

# **Rural Migration in Developing Nations**

Comparative Studies of Korea,  
Sri Lanka, and Mali

*Edited by*  
**Calvin Goldscheider**



# Rural Migration in Developing Nations

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### *Rural Migration in Developing Nations: Comparative Studies of Korea, Sri Lanka, and Mali*

edited by Calvin Goldscheider

What is the relationship between migration and rural social structure? How does the selective movement out of rural areas affect the economic and social conditions of migrants, their families, and their places of origin? Addressing these and other questions, the contributors to this book consider rural migration patterns in the context of social change and economic development in three less developed nations: Korea, Sri Lanka, and Mali. Through comparative analysis the authors reveal both the diversity and the cross-national similarities of rural migration, offering theoretical bases for its interpretation and pointing to policy implications for developing areas.

Calvin Goldscheider is affiliated with the Population Studies and Training Center and is adjunct professor of sociology at Brown University. Dr. Goldscheider is the editor of *Rural Migrants in Developing Nations: Patterns and Problems of Adjustment* (Westview, 1983).

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Rural Migration  
in Developing Nations  
Comparative Studies of Korea,  
Sri Lanka, and Mali

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edited by Calvin Goldscheider

with contributions by  
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To  
Robert G. Burnight  
Kurt B. Mayer  
Vincent H. Whitney





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## Foreword

Reflecting the major attention given by Brown University's Population Studies and Training Center to problems of population movement and urbanization in developing countries, the Center initiated a Comparative Urbanization Project in 1972-73. Funded by a Ford Foundation Grant to the Center, the first objective was to pursue research on questions associated with urbanization, migration, and development in less developed nations.

The program sponsored a non-credit seminar in which an average of 12 trainees participated each year. This seminar served several purposes. First, its discussions identified research interests common to both the faculty and the student seminar participants. Growing out of the interest in the adjustment of rural-to-urban migrants, the seminar developed a set of core questions and sampling designs for use in field surveys in developing countries. It was expected that a small number of the trainees participating in the seminar would, in fact, undertake such field studies, focusing on the adjustment of migrants to big cities in less developed nations. The studies were intended to give the individual trainee experience in field work and to provide the trainee with data for a dissertation. Moreover, a body of comparative data would be compiled whose analysis would allow better insights into what demographic characteristics distinguish migrants from non-migrants, whether these characteristics affect adjustment in the urban area, and what implications the adjustment process has for the urban areas in which the migrants take up residence.

Under the Ford Foundation Grant, the Center funded four trainees during 1973-1977 to undertake field surveys as the basis

for their doctoral dissertations. The field operations, encompassing approximately 750 households in each location, were completed in Seoul, Korea; Surabaya, Indonesia; Bogota, Colombia; and Tehran, Iran. These four projects provided the core studies of the first monograph in this series, *Urban Migrants in Developing Nations: Patterns and Problems of Adjustment*.

Fuller understanding of the relations between migration and urbanization, however, requires attention to assessing migration from the perspective of the rural origins of migrants to cities, as well as an urban perspective. It is important to gain insights on who out-migrates and why, as well as on who stays; to study the large movement that occurs in many countries between rural places; and to assess the return migration from cities that is a common experience of many rural to urban migrants. Growing out of this recognition, the two field studies initiated during 1977-78 in the Comparative Urbanization Project focused on rural areas. One was conducted in southern Korea with independent support from the Ford-Rockefeller Program; it involved surveys in three rural locations covering the determinants and consequences of urban to rural return migration. The second study, undertaken in Sri Lanka, was an assessment of rural resettlement programs; sample surveys, conducted in both the dry zones of destination and the wet zones of origin, allowed assessment of the adjustment of migrants and the impact which their out-migration had on the place of origin. A third project, utilizing data collected in Mali by the Department of Agricultural Economics at Purdue University under sponsorship of USAID, focused on interrelations between rural socioeconomic structure and migration; particular attention was given to factors affecting labor allocation. Again, each of these studies constituted the investigator's doctoral dissertation. These three rural-focused studies now provide the basis for this second monograph emanating from the Comparative Urbanization Project.

