

SOCIOCULTURAL TRANSFORMATION IN RURAL KOREA: A FOCUS ON THE HUMAN ELEMENT AND SOCIAL ORGANIZATION*

KIM KYONG-DONG**

1. INTRODUCTION

Sociocultural transformation is such a broad concept that one could either include *anything* under this rubric or else never be able to cover everything implied in it. I will, therefore, have to limit my discussion to certain aspects of social change in general. My focus will be primarily on the human element and social organization in rural change and development in Korea in the past decade.

This focus in itself may not be sufficiently narrow, but I will try to emphasize those elements in my discussion. What is attempted here, will involve four tasks. First, I will provide a profile of "stereotypic" rural Korea, as a benchmark for examining change within it. Second, this will be followed by a descriptive account of rural change, both from a macro and microscopic viewpoint, focusing on some select aspects of change in the human elements and social organization. Then I will try to look into some major factors which are believed to have affected such changes. And finally, some implications of these observations will be discussed, isolating major issues to be considered for the future development of rural Korea.

The recognition of the significance of the human element and social organization in examining rural change and development has been slow to materialize in the post-war social science studies. The "econocentric" bias which has prevailed in the field has been one of the major obstacles to this shift. Nowadays, however, even economists themselves have come to realize the importance of understanding the "worm in the apple" and have been joined by neighboring social science disciplines for an extensive study of the human factor. Still, this has tended to be negative in nature. The human factor is still taken as one of the production factors or obstacles to change.

* Presented at the international seminar on "Rural Transformation under the Rapid Industrialization in an Open Economy: Policy Issues and Alternatives," organized by KREI, Seoul, Korea, November 7-11, 1978.

** Professor of Sociology, Seoul National University.

Why not regard the human element as an active force in social change within the context of social organization? It is in this spirit that I am focusing my discussion on these two factors. Man is the active agent in the unremitting processes of defining a situation, decision-making, reacting to the unfolding situation, redefining the situation, and making new decisions. This is done in the context of the social structure through organizations. Thus social structures and organizations become the contextual limits, objective determinants, and the mechanisms of human action.¹

In dealing with these elements, one often finds oneself lacking empirical data to support the argument. At most, subjective and impressionistic observations and interpretations are offered. I will have to rely on this sort of approach myself in this paper, but will take the precaution of providing as much empirical evidence as I can muster from the available data. I will have to rely on some macro-demographic and economic data for any descriptive account of rural change in Korea. I will also draw upon very scanty and selective, survey findings available from the sociological studies on rural Korea. The most difficult type of data to obtain, of course, is longitudinal or panel studies of the same people or identical communities.

II. MAN AND SOCIETY IN RURAL KOREA: THE BENCHMARK STEREOTYPE

In order to examine change in rural society, one must have some sort of benchmark against which the current state may be compared. This task, however, entails an inherent limitation in that we do not really have any standard depiction of the traditional rural society and people of Korea. Even if we had some guideline to formulate an ideal-type of Korean rural society, it usually dates back to traditional Korea before the turn of the century. It goes without saying that Korean society has undergone tremendous changes ever since. The more recent past is marred with all kinds of drastic transformations in the sociocultural system of the society, which makes it very difficult for anyone to draw up typical picture of rural society and its people in this country. Thus, the image of man and society in rural Korea presented in this paper is of necessity a stereotype, very likely to be biased by the observer's presentation. This will, however, be the backdrop against which the present will be projected. Because we are dealing with the impact of industrialization upon rural

¹ For a theoretical discourse on the human element and social organization in development, see my paper "The Human Element, Social Organization, and Economic Growth in Korea," presented at the Multidisciplinary Conference on "Industrialization in Korea," June 14-17, 1977, University of Hawaii.

society, the time frame for this benchmark view would be the beginning of the sixties. As it happens, systematic empirical studies in rural sociology also initially appeared around this date.

The picture of rural Korea depicted by most sociologists and anthropologists does not deviate too much from the ideal-type of peasant society or folk society proposed by Western anthropologists and rural sociologists.² Rural society in most cases is a community of people organized and maintained around agriculture. Of course, one of the particular features in Korea is that the scale of agriculture used to be and still is limited.³ The agricultural activity, by virtue of this limitation and otherwise, basically has been oriented to peasant type family production and consumption. Without significant technological innovations, therefore, rural living standards used to be very low, which in turn affected the level of education among the rural populace. Owing to the generally low level of education and prevalent poverty, rural people used to be relatively isolated from the outside world. This relative isolation was to be both the cause and the consequence of the slight migratory tendency among rural people in the past.

In spite of the fact that the rural population constituted the majority of the total population in Korea until very recent times, the scale of communities in rural areas was small. Due to the peasant economy and the small communities, the degree of social and economic division of labor was quite limited. The family, kinship groupings, and often the consanguineous clans predominated as the major structural foci in the rural community. Thus, the traditional cultural elements, such as mores, customs, and conventions played the central role of social control regulating the behavior of rural people. Primary relationships within such organizational contexts predominated, contributing to the stability of social and emotional life.

On the communal level, one distinct feature of Korean rural social organization used to be reflected in the long and persistent tradition of cooperative efforts in the social, political, cultural, and economic spheres.⁴ For instance, *Hyang-Yak*, a community contract system, used to handle the community-wide issues of ethical and moral nature, and, in some cases, even various forms of social deviance and other problems. A variety of voluntarily formed mutual-aid cooperatives have existed for economic

² For example, R. Redfield "The Folk Society," *American Journal of Sociology* 52 (1947); E. R. Wolf, *Peasants* (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, 1966); and J. M. Potter, *et al.*, eds., *Peasant Society* (Boston: Little Brown, 1967).

³ About the stereotype of rural Korea in the past, I have primarily drawn upon Korean Rural Sociological Association, ed., *Rural Sociology* (Seoul: Minjosa, 1965, in Korean).

⁴ In addition, see Man-Gap Lee, *The Social Structure of Korean Village and Its Change* (Seoul: Seoul National University Press, 1973, (in Korean with an English summary)).

and financial exigencies; these were called *Kye*. Labor exchange and cooperative farm and non-farm activities have been quite widespread. Village assemblies (*Dong-Hoe*) managed political matters, while village rituals (*Dong-Je*) and kinship-oriented ancestor ownership ceremonies have been responsible for religious, and social integrative functions.

