32	(1.38)	9.05	(1.35)
RSQ	0.846		0.818		0.846	
N	14,965		10,526		8,231	
F	2158.32		1865.45		1734.39	

for the men moving before 1954 are substantially lower (20-30 points, at a marginal level of significance) than for the migration cohort of 1980-83 (this category is omitted as a 'reference group' category). On the other hand, men moving between 1955 and 1969, in particular between 1960 and 1964, appear to experience greater social mobility than those moving between 1980 and

1983: the coefficients estimates for the migration cohorts of 1955-59, 1960-64, and 1965-69 are significantly larger at the 0.10 level than for the migration cohort of 1980-83.

Kwon (1975, 1978, 1982, 1988) has estimated numbers and rates of internal net-migration for the nation as a whole, and has shown that it was not until the 1960s that the growth of large metropolitan cities accelerated rapidly in the capitalist process of urbanization. Comparing the relative importance of pull and push factors at both origin and destination, he has indicated that the 1960s were dominated more by push factors, than by pull factors. More specifically, since the inception of five-year development projects, beginning in 1962, Korean society has experienced rapid rural-urban migration and urban population growth. It is noteworthy, however, that migrants who moved during the 1960s did not remain poor in urban areas and experienced greater social mobility, as compared with the migrants moving between 1980 and 1983. Clearly, the magnitude of social mobility for the migration cohort of 1960-64 suggests that in Korean society the patterns and determinants of urbanization have shifted over time, depending upon the long-term plans for national development. In Table 2, for example, it is evident that the rural surplus labor roaming in cities has shown a new mode of adaptation through structured mobility<sup>6</sup> in response to a multiplicity of industrial structures and employment opportunities nationwide.

The second point is that the social mobility of rural-urban migrants, as compared with rural natives, increases with time spent in urban areas. This is demonstrated by the values of the coefficients for the duration of urban residence, which, except for the duration of residence of 5-9 and 30-34 years, are all significant and larger than zero (0). The statistically insignificant effect of rural-urban migration during the period 5-9 years can be attributed to a disruption of social mobility. It reflects difficulties of adjustment by rural-urban migrants because of initial psychological distress in the first encounter with city life. The literature interprets this disruptive effect as a result of strong selection and weak adaptation that takes place in the process of structural readjustment, which has been generally understood in the theoretical framework of formal-informal sectors, or of the segmentation of urban labor markets in developing nations (Lee J-Y 1986). The magnitude of social mobility 30-34 years after migration is rather small, since both migrants and nonmigrants are approaching the end of their period of economic activity and labor force participation. In our study sample, the mean ages of rural-urban

<sup>6</sup>Seen from the individual-level perspective, this is different from exchange or circular mobility. For example, this means that particular individuals are forced to move to positions in capitalist or organizational sectors, which are created but which still remain vacant in the process of rapid economic development.

**TABLE 3. REGRESSION COEFFICIENTS OF OCCUPATIONAL STATUS SCORES ON MIGRATION COHORT AND DURATION OF URBAN RESIDENCE: COMPARISONS OF RURAL-URBAN MIGRANTS AND URBAN-BORN RURAL NATIVES.**