The authors of the individual studies and I and my colleagues in the Population Studies and Training Center are grateful to Dr. Calvin Goldscheider for the efforts he has devoted in both the volume on urban migrants and in this monograph to summarizing the individual studies and especially to assessing them comparatively. The rich insights he has drawn from these studies about the relations among migration, urbanization, rural development, and modernization document the value of comparative analysis; moreover, they constitute important contributions to our understanding of the theoretical and policy issues associated with population redistribution.

Since completion of the three rural-focused studies, four studies have again been organized in urban locations. A study in Semarang, Indonesia, focuses on the determinants and patterns of occupational change in relation to migration, with special attention to circular migrants in the city. The study in Accra, Ghana, investigates the modernization of health attitudes and its effects on infant mortality and fertility. The third study, in Juba, Sudan, concentrates on interrelations between female migration and labor utilization. The latter two have been completed, and the first of this latest round of urban studies is near completion at the time this monograph is being submitted for publication. The fourth study, about to be undertaken, will focus on the impact of ethnicity on migrant adjustment through a comparative assessment of migrants from different ethnic areas to Port Harcourt, Nigeria.

In addition to these urban-oriented studies, a new rural-oriented study is being initiated in Indonesia--the third Indonesian study in the Brown series. This one will focus on household labor allocations and labor mobility. Further illustrating the growing range of interests encompassed by the Comparative Urbanization Project are two international migration studies--one on "The Impact of Partial Modernization on the Emigration of Sudanese Professionals and Skilled Workers," and a second on "The Effect of Return Migration on the Social Structure of Two Spanish Villages."

Several other trainees have completed research within the general framework of the Comparative Urbanization Project, but not as a direct result of their major sponsorship by or involvement in the Project. These include: 1) an investigation of migrant adjustment in Thailand, based on the material from the Longitudinal Study of Social, Economic, and Demographic Change in Thailand; 2) an evaluation of employment and earning patterns of cityward migrants to Taipei; 3) an assessment of the impact on migration and labor absorption of development efforts in the underdeveloped areas of Southern Italy; and 4) the exploitation of data from the Malaysian Family Life Survey to assess the effect of migration definitions on the observed prevalence of migration and on migrant/non-migrant socioeconomic differentials. A full list of completed and ongoing doctoral dissertations is presented in the Appendix.

Despite the diverse settings and conditions under which the field projects have been implemented, each project has been highly successful. In part, this success reflects the strong motivation and training of the students involved. In part, it results from our practice of assuring local sponsorship; no student is allowed to

undertake a field study overseas unless there is assurance of a strong local sponsor, usually a local population institute, which can provide both technical advice and assistance in recruiting field staff. Such support was negotiated in advance of the trainee's arrival overseas, and in every instance served the intended purpose very well. In addition, the trainees became involved in the activities of the local institutes, thereby contributing in important ways to furthering the respective institution's population research activities and the competence of some of its staff members. Upon returning to campus, each of the trainees made use of the facilities of the Population Studies and Training Center and the Social Science Data Center for the processing and analysis of materials.

The Comparative Urbanization Project has thus served its multiple purposes very well. The trainees who have conducted the field studies have gained excellent experience both in organizing a full project and in doing research in a less developed country. Their research findings provide new insights into the various forms that population movement takes as part of the multiphasic response to changes in economic and social conditions at origin, into the migrant adjustment process, and into the effects of migration on places of origin and destination. Other participants in the Center's training program have benefited by helping to plan the research instruments and the sample design and by reacting to the analyses undertaken by the trainees who undertook the field work. The substantial involvement of faculty has fostered closer faculty-student relations, with all the benefits such interaction produces. The close ties developed between Brown's Population Center and the institutions overseas that have sponsored the individual studies have proved of mutual benefit in furthering the training and research programs of the respective centers. The experience gained on these projects has been shared with other institutions in the United States and overseas and with international agencies; as a result, our instruments and sampling procedures have been adopted in modified form for much wider use.