Under the circumstances, the social character of rural Koreans tended to resemble the ideal-typical image of peasants; attachment to land, familism or family-centrism, traditionalism, and superstitious orientation. In addition, since Confucianism has been one of the most influential ideological principles guiding the social and cultural structure of Korean society, it has inculcated in this society, among others, authoritarian personality, hierarchical social relationship, and elitism, confounded by moralistic obligations and collective particularism chiefly embodied in the strong kinship ties and familism. Furthermore, ritualistic behavior patterns, the tendency to belittle industry and commerce, strong emphasis on learning and education, *Insim* (human heartedness, extension of friendly and compassionate help), and territorial loyalty were also promoted by this culture.⁵

Although I personally reject the popularly held notion that peasants are innately unwilling and unable to better their own life, their lack of motivation, their deep sense of mistrust towards outsiders and particularly officials, their fatalism, apathy and indifference, their apparent resistance to change, especially that induced from the outside, and the whole gamut of negativism and passivism has been readily found among rural Koreans, until very recently. One might attribute this to the deep-rooted influence of *shamanistic* folk religion of Korean people in general and its greatest impact upon the rural populace, in particular. Yet, this accounts for only part of the picture.

One should also look for other explanations in the historical status of peasantry in this country within the context of the social structure. Traditionally the peasantry in Korea has been tied to land, in isolation from the outside world, and suffering from chronic poverty for generations. The natural conditions have not been favorable to the mass of peasants who were not blessed with the means to overcome the natural adversities. Fatalism or apathetic orientation thus inculcated had been reinforced by the exploitation and compulsory military service imposed by the ruling class in the pre-modern era. Moreover, the Japanese colonial policies were most exacting for the farmers. Despite the unprecedented effort by the independent republic to reform the traditional-colonial land tenure

⁵ Kyong-Dong Kim, "A Study of the Confucian Values in Korea," in *Collected Papers in Commemoration of Professor Dr. Sangbeek Lee on His 60th Birthday* (Seoul: Eulyoo, 1964, in Korean), pp. 333-368; and Kyong-Dong Kim, "The Measurement of the Confucian values in Korea," *Korean Journal of Sociology* 1 (1964, in Korean), pp. 3-24.

system, the war of 1950–53 and the hasty recovery from its aftermath had still left the rural sector in the backwater of change. Even in the heat of tremendously rapid industrialization, the agricultural sector and the rural communities were once more left behind.

Exposed to little stimulus and lacking incentives for change, the Korean peasantry has generally been a passive agent and resistant to change throughout history. There were occasions when the peasants, frustrated and outraged over the irrational and unfair treatment they had to suffer, took the matter into their own hands and rose collectively against the exploiting force. These upheavals, however, never succeeded. Such historical structural factors must have caused them to become largely conservative in their ideological orientation.

III. AN OVERVIEW OF RURAL CHANGE SINCE THE SIXTIES

If this is a typical (though probably stereotyped) image of rural people and society in Korea, we could expect that Korean rural communities would have been relatively stagnant in most aspects of life. This seems to be the general agreement. One logical conclusion, then, would be that some external force was needed to bring about change in this sector of the society. On the surface, at least, this is what has actually transpired, since the government has become the most influential external force inducing rural change in Korea. I will return to this point later on.

A slightly more in-depth analysis, nevertheless, should be able to demonstrate that on top of all the external factors affecting rural change, or even in spite of them, it was still the human element within the rural social organization that has played the crucial part in initiating the wave of change that we have observed in the span of a decade or perhaps less. This is not to deny the significant role played by human decisions made outside the confines of rural society, especially in instigating, enlightening, locating, and assisting the human element within the rural communities. Rather, it is to put the matter in the right perspective in evaluating the effect of such exogenous forces of change.

Before this point is amplified, we need to have a general notion of what has been changing in rural Korea. It is at this juncture that I have to confess that little is available by way of systematic empirical research of a longitudinal nature. Only a couple of studies on rural communities have explicitly attempted a panel study of identical rural areas. One of them covered the rather broad subject matter of social structure,⁶ while the other was a study of fertility behavior.⁷ Otherwise, I find an interest-

⁶ Man-Gap Lee, *op. cit.*

⁷ T. H. Kwon, Hae Young Lee, and E. S. Lee, "Ichon Resurvey." *Bulletin of the Population and Development Studies Center* 6 (October 1977), pp. 17–66.

ing decrease in the sheer number of sociological studies of rural communities between the sixties and the seventies. Also, because most of the studies conducted in the seventies deal with some aspect of the *Saemaul Undong*; while those reported in the sixties treated diverse problems, comparable data is scarce. Especially if one wants to have some comparable data on the attitudes of rural people, the lack of material is acute. This leaves me with only scanty materials on which I can even infer some generalizable trends of change. Let me begin with some descriptive accounts of broad social change in rural Korea in the past decade or so.

Population Change. The total number of farm households in 1963 amounted to 2,415,593 with a farm population of 15,266,325. These have respectively declined to 2,355,856 and 12,785,456 by 1976. Even though the decrease in the absolute number of farm households and population has not been steady until after 1970, the proportion of farm household and population has been consistently declining since the early sixties. As of 1963, farm households constituted 51.4 of the national total while that of the of farm population 56.0, but by 1975 it had dropped to 35.2 and 37.5, respectively (see Table 1 below).