Variables	Col. 1		Col. 2		Col. 3	
	Rural-Urban Migrants		Rural-Seoul Migrants		Rural-non-Seoul Migrants	
	Raw Coeff.	t	Raw Coeff.	t	Raw Coeff.	t
Y(t-1) - Y(t-2)	0.21	(8.52)	0.24	(6.52)	0.25	(5.52)
AGE(t)	2.34	(50.40)	2.19	(43.40)	2.14	(35.40)
ASQ(t)	-0.28	(-40.16)	-0.28	(-35.16)	-0.34	(-28.16)
<b>Migration Cohort</b>						
-1944	-23.11	(-1.75)	-21.11	(-1.38)	-25.21	(-1.84)
1945-1949	-15.20	(-1.52)	-13.20	(-1.36)	-17.53	(-1.65)
1950-1954	-14.82	(-1.25)	-16.82	(-1.14)	2.38	(1.35)
1955-1959	19.94	(4.89)	23.94	(3.75)	17.74	(2.95)
1960-1964	13.20	(3.47)	15.25	(2.48)	11.30	(2.47)
1965-1969	5.53	(2.60)	8.73	(1.98)	3.63	(2.30)
1970-1974	4.50	(1.53)	6.81	(1.38)	2.58	(2.53)
1975-1979	3.91	(0.59)	5.91	(0.61)	1.85	(1.59)
<b>Duration of Urban Residence</b>						
-20-16	-18.00	(-1.75)	-14.10	(-1.68)	-20.25	(-1.64)
-15-11	12.21	(3.80)	12.22	(2.48)	19.03	(4.80)
-10-6	-5.16	(-1.22)	-3.36	(-1.14)	-7.24	(-1.42)
-5-1	-5.20	(-1.70)	-3.70	(-1.65)	-7.21	(-1.82)
0-4	-4.08	(-1.40)	-2.68	(-1.35)	-6.58	(-1.30)
5-9	-11.50	(-5.53)	-9.54	(-4.38)	-13.00	(-5.63)
10-14	3.76	(2.65)	3.76	(2.38)	6.67	(3.75)
15-19	3.20	(2.88)	5.29	(1.87)	2.00	(1.58)
20-24	7.20	(1.90)	7.28	(1.94)	6.23	(3.00)
25-29	8.20	(1.96)	8.23	(1.43)	7.16	(2.54)
30-34	2.50	(0.90)	2.52	(0.96)	5.31	(0.90)
RSQ	0.765		0.724		0.730	
N	14,719		6,623		8,095	
F	1567.40		1423.57		1448.91	

migrants are barely greater than 50 years for the period of 30-34 years after migration.

#### *Urban Natives As a Reference Group*

Table 3 presents the estimated coefficients for the effects of rural-urban

migration on the magnitude of social mobility across individuals and over time, using a pooled time-series of cross-sections derived from Table 1. The first column presented in Table 3 is for the total sample, the second column is for the migrants destined for Seoul, and the third column is for the migrants destined for other cities. The total sample refers to the individuals included in seven five-year and one four-year cross-sections. The regression results are utilized to calculate the 'standardized' effects of the migration cohorts, using urban natives as the reference group.

In Table 3, controlling for the duration of urban residence (DUs and DUBs), the coefficients for the migration cohort dummy variables indicate that the men who moved prior to 1954, i.e., before the truce period of the Korean War, are likely to have been less active participants than those moving during the period of 1980-83 (category omitted as a reference group). In other words, the estimated coefficients for the migration cohort moving before 1944, between 1945 and 1949, and between 1950 and 1954, are significantly smaller than those for the migration cohort who moved between 1980 and 1983 (the reference category). Conversely, the migration cohorts of 1955 and 1964 have significantly larger coefficients than for the cohort of 1980 and 1983. This finding indicates that recent migrants have participated more actively in urban life in the process of urbanization which accelerated after the Korean War (1950-53). We observed similar results in Table 2 in our comparison of rural-urban migrants and rural natives. We believe that the magnitude of change in occupational status scores has increased over time and that it reached the peak during the periods of 1955-59 and 1960-64.

The inverted-U shaped effects of rural-urban migration on the magnitude of social mobility over time can be interpreted in several ways. First, in the 1960s, differences between villages and cities in the level of socioeconomic development may have induced a large volume of rural-urban migration. Given large rural-urban class and occupational differences, the urban environment may have provided a stronger incentive for rural-urban migrants to adopt the occupational and other socioeconomic activities of urban-born urban residents, especially through access to schooling facilities or opportunities for labor force activities. Second, recent rural-urban migrants (e.g., those moving between 1955 and 1964) may have been more selective in terms of socioeconomic variables, or more innovative than earlier migrants (e.g., those moving before 1954). The literature has noted that the selectivity of rural-urban migration (e.g., the choice of an urban destination) increased during the decade of 1960-70, but has since decreased. Third, reflecting improved communication technology in the 1960s, recent rural-urban migrants (e.g., those moving between 1955 and 1964) may have been better informed before migration, more easily integrated into the urban environment, and, therefore,

more successful in adapting to the urban life style. All these explanations refer to the complex facet of Korean modernization and industrialization which we have witnessed over the last forty years, especially, that which has occurred in the early national economic development plan periods.