The Project remains ongoing. This monograph, as the one before it, *Urban Migrants in Developing Nations*, represents an attempt to pursue the Project's comparative aspect. In this respect, it must be recognized that the Project combines a training and a research function through reliance on research carried out as "independent" doctoral dissertations. As such, considerable flexibility is given to the investigators with respect to the specific focus, design, and execution of the individual projects. The

attempt to meet concurrently some of the research interests of the local sponsors introduces still more variability into the contents and design of the surveys. Furthermore, during the decade during which the Project has been ongoing, successive research efforts have taken advantage of the experience of the earlier participants. For these and other reasons, the "comparative" character of the overall project is a very loose one; if anything, the initial goal of standardization has given way, by intent, to considerable variability in focus, design, and policy relevance. In so doing, the contributions of the overall project have been enriched rather than restricted.

The Comparative Urbanization Project has thus provided rich opportunities for its participants to become more expert on the problems of comparative research in less developed countries; concurrently, it has generated research findings that provide new insights about migrant adjustments in rural and urban places, both specific to individual locations and comparatively across nations. Both functions should prove of value to the scholarly and policy-making communities.

*Sidney Goldstein  
Providence, R.I.  
July 1984*





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## Preface

The population of nations of the Third World designated as less developed is predominately rural and will probably remain so for the next several decades. Yet, much is happening to transform the social, economic, and demographic structure of these places. Migration is among the many processes changing the rural areas of less developed nations. Some people are moving out of rural areas to urban places; others are moving from one rural area to another. Sometimes the move is permanent; often it is not. Some movement is based on the decision of individuals and their families in response to social and economic opportunities. Increasingly, governments have developed direct and indirect policies and programs to sponsor, subsidize, and direct migration. Movements within and between countries are an integral feature of the changing social structure of less developed nations.

The most conspicuous populations to be affected by these rural movements are the migrants themselves. Areas of destination are obviously influenced by the influx of migrants, as is the population residing there. Households and families who do not move out of rural places are also influenced by those who do. In short, migration has an impact on movers and non-movers in places of origin and destination. Research has emphasized the urban context of rural out-migration by focusing on the adjustment of migrants in places of destination and the impact of migration on cities. Here we analyze rural areas as a basis for understanding why some people move out and why others stay; we focus on changes in rural structure to identify the effects of out-migration.

The studies presented in this monograph address the relationship between rural migration and social structure in three less developed nations: Korea, Sri Lanka, and Mali. Each case study focuses on a specific theme: (1) return migration to rural

areas of Korea; (2) government subsidized movement from the rural wet zone to the rural dry zone in Sri Lanka; and (3) out-migration and labor allocation in Mali. Together, these projects are part of the complex puzzle of rural migration in developing nations.

In addition to the detailed case studies, two chapters were written specifically for this volume. The first provides a broad overview on rural migration and outlines some hypotheses about the relationship between migration and rural social structure. The concluding chapter focuses on comparisons of the results of the three case studies to highlight commonalities of theme and emerging issues.

The materials were organized specifically for this volume and have not been published before in this form or in comparative perspective. Much longer versions of the three case studies were doctoral dissertations in the Department of Sociology, Brown University (1979-1982). Parts of Chapter 1 were first organized for the conference on Rural Development and Human Fertility, The Pennsylvania State University, April 1983. That presentation focused on migration and fertility in less developed countries and was thoroughly revised and broadened for this chapter. The comparative materials in Chapter 5 were first presented at the summer Wednesday Workshop organized by the Population Studies and Training Center, Brown University, in August 1983. Reactions to that presentation helped clarify several important qualifications which subsequently were incorporated in the final version.

Since the longer reports of the three case studies were doctoral dissertations, they were evaluated systematically and in detail by faculty members of the Sociology Department. I want to thank my colleagues for their work on these dissertations. Sidney Goldstein was Chairperson of all three dissertations. Each of the other committee members, Barbara Anderson, Dietrich Reuschmeyer, and Alden Speare, Jr., served on two dissertation committees.

The decisions about what and how to select, edit, and distill from the longer dissertations were mine. Having edited and reorganized the material for this monograph, each author was asked to review his material. Each responded with comments and corrections and these changes are reflected in the final version. I also had the benefit of the detailed and insightful comments from Sidney Goldstein on the entire volume. He went through every page, sparing no red ink. All of us who have received manuscripts returned with his comments know the care and devotion he invests

in evaluating constructively the work of colleagues and students. I continue to be indebted to him, as are the authors of these three case studies, for the standards he sets.