TABLE 1
FARM HOUSEHOLDS AND POPULATION

	Households			Population			Persons per Household
	Total (A) Households Thous.	Farm (B) Households Households	B/A %	Total (A) Population Thous. Person	Farm (B) Population Population	B/A %	
1961	4,343	2,327	53.6	25,766	14,509	56.3	—
1962	4,564	2,469	54.1	26,513	15,097	56.9	—
1963	4,700	2,416	51.4	27,262	15,266	56.0	6.33
1964	4,841	2,450	50.6	27,984	15,553	55.6	6.35
1965	4,986	2,507	50.3	28,705	15,812	55.1	6.31
1966	5,135	2,540	49.5	29,436	15,781	53.6	6.21
1967	5,293	2,587	48.9	30,131	16,078	53.4	6.22
1968	5,457	2,579	47.3	30,838	15,908	51.6	6.17
1969	5,626	2,546	45.3	31,544	15,589	49.4	6.12
1970	5,820	2,483	42.9	32,241	14,421	44.8	5.81
1971	5,942	2,482	41.7	32,883	14,712	44.7	5.93
1972	6,071	2,452	40.3	33,505	14,677	43.8	5.99
1973	6,197	2,450	39.5	34,103	14,645	42.9	5.98
1974	—	2,381	—	34,692	13,459	38.8	5.65
1975	6,757	2,397	35.2	35,281	13,244	37.5	5.57
1976	—	2,336	—	35,860	12,785	35.7	5.43

Source: Economic Planning Board, *Handbook of the Korean Economy*, 1977, p. 234

One constant change over this period to be noted is the decline in the average size of farm household. The average household in 1963 had 6.33 members but has come down to 5.43 as of 1976. This may be partly due to the general decline in the fertility rate experienced both in urban

and rural areas. According to a recent analysis of fertility change in Korea, the urban-rural gap in the fertility rate increased up to 1967, with the differential dissemination of family planning methods and the differential rate of incidence of induced abortion. But the gap has narrowed down since then, due to a trend of leveling off or even a slight increase in the urban rate accompanied by a rapid decline in rural fertility.⁸

The other side of the coin may be understood by an examination of the trend of urbanization or urban population growth. The relative size of urban *versus* rural population in 1960 was about one to two and a half (28.0% *versus* 72.0%) but by 1975 it has come very close to half-half (48.5% *versus* 51.5%), as shown in Table 2. It is emphatically pointed out by experts that migration was a more important factor than natural increase in the growth of population in the cities, especially in the largest cities. This, in turn, meant that rural areas have been on the losing side of internal migration. One estimate of net migration between rural and urban areas during 1960-66 showed that rural areas lost about one and a half million people. The net gain and loss has even increased during the 1966-70 intercensal period to 2.32 million, (Table 3).

TABLE 2
URBAN-RURAL POPULATION FOR SELECTED YEARS

Year	Total Population (in 1000)	Urban Population (in 1000)	Rural Population (in 1000)	% Urban	% Rural
1949 ¹⁾	20,189	3,744	16,445	18.5	81.5
1955 ²⁾	21,526	5,281	16,245	24.5	75.5
1960 ²⁾	24,989	6,999	17,999	28.0	72.0
1966 ²⁾	29,193	9,805	19,388	33.6	66.4
1970 ²⁾	31,435	12,955	18,480	41.2	58.8
1975 ²⁾	34,709	16,794	17,915	48.4	51.6

Sources: 1) Economic Planning Board, *Korea Statistical Yearbook*, 1963.

2) *Ibid.*, 1976

TABLE 3
ESTIMATES OF NET MIGRATION, URBAN AND RURAL AREAS 1961-1966
AND 1966-1970.

Year	Number of net migrants (in thousands)		Net migration rate* (in percentages)	
	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural
1961-1966	1,591	-1,660	16.3	-8.6
1966-1970	2,321	-2,321	20.4	-12.3

Source: A Comprehensive Study of 1966 Population Census. As quoted in UN-ESCAP, *op. cit.*, p. 154.

* Calculated on the basis of the 1966 population for the period 1961-1966 and the 1970 population for the 1966-1970 period.

⁸ T. H. Kwon, *et al.*, *The Population of Korea* (Seoul: Seoul National University Press, 1975), p. 18.

According to the analysis of the 1970 population census, rural to urban migrants comprised nearly 51% of the total interdistrict migrants, while the number of rural-urban migrants increased by 102 per cent between the periods of 1961-66 and 1965-70.⁹ Even if the analysis is limited to a specific rural county, however, some trend has been recently observed that the migration deficiency or the difference between in-migration and out-migration over time has been slightly leveling off.¹⁰ This may be an indication that, while rural out-migration is slowing down, rural in-migration coupled with urban-rural return migration is picking up gradually. Another 1970 census analysis has identified 9.1 per cent inter-provincial, 5.2% interdistrict, and 4.1% inter-communal return migration rates against the total number in-migrants of the same types.¹¹

As is generally recognized, the bulk of rural-urban migrants are in their twenties, especially among males, and the level of education attained by this group is relatively high. The proportion of rural migrants employed in various service occupations is largest both among males and females but male migrants in their twenties are also employed in production work. This phenomenon is usually known as selective migration favorable to urban areas and disadvantageous to rural areas.¹²

Some scattered analyses of the reasons for rural out migration have consistently indicated that the most significant motivating factor for the move was occupational-economic in nature, although schooling and marriage were given as important reasons by age-sex specific groups. The general tendency is that attractions or urban pull rather than repulsion or rural push played a greater role in the migration decision.¹³ This should be contrasted with a shift found in the stated reasons for initial out-migration and later return to rural home. For those rural returnees studied, repulsion from the city was more important than attraction to the rural origin, and despite little change in the proportion given for occupational-economic reasons between the two moves, familial-social and other affective attractions played a greater role in the return migration.¹⁴

⁹ UN-ESCAP, *Population of the Republic of Korea*. Country Monograph Series No. 2 (Bangkok: UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, 1975), p. 155.

¹⁰ Kyong-Dong Kim, Eui-Hang Shin, and On-Jook Lee, "Patterns of Residential Mobility in a Rural County: The Potential Use of the Residential Registration Data in Korea," in *The Proceedings of the Summer Seminar on Population, Korea: A Case Study*, July 14-15, 1977, Population Secretariat, Korea Development Institute, pp. 65-92.

¹¹ UN-ESCAP. *op. cit.*, pp. 157-159.

¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 162-165.

¹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 160-161; Seung Gyu Moon, *Outmigration from Families of Orientation in Two Rural Communities: A Case Study in Korea*. Publication Series No. 10, Population and Development Studies Center, Seoul National University, (December 1972), p. 18; and On-Jook Lee, "Who Stays, Moves Away, or Returns, and Why? Some Observations on Urban-to-Rural Return Migration in Korea," *Korea and World Affairs* (Fall, 1978).