In Table 3, we find that the disruptive mobility effects of rural-urban migration appear between 10 years before migration and 9 years after migration in the Republic of Korea (the coefficients for the duration of urban residence dummy variables are statistically significant only during the period 5-9 years after migration). In the case of Korea, a substantial number of children from both poor and wealthy farmers were likely to move as single premarital migrants as the leading sector of economic expansion shifted from light to heavy chemical industries in the process of export-oriented industrialization. It appears that a majority of Korean migrants who have moved at relatively young ages as unmarried men may have to wait five or ten years before they finish a higher level of schooling or obtain urban employment and find a desirable spouse in the urban marriage market. In this process, a substantial number of rural-urban migrants are more likely to participate in urban life, and to seek their employment initially as production- or service-oriented workers. This may have caused a disruptive effect on the mobility of migrants, which reflects a temporal disequilibrium in the process of migrant adjustment in urban Korea. This occupational choice behavior has been easily observed in Korean census data on five- and one-year migration experiences (see Table 3-2, Kwon 1990 for more details).

The disruption effect of rural-urban migration seen in Table 3 urges us to consider three factors: first it may not be extremely difficult for rural-urban migrants to move their positions from informal sectors to formal sectors, given a competing coexistence of two industrial sectors in the urban areas of Korea; second, needs for wealth accumulation through savings increase with a rise in age at marriage, which is associated with urbanization and socioeconomic development; and third, the rapid tempo of family formation begins immediately after the period of deferred payments among youth. We believe that these factors are central elements for explaining a strong adaptation effect after a short period when disruption disappears. This result does not confirm the so-called socialization model, as implied by Lee J-H (1985), who states that movement from traditional (informal) to modern (formal) sectors, takes place from one to another generation, rather than within a specific generation (i.e., 30 years), in urban Korea.

This study finds that significant difference in occupational status scores between rural-urban migrants and urban natives gradually disappear. This finding sharply contrasts with previous studies of the urban informal sector which strongly emphasize the selective nature of rural-urban migration or the

inability of migrating individuals to adapt to city life. Many studies place far too much stress on the selection process of rural-urban migrants (Lee J-Y 1986; Han *et al.* 1985), implying that migration, and possibly urbanization, operate as a barrier to the convergence of regional differences in the expansion of educational or labor force participation opportunities. The disruptive effect of rural-urban migration on the fertility behavior of migrants appears as well in Thailand, Mexico, and Colombia, but it is important to note that the occupational prestige scores of rural-urban migrants approach those of urban natives fairly rapidly, i.e., five years after migration (Clark 1983; Goldscheider 1983; Radloff 1983).

### *Calculation of Standardized Effects*

In Tables 2 and 3, the regression coefficients of duration for urban residence (DUs and DUBs) show effects with reference to the migration cohort moved between 1980 and 1983. Table 4 presents standardized effects of DUs and DUBs on the social mobility of migrating individuals, i.e., for the mean value of the raw or nonstandardized coefficients of the non-referent migration cohorts.<sup>7</sup> This technique was used initially by Bowen and Finnegan (1969) to correct United States census data. Table 3 indicates that population movement contributes to the upward status mobility of rural-urban migrants and that migrants moving to Seoul tend to experience greater social mobility than those moving elsewhere.