I also received helpful comments and suggestions from Frances Kobrin Goldscheider and Sally Findley on the chapters I prepared. They were improved by their constructive criticisms.

Editing this volume and its predecessor on Urban Migrants in Developing Nations would not have been possible without the support and facilities of the Population Studies and Training Center. Sidney Goldstein as Director of the Center and Alden Speare, Jr. as Chair of the Sociology Department were supportive of me and the project. I am grateful to both for providing me the opportunity to work on these materials. Some of the editing and the preparation of Chapters 1 and 5 was carried out when I was visiting at the Rapd Corporation in Santa Monica, California. Peter Morrison arranged for me to be there and I thank him for his hospitality and friendship.

Kathy Eckstrand served as the technical editor of this volume as she was on the previous book. She read through and edited my prose and corrected my editing of other people's work. I depended on her to coordinate the details and to see the final manuscript through to its published version. She did a masterful job and I am grateful. Communicating from Providence to Jerusalem, Israel; Seoul, Korea; Maiduguri, Nigeria; and Harare, Zimbabwe was not an easy or rewarding task. Kathy did it with grace and efficiency and always with a smile.

Most of the text was typed and retyped by Carol Walker who, as in the past, was efficient and helpful. Gayle Grossmann, Judy Quattrucci, and Kathy Eckstrand completed the typing tasks, including the tables, and prepared the manuscript in its final form. Alice Goldstein coordinated these efforts and facilitated the efficient processing of the entire project. Again, my thanks.

This volume is dedicated to three former professors of sociology at Brown University who helped shape its program in population. They established the foundations--in vision and in deed--for Brown's emergence as a center of excellence in the education of demographers and in the study of population. We at Brown are indebted to them for their contribution to our program. As demographers and sociologists, we are grateful to them for their scholarly, educational, and institutional contributions. I am honored to call them teachers, colleagues, and friends.

*Calvin Goldscheider*



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# 1

## Migration and Rural Social Structure: An Overview

*Calvin Goldscheider*

Research on the relationship between migration and social structure has often emphasized the urban context. Studies have focused on the links between development and urbanization, the growth of urban places, the adjustment of migrants in the cities, and the problems associated with movers to various neighborhoods of metropolitan areas. The impact of migration on rural areas, their population and social structure, has received far less attention. Yet, it is clear that to understand migration processes in their complexity requires a dynamic theoretical model and methodology which includes the rural component as an integral element. Investigating rural social structure and migration is fundamental to an analysis of the social, economic, and demographic sources of urbanward migration, the selectivity of migration, and the consequences of migration for rural families and communities.

The premise of the studies reported in this volume is that there are important connections between migration and rural social structure which are critical for understanding less developed regions of the world. These connections operate at macro- and micro-levels of analysis. They are most conspicuous at the level of household and community where relationships between population change and social structure are most salient.

To place the research on migration and rural social structure in a broader context, we outline in this chapter the rural context of less developed countries and categorize various linkages between rural out-migration and social change. A brief description of the social demographic characteristics of the three countries which were studied concludes this overview.

## **The Rural Context of Less Developed Societies**

Urbanization has been a major process associated with the modernization of societies and rapid urban growth has been a conspicuous feature of less developed nations. Demographic research has focused on the relative contributions of natural increase and migration to urban growth in more and less developed societies and has analyzed the socioeconomic adjustments of rural migrants in cities. Migration has been viewed as a vehicle of change for those who move and as a factor in the redistribution of population from rural to urban areas. Seldom has the study of urbanization led to a systematic examination of the impact of migration on rural social structure. Rural populations have often been viewed as marginal and therefore uninteresting analytically in the processes associated with modernization and development.