¹⁴ On-Jook Lee, *op. cit.*

Change in Rural Social Stratification. Another broad contextual change to be analyzed is one aspect of social structure, that is, social stratification. However important this aspect of change may be, data available for a proper analysis is seriously limited. One of the macroscopic approaches in this respect may use data on the average size of farm land cultivated by farm households. And another set of data may be found in the microscopic studies on the village level. Unfortunately, we have no longitudinal data covering the seventies for the latter case.

According to the *Yearbook of Agriculture and Forestry* as well as the *Korea Statistical Yearbook* published by the government, change in the proportion of farm households cultivating various categories of land shows an interesting fluctuation pattern. With uneven fluctuations over time since 1965, a definitive change appears around 1974. For instance, the relative number of farm households in the lower echelon of the average farm size, i.e., below 1 *ha* has been decreasing in general between 1965 and 1974, and then makes an upturn again beginning in 1975. Similarly the proportion of farm households belonging to the size category of 1 to 2 *ha* has been on the rise up to 1974, and then began to drop since 1975. And the already small proportion of those farm households cultivating 2 *ha* or more of land has generally declined except for 1974 (See Table 4).

TABLE 4
PROPORTIONS OF FARM HOUSEHOLDS BY SIZE OF CULTIVATED LAND (%)

Year	Total Farm Households (in '000)	Non-Crop Farms	Below 0.3ha	0.3-0.5 ha	0.5-1 ha	1-2 ha	2-3 ha	3ha over	Total
1965	2,507	—	17.2	18.7	31.7	25.6	5.6	1.2	100.0
1966	2,540	—	17.0	18.2	32.2	25.8	5.4	1.4	100.0
1967	2,587	—	17.8	17.8	32.0	25.7	5.2	1.5	100.0
1968	2,579	2.2	15.9	17.4	31.8	26.0	5.1	1.6	100.0
1969	2,546	2.3	15.7	17.4	31.7	26.2	5.1	1.6	100.0
1970	2,483	2.9	15.7	15.9	33.2	25.8	5.0	1.5	100.0
1971	2,482	3.4	15.6	17.1	31.7	26.0	4.8	1.4	100.0
1972	2,452	3.5	15.8	16.9	31.7	25.9	4.8	1.4	100.0
1973	2,450	3.5	15.4	17.0	31.5	26.3	4.8	1.5	100.0
1974	2,381	4.7	12.8	15.5	34.0	26.5	5.0	1.6	100.1
1975	2,379	4.0	13.0	16.0	34.8	26.0	4.7	1.5	100.0
1976	2,336	4.5	13.2	16.3	34.9	25.2	4.5	1.4	100.0

Sources: Ministry of Agriculture & Fisheries, *Yearbook of Agriculture and Forestry Statistics*, 1975, for data to 1974, and Economic Planning Board, *Korea Statistical Yearbook*, 1977 for others.

In other words, whereas the relative weight of the upper-echelon farm households has been gradually reduced, that of the lower-class has experienced a U-curve change and that of the middle-category, a reverse of the U-curve change. For a steady and uniform change in the stratification structure for a society experiencing overall economic growth, one might

expect a significant expansion of the middle-echelon and contraction in both the lower and upper-class categories. To give an idea of a society in transition, I can cite one set of data gathered on a micro-level nation-wide survey. According to Table 5 below, there is a sense of transition, though cross-sectional in nature, from rural through large urban to intermediate industrial communities, in terms of a relative expansion of the middle-class. If we take this sort of a criterion for the change in the stratification structure for all levels of communities, then the picture we have found in the statistics of cultivating land size does not fit the expected trend.

TABLE 5
SOCIAL STRATIFICATION BY TYPE OF COMMUNITY

Class Category	National average (%)	Seoul (%)	Industrial cities (%)	Small cities (%)	Eups (towns) (%)	Rural villages (%)
Upper	.06	2	1	1	—	—
Upper-Middle	7.00	12	13	8	6	3
Lower Middle	17.90	25	31	14	25	11
Upper-Lower	39.10	46	33	39	57	39
Lower-Lower	35.94	13	17	37	13	47

Source: Bom Mo Chung, *et al.*, as quoted in K. D. Kim, "Social Change in South Korea," *Journal of Korean Affairs*, 4, (January 1975), p.11

If, on the other hand, this implies a general increase in the even smaller proportion of farm households not engaged in crop farming, which may be counted as a significant developmental change pattern, this is not borne out by the statistics. Here again, the slow rise in that proportion has been slightly reversed since 1975 (Table 4). Thus, one has the impression that as far as the average size of land is concerned a general improvement in the stratification structure experienced since 1960's was checked around 1974. I dare not conjecture about why this has been so.

Since very little systematic study is available for land tenancy, which may also be an indication of social stratification, I have little option but to cite Prof. Man-Gap Lee who has observed in his study of several villages that the tenancy system does not have the significance of an exploitative economic relationship insofar as cultivating land is concerned. This, he explains, is mainly due to the fact that many of the landowners are either relatives or acquaintances of the tenant farmers.

Also, commenting on the significance of the traditional status distinction, he maintains that such differentiation is steadily losing its old significance, at least in those villages he studied. It seems, therefore, that the change in the social stratification within rural society is mostly a function of the change in the economic standard of living among the villagers. In this sense, the change in the average size of cultivating farm land may have to be understood in connection with the kind of economic and technical change that has been taking place in rural communities. Of course, from