We use rural natives as a reference group in the first column of Table 4. We calculate the sum of post-migration values, assuming that an "average" rural-urban migrant spends a maximum of 35 years, i.e., 15-49 years, in urban areas after migration. The status scores are larger by 40.33 points for the total sample; by 58.83 points for migrants to Seoul; and 21.46 points for those moving elsewhere, using rural natives as a reference group. The status scores of the reference population and rural-urban migrants are logically treated as zero when they do not enter the labor market in both villages and cities. The status score of both an "average" rural-urban migrant approaches that of a majority of middle-class occupations, as estimated by Hong (1983) in his preliminary analysis of stratification. When rural-urban migrants move to

<sup>7</sup>We calculate a 'standardized' differential between rural-urban migrants and rural or urban natives, depending upon the duration of urban residence, using a two-step procedure. First we calculate a standardized 'constant term' for all migration cohorts by (1) summing raw or nonstandardized regression coefficients for migration cohort dummy variables; (2) dividing the sum by the number of migration cohort dummy variables. (3) adding this value to the constant term of the first difference form equation, which was set to zero (0). The second step is to add the 'standardized' constant term to the regression coefficients for the duration of urban residence of the reference population, i.e., the migration cohort migrating between 1980 and 1983.



**TABLE 4.** MIGRANT/NONMIGRANT DIFFERENTIALS IN OCCUPATIONAL STATUS SCORE, ADJUSTED FOR THE MEAN VALUE OF MIGRATION COHORTS

Duration of Urban Residence	Col. 1			Col. 2		
	Rural-Urban Migrants vs. Rural Natives			Rural-Urban Migrants vs. Urban Natives		
	Total	Destination		Total	Destination	
Seoul		Others	Seoul		Others	
-20--16	-20.41	-20.11	-19.99	-18.77	-12.91	-23.12
-15--11	23.78	27.37	20.31	11.44	13.41	16.25
-10--6	-6.06	-2.86	-8.79	-5.93	-2.17	-10.11
-5--1	4.31	8.47	-0.07	-5.97	-2.51	-10.08
0-4	7.41	11.11	4.83	-4.85	-1.49	-9.45
5-9	-6.39	-1.97	-9.31	-12.27	-8.35	-15.87
10-14	3.11	1.86	2.50	2.99	4.95	3.80
15-19	4.71	4.39	4.68	2.43	6.48	1.87
20-24	10.07	14.75	5.32	6.43	8.47	3.36
25-29	16.69	22.18	11.26	7.43	9.42	4.29
30-34	4.73	6.51	2.18	1.73	3.71	3.66
Sum of Post-migration values	40.33	58.83	21.46	8.89	23.19	-8.34

the national capital, they are likely to experience deproletarianization, spending their urban lives in the ranks of white collar workers. In addition, migrants to cities other than Seoul, do not experience any substantial improvements in occupational status scores, at least compared with the migrants to Seoul. Therefore we argue that rural-Seoul migrants move upward into either the new middle class or the old petty bourgeoisie, while the remaining migrants are more likely to stay in the lower strata of working class or urban poor.<sup>8</sup>

We use urban natives as a reference group in the second column of Table 4. The status scores are larger by 8.89 points for the total sample; by 23.19 points for migrants to Seoul by -8.34 points for those moving elsewhere, than those for the reference group of urban natives.<sup>9</sup> When migrants move to the national capital, they adapt much better during their lifetime (a maximum of 35 years) to their destination than do Seoul-born Seoul residents.

<sup>8</sup>The status score of an "average" rural native amounts to 10.14 points. Consequently, the status scores of an "average" migrant amount to 50.33 points, for 'sampled' total migrants, 68.97 points for rural-Seoul migrants, and 31.60 points for the migrants moving elsewhere. Keep in mind that all these values are hypothetical because we assume that an "average" rural-urban migrant spends a maximum of 35 years in urban areas after migration takes place.

<sup>9</sup>On an average, occupational status score amount to 42.16 for urban natives as a whole, 45.50 for Seoul natives, and 38.23 for other urban natives.

From the above analysis, we surmise that urban problems and regional inequalities will be exacerbated by the massive movement of people to the national capital. We argue that many single, premarital migrants have been greatly successful in upgrading their socioeconomic status through obtaining higher education. As a consequence, we believe that Seoul and the surrounding regions will be faced with severe problems, such as unemployment, housing shortages, pollution, and deteriorating living conditions, unless the national government offers strong incentives to move the population away from Seoul and the surrounding regions (e.g., new satellite town construction projects).