The demographic reality of less developed nations suggests that such neglect is unwarranted. The population size and structure of countries defined as less developed reflect in large part the consequence of population patterns in rural areas. The analysis of the effects of migration on rural areas is at the core of the demography of less developed countries and of the social, economic, and political correlates of their population processes. In particular, the proportion rural in less developed countries is high and most of these nations will remain predominately rural for the next several decades. United Nations estimates indicate that more than half of the total population of the world will be located in the rural areas of less developed countries in 1985. About two-thirds of the population in less developed regions are likely to remain in rural areas until around the first decade of the twenty-first century (U.N., 1982).

Three additional demographic patterns provide a context for exploring rural migration patterns in less developed nations. First, the size of the rural population is increasing at the same time that the proportion living in rural areas is decreasing. This is an exceptional pattern when compared to the historical and contemporary experience of most industrial nations (Goldscheider, 1983a; Davis, 1965; Goldstein and Sly, 1977). Between 1960 and 1980, the percent rural in less developed countries decreased from 78 percent to 69 percent but the rural population of these same countries increased by 40 percent (from 1,632 million to 2,285 million). Between 1980 and 2000, the United Nations estimates that the proportion rural in less developed regions of the world will further decrease to 56 percent. Yet, at the same time, the

estimated numerical increase in these areas will be from 2,285 million to 2,725 million. Although the projected pace of rural population will be slower relative to previous decades (the increase will be "only" 19 percent), the numerical increase estimated at over 441 million persons is only slightly smaller than the combined population size of the United States and the Soviet Union in 1970.

These data reveal the continuing high proportions rural in less developed nations as well as the changing population distribution. There has been and will continue to be an increase in the level of urbanization, part of which reflects net out-migration from rural to urban areas, and part of which reflects differential natural increase. Nevertheless, the amount of rural-urban migration is substantially greater than these net residual movements indicate. Not all rural-urban migration is permanent; return, repeat, and temporary movements are not reflected in the net redistribution estimates nor are stream-counterstream migrants (i.e., gross migration flows) included. No less important is the fact that not all rural out-migration is toward places defined as urban; some (and often a substantial proportion, if not a majority) is toward other rural areas. Hence, rural-urban population transfers may represent only a small percent of all rural migration. Taken together, the variety of migration flows from rural areas is greater than the net rural-urban migration inferred from urbanization estimates. Recognizing this, the net rural-urban population redistribution implies high rates of migration and large numbers of rural persons on the move.

A third feature is the heterogeneity of nations included among the less developed regions of the world. For example, Africa as a whole is projected to remain mostly rural until after the year 2010. Within Africa, the variation in urbanization levels is considerable. Eastern Africa is projected to remain mostly rural (i.e., 50 percent) until sometime after 2025, western Africa until after 2015, central Africa until after 1995, and northern and southern Africa until after 1985. Individual countries within Africa display an even wider range. In contrast, the Latin American region is already mostly urban with only 31 percent estimated to be rural in 1985, but Bolivia will be 64 percent rural in 1985 and will remain rural until the turn of the twenty-first century.

Similar variations characterize the Asian countries categorized as less developed by the United Nations. Only about 20 percent of China was urban in 1982 and most of the population is projected to remain rural until around 2015. Some east Asian



countries (e.g., Korea) are already predominately urban, while Indonesia, Thailand, Vietnam, Bangladesh, and India, with a combined population of 1,127 million in 1985 are at least 75 percent rural and will remain so until sometime after the second decade of the twenty-first century. The increasing size of the rural population, the amount of out-migration, and the enormous variation among countries defined as less developed require systematic comparative research focusing on rural social structure and migration. Yet neither the data nor the theoretical frameworks available allow for a systematic assessment of these processes.

Official sources of data usually contain limited information about the extent of migration. In part, this reflects the complex nature of migration. There is a wide range of migration types, including local, short distance, temporary, seasonal, and labor mobility, as well as internal and international migrations which involve greater distances for longer periods of absence, and tend to be more permanent. Other criteria for classifying types of migration relate to the composition of the migration stream (e.g., individuals, families, accompanying children, chain, mass) and directionality (e.g., rural-urban, urban-urban, rural-rural, urban-rural). These and other distinctions are based on the implicit assumption that types and intensities of changes (demographic, social, economic, political, and cultural) associated with migration vary by the type of movement. Since the social, economic, and demographic determinants of various types of migration may be different, there is a need to specify the particular type of migration before linking migration to other processes. Moreover, since migration is repeatable and reversible, it is necessary to separate out return and repeat migrants from first-time movers. Combining types of migration and its character involves a complex system of migration flows (see Goldscheider, 1971, 1983a). Most data sources do not comprehensively provide information on all these types of movement and their correlated social, economic, and demographic variables.