TABLE 6
INCOME OF FARM HOUSEHOLD AND SALARY AND WAGE EARNER'S HOUSEHOLD

Amount: in won, Index: 1970 H 100

	Income of Farm Household (Per Household)				Salary and Wago Earners (Per Household)				A/B X 100
	Nominal Income		Real Income		Nominal Income		Real Income		
	Amount	Index	Amount(A)	Index	Amount	Index	Amount(B)	Index	
1962	67,885	27.3	206,337	80.7	96,600	25.3	293,617	77.0	70.7
1963	93,179	36.4	234,708	91.8	80,160	21.0	201,914	53.0	116.2
1964	125,692	49.1	244,537	95.6	97,300	25.5	166,610	43.7	129.3
1965	112,301	43.9	192,125	75.1	112,560	29.5	192,740	50.6	99.7
1966	130,176	50.9	199,046	77.8	161,520	42.4	246,972	64.8	80.6
1967	149,470	58.4	206,165	80.6	248,640	65.2	342,952	90.0	60.1
1968	178,959	70.0	222,033	86.8	285,960	75.0	354,789	93.1	62.6
1969	217,874	85.2	245,630	96.0	333,600	87.5	376,099	98.7	65.3
1970	255,804	100.0	255,804	100.0	381,240	100.0	381,240	100.0	67.1
1971	356,382	138.3	317,348	124.1	451,920	118.5	402,422	105.6	78.9
1972	429,394	167.9	341,874	133.6	517,440	135.7	411,975	108.1	83.0
1973	480,711	187.9	371,205	145.1	550,200	144.3	424,865	111.4	87.4
1974	674,500	163.7	421,299	164.7	644,520	169.1	402,573	105.6	104.7
1975	872,933	341.3	431,718	168.8	859,320	225.4	424,985	111.5	101.6
1976	1,156,254	452.0	499,246	195.2	1,151,800	302.1	497,306	130.4	100.4

Source: Report on the results of Farm Household Economy Survey Annual Report on the Family Income and Expenditure Survey.

Note: 1) Deflated by the index number of Seoul consumer prices; 1970 prices.

the social psychological point of view, one still has something to rely on in the overall change in the living standards among the rural populace and their subjective evaluation of their life conditions over time.

Improvement of Living Standards and Subjective Evaluation. To begin with the official statistics, they clearly indicate that the level of farm household income has substantially increased in the past decade or so. The average farm household income in real terms in 1970 prices has jumped six times between 1962 and 1974, from 206,337 *Won* to 499,246 *Won* (Table 6). And the ratio of farm household income against that of the urban worker's household has steadily been on the rise since 1967. The per-household income ratio in current prices even surpassed the 100 mark in 1974 (Table 6). Of course, the general improvement in the household expenditure and the average property holding is also noted in these statistics.

In addition, I have found a few social survey reports which contain some information about the change in the rates of various household goods possessed by rural families.¹⁵ The outstanding conclusion we can draw from the summary table presented below (Table 7), though the data are not exactly comparable by any measure, is twofold. First, the kinds of item studied and identified to be in possession by rural families have significantly changed. In the 1977 return migration study we conducted, we used the same scale for both urban and rural families and still have found all of the

TABLE 7
HOUSEHOLD ITEMS POSSESSED BY FARM FAMILIES (%)

Item	1958 Study	1966 Study	1969 Study A	1969 Study B	1977 Study
Radio	12.4	32.3	55.7	73.8	89.8
Sewing machine	—	41.5	48.3	49.6	68.4
Camera	—	2.3	—	—	9.6
Stereo	—	—	—	2.3	26.4
Electric Fan	—	—	—	—	48.2
Electric Rice Cooker	—	—	—	—	20.8
TV	—	—	—	—	50.3
Telephone	—	—	—	—	22.3
Gas range	—	—	—	—	3.6
Gas range	—	—	—	—	3.6
Washing machine	—	—	—	—	2.5
Refrigerator	—	—	—	—	3.6
Piano	—	—	—	—	1.5
Air conditioner	—	—	—	—	2.0

¹⁵ The studies from which these data were drawn are: Moon, *op. cit.*; Seung Gyu Moon, Keun Sup Yoon, and Sang Bok Han, "Six Scales and Indexes for Farm Households in Cholla Pukto Villages," *Korean Journal of Sociology* 3 (1967, in Korean); Man Gap Lee, *op. cit.*; and raw data from Kyong-Dong Kim and On-Jook Lee, "Urban-to-Rural Return Migration in Korea", a project sponsored by the Ford-Rockefeller Foundations Population and Development Policy Research Program: 1977-1978.

items being possessed by some rural families. This enabled us to compare urban and rural families on the identical scale of household items possessed, while in the past this comparison on a par was not practical because of the acute discrepancy between urban and rural living standards and life styles.

Second, limiting ourselves to the few select items used by the studies under comparison, a tremendous increase in the rate of possession can be readily observed.

These objective improvements should be reflected in the subjective perception of the rural people. In Prof. Lee's study, the proportion of those respondents who put themselves in the upper and upper middle SES (socioeconomic status) categories has increased substantially from 8.9% to 22.4% while there was a decline in those who classified themselves in the lower echelons from 23.7% to 24.2%. Also, in comparison with ten years ago or before, more persons in the second study have expressed the view that their living conditions have improved, relative to the first study. Those who expressed such an opinion comprised 40.7 per cent in 1958 and 51% in 1969.¹⁶

In our own study of return migration conducted in 1977, 89.7 per cent of the respondents in rural villages reported that the economic conditions have improved over the past five years; there was only one person who said they have worsened.¹⁷ Even if we discount the responses for various reasons, it is significant to find such a large majority indicating economic improvement in the recent past.

Change in Some Aspects of Micro-Level Social Organizations. There are myriads of micro-level social organizations even within the confine of rural communities. However, we suffer from a serious lack of data in this area. On the basis of the available materials, I will now concentrate on the structural change in the family and kinship aspects of social organization.

Once again relying on demographic analyses, let me start off with the change in the household composition. During the decade of 1960-70 according to demographic analyses, the proportions of one and two generation households show marked increases both in urban and rural areas. Those of three generation households, on the other hand, declined substantially. The dominant type of two generation household, of course, was the typical nuclear family comprised of the married couple and their children. Between 1966 and 1970, the proportion of nuclear families has increased, with the decline of the stem family consisting of two or more family nuclei in a direct lineage relation, both in urban and rural areas. For the rural area alone, the ratio of nuclear families was 63.72 per cent in 1966 but it rose to 67.54 per cent in 1970, (Table 8).¹⁸ This is already partly reflected

¹⁶ Man-Gap Lee, *op. cit.*, p. 271

¹⁷ Unreported data, Kyong-Dong Kim and On-Jook Lee, cited in note 15.

¹⁸ T. H. Kwon, *et al.*, *op. cit.* (1975), p. 58; and UN-ESCAP, *op. cit.*, p. 122.

TABLE 8
HOUSEHOLD BY FAMILY TYPE FOR THE WHOLE COUNTRY, URBAN AND RURAL AREAS,
1966 AND 1970.