## CONCLUSION

In this paper, we examined the impact of rural-urban migration on the social mobility of individuals in the Republic of Korea, using life history data from the 1983 Korean National Migration Survey. Major findings from this study provide important clues to the nature and process of social mobility in the process of urbanization and urban population growth in developing nations. Moreover, the result call for a new and fresh outlook concerning the future of urbanization and urban problems in the Republic of Korea.

The social structure of local communities has two dimensions, whether they are rural or urban. One refers to the vertical structure involving class or strata compositions. The other refers to various social groups based on kinships, regional ties, and alumni associations. Sorokin and Zimmerman (1929) indicate that the class structure of rural communities takes the form of two- or three-storied farming houses, while the class structure of urban communities approaches the complex facet of a skyscraper more closely than does a bipolar confrontation of capitalists and working classes. Together with debates surrounding the nature of social formation and the state in the Republic of Korea, the urban poor and the squatter settlements have been a popular and controversial issue in urban studies and policy research (Huh 1982; Lee J-Y 1986). But quite apart from the prescriptions as well as the premises implied in this debate, this study shows, significantly, that most rural-urban migrants successfully adapt to urban life through upward occupational mobility, compared with both rural and urban natives. We believe that this mobility contributes to increased middle-class consciousness among urban residents, such that most of them see themselves as members of the middle stratum or class, in Korea.

The so-called "middle strata" is divided into the old and the new middle classes: self-employed small entrepreneurs constitute the former, most of whom own assets required for their businesses; white collar workers relying

on big capital constitute the latter. White collar workers are salaried persons who organize producers of material goods, coordinate human relations, and participate in the process of delivering products to consumers. In urban areas in Korea, particularly in metropolitan Seoul today, mechanization, automation, the expansion of circulation activities, and the expansion of coordinating activities greatly increase the share of white collar workers in the total population. It is critical for our understanding of Korean development to note that, at this stage, rural-urban migrants do not remain urban marginal workers, but rather experience the process of occupational mobility which incorporates them into the petty bourgeoisie or the new middle class.

Findings from this study have practical applications in policy formulations. First, we believe that this study provides a novel perspective for designing policy instruments concerning population deconcentration away from large metropolitan areas, such as new satellite town construction projects. The study shows that a principal cause for the expansion of the primate city of Seoul is the successful migrants' experience in adapting to this urban environment. In Korea, reasons for the movement of individuals from villages to cities for males are dominated by socioeconomic considerations, such as educational or upward mobility aspirations, and for females are dominated by a variety of familial matters, e.g., joining their husbands after marriage. Cities provide rural-urban migrants with unlimited possibilities for upgrading their social positions, for the development of personal capabilities, and for occupational choice. Based upon this, we strongly argue that meaningful policy instruments for deterring urban concentration should consider our finding that urbanization and rural-urban migration do not necessarily accelerate the pauperization or proletarianization of migrating individuals. In this context, unequal employment structures in cities should be improved upon. Since rural migrants achieve higher individual mobility than their urban native counterparts, when they are destined for Seoul one way of deterring population movement is by improving the job structure for precipitated marginal classes in cities. Another basic policy guideline based on the findings of this study is balanced regional development through the prediction of population movement.

We believe that analyses similar to this one are required for developing life history data on socioeconomic characteristics at different points of observation and in more detailed contexts. These analyses would be indispensable for calculating not only the personal benefits accruing from upward mobility through improved living arrangements in urban areas, but also for determining the costs of urban services needed to resettle rural-urban migrants, particularly adequate health and safety conditions. Since the magnitude of social mobility due to rural-urban migration will vary according to the size of cities,

life history data will be needed for each of the cities concerned. In addition, the nature of the agricultural sector and its losses or benefits resulting from the removal of potential labor must be considered as policymakers attempt to link rural-urban migration with the process of stratification among rural-urban migrants in urban areas. Thus, regression analyses of the sort used in this study should strengthen the information base for national population policies, which are needed to bring about improvement in the living standards of rural-urban migrants and thus, economic development for the people of this country.

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