Migration involves consequences for places of origin, for places of destination, and for migrants and their families. The wide range of types of movement included among the definitions of migration and the diverse determinants and complex consequences of various migration types imply that it is not fruitful to search for general relationships between migration and social structure without specifying the type of migration or comparing the variety of migration flows involved in the migration system (Goldscheider, 1983a).

People move out of rural areas to take advantage of relatively better social and economic opportunities elsewhere. Yet, not everyone has access to or knowledge about opportunities nor does everyone respond to the opportunities known and accessible. In-migration to rural areas, return migration to rural areas of origin, decisions to extend permanent migration, or to become a circular, seasonal, or temporary migrant are complexities in understanding the relationship between opportunities and migration. A core analytic theme therefore is the specification of factors and the identification of the contexts which define and shape the relationship between opportunities and migration.

## **Rural Out-Migration and Social Change**

The demographic importance of rural areas and the wide range of migration types leads to the central issues of the studies reported in this volume: In what ways does migration to and from rural areas affect rural social structure? Which aspects of rural social structure are more clearly linked to the determinants and selectivity of migration? Indeed, what are the mechanisms linking geographic movement to social change? Several major ways of examining the linkages between migration and changes in rural social structure may be identified.

### *Size and Composition Effects*

The migration of people from one area to another changes the size of both populations, other things being equal. The rate of migration, relative to population size at origin and destination, will affect the social and economic institutions of both communities. Economic production, consumption patterns, labor markets, household and family networks, political power, and other aspects of social, political, and economic organization which are related to population size will be affected by migration.

Migration not only involves the movement of a specific number of people from one place to another but the selective movement of persons with particular characteristics. In turn, these characteristics are linked to social, economic, political, and cultural aspects of places of origin and destination. Selectivity based on these affects the structure of population at both areas of origin and destination.

It is well-established empirically that migration from rural areas is selective of younger persons (particularly those between

the ages of 15 and 29). From a demographic point of view this means an alteration in the age structure of the population remaining in places of origin (in our case the rural areas of less developed regions) as well as the population in places of destination (rural or urban). As a result, in-migration to cities may increase the urban population directly through the transfer of population and indirectly through the influx of higher fertility populations from rural areas. Moreover, since in-migrants tend to be in the prime reproductive ages, in the short run at least, there is a structural effect of in-migration on period fertility. Together with the natural increase of the urban population, high urban population growth rates result.

The pursuit of that line of argument tends to neglect the demographic compositional effects of out-migration on rural areas of origin. These effects depend in part on the extent of rural out-migration (relative to the size of the rural population) and the degree of age selectivity. They also depend on the type of out-migration (in particular its permanence) and the additional selectivity by sex and marital status.

Selectivity by age, sex, and marital status as well as migration type have an impact on rural social structure through compositional changes and through changes in marriage patterns. Selective out-migration of young males or females who are unmarried may result in a changing rural marriage market; in turn, the timing of marriage may be affected through imbalances in the sex-ratio (by age) of the remaining non-married rural population. It is of course difficult to assess this effect, in part, because migration is dynamic over time. For example, single women may migrate out of rural areas later than single men or men might return to places of origin to marry or raise their children, returning to urban areas with their spouses and children. The permutations are extensive. The important point to note is that the compositional effects of rural out-migration occur through the age structural selectivity of migration as well as through sex-ratio imbalances brought about by sex-marital status selectivity. Again, type of migration (its relative permanence and whether primarily of individuals or young families) plays an important role in the extent and direction of these compositional effects. Moreover, the extent of temporary or seasonal migration may have consequences for the separation of spouses and in turn for fertility patterns, particularly their tempo and timing. The absence of husbands from home for a particular season or for some period of time may affect delayed childbearing and completed family size.