	1966			1970		
	Whole Country	Urban	Rural	Whole Country	Urban	Rural
(1) Nuclear Family	66.80	72.41	63.72	71.53	76.90	67.54
(2) Stem Family	21.25	14.19	25.12	18.78	12.94	23.12
(3) Others	11.95	13.40	11.16	9.69	10.16	9.34

Source: Kwon *et al.*, 1975, *op. cit.*, p. 58.

in the declining average size of farm household discussed earlier.

Another interesting, though indirect, indication of change in the family structure is the sharp decline in the proportion of married persons in the rural area. In connection with sex and age, the proportion of married persons shows some differential trends. But the significant point is that the proportion of married males does not surpass 60% even in the age category of 25-29 years old as of 1970, while the same proportion was 67.8% in 1966, and even higher at 74.8% in 1955. Even though most girls marry by age 29, the proportion of married females in the 20-24 age group has also declined over the years, from 80.2% in 1955 through 57.9% in 1966 to 38.7% in 1970.¹⁹ This implies that the marriage age has increased over the period for both women and men. But it also means that the fertility rate would have been affected by this change, thus eventually causing smaller families.

Another set of survey data drawn from separate studies shows that the family decision making pattern is becoming more egalitarian even in rural families. Between 1959 and 1971, the average score for this pattern has shifted from a father-dominant to a mother-dominant one with respect to family affairs, and from a co-determinant, egalitarian norm to one of mother-dominance on matters of children. The scores given in the table below indicate this trend clearly, where the larger score stands for mother-dominance.

TABLE 9
DECISION-MAKING AUTHORITY PATTERN IN THE RURAL FAMILY.

Domains of Decision	Year of Study	
	1959	1971
Family Affairs	1.91	2.45
Child Affairs	2.49	2.81

Sources: On-Jook Lee, "A Typological Approach to the Husband Wife Relationship in the Korean Family: Aspects of Modernization," *Korean Journal of Sociology* 11 (1977, in Korean), p.103 for the 1971 data and Whang Kyung Koh *et al.* *A Study of the Korean Rural Family* (Seoul National University Press, 1963, in Korean with English Summary), pp. 46-47, for the 1959 data.

¹⁹ UN-ESCAP, *op. cit.*, p. 55

As for the kinship structure and functions, we have only the partial observations reported by Prof. Lee in his study which did not even compare the two studies. But he has indicated that participation in *Chonghoe* or clan association has been observed among both villagers of the *Yangban* (the gentry) background and the *Sangmin* (the commoner) descent. The major functions of *Chonghoe* still played almost identical functions observed in the first study 11 years ago, in terms of the maintenance of ancestral tombs and clan-owned land, editing the genealogical book, keeping the shrine, and the provision of financial support for the education of the clan members' children.²⁰ Thus despite the change in the structure of individual family units, the kinship ties seem to be still strongly maintained on the village level.

Some Selective Attitudinal Change. Now, I shall present some scanty data on possible changes in people's attitudes in rural Korea. It should be pointed out at the outset that these data compared are not drawn from the identical or panel studies of the same villages or persons. They are shown here simply to infer some plausible changes experienced by rural Koreans over the past decade or so.

To begin with some of the traditional values usually conceived as Confucian-oriented, I have evidence indicating that the Confucian values are gradually losing their grip over rural Koreans. Not only are the average attitude scores measuring general Confucian outlook declining, but also the proportion of rural people expressing the view that certain traditional attitudes and practices should be discarded have increased over time, with respect to 1) ancestor worship, 2) male supremacy, 3) taboo on remarriage of widows, 4) mate selection of children, and 5) practices of sorcery, fortune telling, or shamanistic rituals (Table 10).²¹

Some comparable findings also appear as to the modern attitude regarding individualism, mobility, risk-taking or achievement orientation, and the like. Many rural people no longer believe that an individual should sacrifice the chance for success for his family obligations; a more mobile person is preferred to one who considers family and kinship ties; many have come to believe that success can be attained by ability and determination rather than connections, nepotism, and the like; and, though still small in number, more rural people have come to realize the importance of risk-taking by investing the retirement fund rather than hoarding it; and a much larger proportion of rural people today would like to send their children, both sons and daughters, on to higher education. (See Table 10).²²

No doubt, these should not be taken at face value because the data

²⁰ Man-Gap Lee, *op. cit.*, pp. 242-244.

²¹ The studies from which these findings are cited include: Koh, *et al.*, *op. cit.*, p. 190, for the 1959 data; Sung Chick Hong, *A Study of Korean Values* (Seoul: Korea University, Asiatic Research Center, 1969, in Korean,) p. 88, for the 1964 data; and an opinion survey conducted by the author in 1978.

TABLE 10
SOME CHANGING VALUES IN RURAL KOREA (%)

Value-Attitude	1959 Study	1964 Study A	1964 Study B	1977 Study	1978 Study
Confucian values (scale score)*	—	—	(4.17)*	(3.79)*	—
Discard ancestor worship rituals	1.6	2.0	—	—	16.3
Discard sorcery, fortune telling, etc.	—	71.9	—	—	76.5
Leave mate selection up to children (son)	5.8	—	—	57.9	—
(daughter)	3.1	—	—	57.9	—
Allow widows to remarry	14.2	—	—	47.5	—
Discard male supremacy	—	12.2	—	—	72.9
Emphasis on family obligations to sacrifice of individual success	—	92.6	—	29.3	—
Emphasis on personal mobility	—	15.6	—	52.0	—
Success by ability & determination	—	50.0	—	84.9	—
Risk taking by investment rather than hoarding	—	9.7	—	29.1	—
Educational aspiration for son thru college and beyond	88.5	—	—	91.4	—
Educational aspiration for daughter thru college and beyond	41.1	—	—	70.9	—

*Mean Scores adjusted for comparison over time.

Sources: See notes 21, 22.

were collected from different sets of people at different time points. They are simply provided to illustrate some interesting changes in the attitudinal orientations we were led to believe rural Koreans used to hold.

IV. FACTORS AFFECTING SOCIAL CHANGE IN RURAL KOREA

Crude as they may have been, we have browsed through some aspects of social and psychological change in rural Korea. What, then, are some of the major factors that have either directly affected or contributed to such transformations? It goes without saying that these factors are interrelated which cannot be fully investigated in this paper.

As we have observed earlier, there have been some significant changes in the composition of rural population, mainly through migration. The first thing that would come to mind in trying to explain these changes is the industrialization of the society as a whole. It is true that urbanization, drawing upon rural exodus, had already been underway even before any measure of industrialization had been initiated in the early sixties. This has often led many observers of urban growth to conclude that Korean urbanization was probably suffering from what has been known as "over-urbanization." Urbanization not accompanied by industrialization was to be understood as caused primarily by the rural push, i.e., the severe poverty in the rural sector, and this created rapid urban concentrations without the social and economic capacities to absorb such an inflow of rural migrants. Part of this process of overurbanization was the extremely rapid growth of the primate city, Seoul.²³

Close analyses of the urbanization pattern in Korea, however, have demonstrated that this was not the case with Korea's experience of urbanization, particularly since the sixties. It is true that the rate of urban growth has been very high and the major stream of migration has tended to favor large cities. Nevertheless, the rapid industrialization and economic growth achieved by this country since the sixties have enabled the growing cities to sufficiently increase their capacity to absorb the rural migrants and normalize the city-size distribution patterns over the years. In short, the overurbanization thesis has not been found to apply to the Korean case.²⁴

The initial impact of rapid industrialization and economic growth favoring the urban sector, however, has had a rather negative effect on the

²² These studies include: Hong, *op. cit.*; Koh, *et al.*, *op. cit.*; and Kyong-Dong Kim and On-Jook Lee, return migration study.

²³ K. Davis and H. Godlen "Urbanization and the Development of Pre-Industrial Areas," *Economic Development and Cultural Change* 3 (1955), pp. 6-26; and N. V. Sovani, "The Analysis of Over-Urbanization," *Economic Development and Cultural Change* 12 (1964), pp. 113-122.

²⁴ Kyong-Dong Kim *Urbanization and Economic Development: With Special Reference to the Korean Development*, Population and Development Studies Center, Publication Series

rural sector. The policy for rapid economic growth concentrated on the manufacturing sector, which in turn was supported by the rapid rise of exports, and with limited resources available, it was necessary to neglect the rural sector. So it was some while before the spill-over effect of industrialization began to be apparent in the lagging rural sector. It had to wait even longer before the economy as a whole had improved its capacity so that the rural sector was given sufficient independent attention by the planners. This is when the *Saemaul Undong* (the New Community Movement) got under way.²⁵

I am not arguing that this should have been the way we ought to have followed: I am simply depicting the path we have trodden thus far. No matter what kind of laments are unleashed over this pattern of uneven development, and no matter how late such a nationwide rural development program as the *Saemaul Undong* was undertaken, its impact is being deeply and widely felt in rural Korea today.

Efforts to promote rural development by the government or by civil and religious agencies have been made constantly since independence.²⁶ None of them, however, has been as influential as the *Saemaul Undong* in bringing about so much rural change in Korea. Several reasons may be identified for this.²⁷ First, none of the previous programs or movements for rural development was as comprehensive as the *Saemaul* movement. Each of them was aimed at some minor aspect of rural change, such as technical assistance, the improvement of the rural environment, health, and educational conditions, reform of social organization, and the like. Second, none of them achieved a national basis; some (e.g., Community Development) attempted to spread the program step by step but never reached the whole country.

Third, most importantly, the nation as a whole and the rural society in particular were not prepared for such changes when these previous programs were implemented. In fact, one could argue that these preceding movements and programs laid the ground for the success of the *Saemaul Undong*. In short, timing was important. I will come back to this point later.

To look into the role of the human element and social organization

No. 6; and H. Jo, "Examination of the Overurbanization Thesis in Korea," M. A. Thesis, Department of Sociology, Seoul National University (1977, in Korean).

²⁵ Kyong-Dong Kim, "Social Change in South Korea," *Journal of Korean Affairs* 4 (January 1975), pp. 31-5.

²⁶ V. S. R. Brandt and Man-Gap Lee, *The Community Development Program in Korea*, C. D. Expert Meeting Paper on Korea, Korean National Commission for UNESCO, December 1977, pp. 16-19.

²⁷ Kyong-Dong Kim and On-Jook Lee, "Korea's *Saemaul Undong*: Social Structure and the Role of Government in Integrated Rural Development," *Bulletin of the Population and Development Studies Center* 6 (October 1977), pp. 1-16.

in making the *Saemaul Undong* as effective as it has been, we cannot help but stress the significance of political selectivity and the social structural background. It was a decision made by the political leadership which saw the need for a nationwide movement and which initiated the movement. It was the politico-bureaucratic organization which prepared and planned and implemented the program. It was these human elements that found the local leadership, who would carry out the program and it was this local leadership, indigenously developed, that made the movement a reality.²⁸

On the side of structural conditions, the apparently authoritarian social structure prevalent in Korean society, including the centralized administrative organization and the collectivistic community organization on the rural village level, was conducive to the mobilization of the necessary manpower and resources for the initial take-off. One could argue, therefore, that the kind of seemingly negative conditions in the rural society were actually favorably utilized for an effective rural development program.²⁹

Nonetheless, one should not overlook the latent changes that had been underway, which prepared for the coming of the *Saemaul Undong*. In addition to the various rural development efforts mentioned above, there had been significant changes taking place in the country at large and in the rural society. Some changes had already been a going concern even before or without regard to industrialization.

To mention only a few major factors, an emphasis on learning and education has been a deeply rooted value-orientation of Korean society since the pre-modern era. Education has never lost its significance as a major channel for social mobility in this society. No one doubts that the opportunity for education was restricted by social status and class position during the Yi dynasty and the colonial period. But this barrier was removed after independence. Since industrialization has started, the importance of education for social mobility has been increasingly recognized.

Traditionally, the Korean people are known to be very strongly achievement oriented, contrary to the popular view of the traditional peasantry. This strong achievement motivation used to be simply channeled into different kinds of accomplishments, depending on the dominant value orientations and social structure of the era. Now, these motives are being channeled into economic success, chiefly due to industrialization and economic growth experienced in the recent past. Even though sociological surveys usually find significant urban-rural differences in this and other psychological and attitudinal dispositions, in this respect, rural people are no exception. Note, for instance, the high aspirations for children's education, noted above. Other studies have found that Korean families, both rural

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ *Ibid.*

and urban, place achievement at the top of their child-rearing value hierarchy.³⁰

Instigating this orientation and other urbanized and modern attitudes and ways of life, has been the mass media. The beginning of extensive rural exposure to mass media may be the time when the new military regime initiated the rural amplifier system in the early sixties. Although it was a rather fixed and onesided system of mass communication, it was through this program that rural people first came into contact with the mass media on a national scale.³¹ As has been observed earlier in this paper, this was gradually replaced by the individual ownership of radios. Today, it is not too hard to find TV antennas sticking out on top of rural homes almost everywhere one travels.

The basically important role of the mass media for rural people must be found in its educational function, with respect to technical aspects of agriculture, improvement of environment and health, family planning, inculcation of modernism-oriented attitudes, and the like. But it has now come to be a major source of entertainment, as well.³²

Related to these factors is the role of various agents of change, governmental, civil, and religious in nature, who have also played a very significant part in preparing the rural populace for new developments. Among these may be cited the Office of Rural Development responsible for technical assistance, the Agricultural Cooperative providing various educational programs in addition to its financial role (which is often the target of criticism), and other large and small voluntary organizations.

Many authors discussing rural change in Korea also list the military experience of young men as one of the important factors conducive to change. The military conscription system inevitably takes all the able young men away from the rural villages and exposes them to the urban atmosphere for a period of three years. Beginning in the sixties, the military conducted special short-term courses on agriculture and related subjects for the discharged servicemen. In fact, military experience has been considered as a form of rural out-migration. Many young men with such a background would be tempted to leave for the city in search of a better life.³³

More recently, however, as has been reported earlier in this paper, urban-rural return migration has been observed. Even though our own study of rural returnees has not been able to provide any significant data

³⁰ See, for example, On-Jook Lee, "Parental Decision-Making Patterns in the Korean Family," M. A. Thesis, Department of Human Development and Family Studies, Cornell University, 1976.

³¹ Kap-Hwan Oh, *Mass Communication and Rural Development in Korea*, *Bulletin of the Institute of Mass Communication*, Seoul National University, 5 (1968, in Korean), pp. 1-10.

³² Man-Gap Lee, *op. cit.*, pp. 318-326.

³³ *Ibid.*

to indicate the positive role of returnees in the community development activities, we contend that they are potentially useful human elements for future development, if they are given the opportunity to act. At least in terms of attitudinal orientations, they stand somewhere in-between the city dwellers and rural natives. They also are better off than rural non-migrants with respect to their level of educational attainment and occupational skills. But they are less committed to agriculture for their life-time career. Thus, some form of rural industrialization based on the needs of each community may be needed not only to absorb and utilize this set of human resources, but to encourage rural youth to stay in the rural home and perhaps to induce the out-migrants to return to their rural origin.³⁴

Combined together, these factors must have slowly built up the social psychological basis for the timely rural development program. As a matter of fact, one of the crucial factors affecting the *Saemaul Undong* has been local leadership, and this leadership was not initially created by the movement itself. Rather, the movement has located and utilized the already extant indigenous leadership on the local level. One is left with the impression that this kind of leadership did not spring up suddenly, but has been slowly inculcated over time under the influence of those factors that have been listed and examined above.

V. ISSUES AND PROSPECTS

As has been stated repeatedly, the present account of sociocultural change in rural Korea is seriously defective due to the dearth of data. Of necessity, the observations have been crude, and the explanations offered rather impressionistic. It would, therefore, be dangerous to speak of the implications of these changes mentioned above. Yet, I will embark on some subjective interpretations of these "facts" in terms of a few central issues with which Korea may have to face squarely in order to promote desirable changes in the rural society in the future. In doing this, I will again focus on the human element and social organization.

The central issue that needs be considered is whether or not the current form of rural change and development can be understood and recognized as a form of "integrated rural development." By integrated development, I mean the following:

- 1) It is a comprehensive change; which will encourage change in all of the social, economic, cultural, and political spheres of social institutions and involve all segments of the community system.

³⁴ Kyong-Dong Kim and On-Jook Lee, "Adaptation in the City and Return Home: A Dynamic Approach to Urban-to Rural Return Migration in Korea," paper presented at the Symposium on Internal Migration and Development organized by the Commission on Population and Development of the Latin American Council of Social Sciences, Cuernavaca, Mor., Mexico, September 18-21, 1978.

2) It is a balanced change; it must encourage change in all of the strata, sectors, and regions of the society, at an even or similar pace within the community as well as among the communities of the larger society.

3) It is to be a change with meaningful linkages among these diverse strata, sectors, and regions.

4) All of the above require a coordinated and concerted effort at development.

5) It calls for active voluntary participation by the members of the community and the larger society.³⁵

The *Saemaul Undong*, at least in its ideal goals, has ingredients of an integrated development pattern. In reality, however, we have reasons to believe that there is much room for improvement. We have seen some uneven emphases placed on different aspects of change, namely environmental improvement, the creation of an economically productive basis, raising the income level, technical innovation, social organizational or cultural change. It is necessary for any system under change to make reasonable adjustments in terms of the order of change to be pursued depending on various external and internal conditions. Yet, in this process of adaptation, one has to watch out for slippage in any one sphere of the system. Otherwise, the uneven change could be the source of entropy.

What seems to be needed is the balanced development of rural and urban, agricultural and industrial sectors, under a broad national development program, taking account of the linkages between them. This requires both an overall master plan, and coordination of various segments of the society as well as the government agencies. One of the serious problems usually encountered in government-involved programs is the difficulty of coordination. And this is partly reflected in the lack of a broader perspective in the rural development programs. While the *Saemaul Undong* rightly may be basically a community movement, its long-term success requires the broadening of its outlook to the regions and the whole nation in terms of the overall development picture.³⁶

Another problem of balanced development beginning to show signs of tension is the consequence of the differential emphasis placed on the physical and material spheres of life, neglecting the psychological and subjective quality of life. Of course, one of the main pillars of the *Saemaul Undong* is the inculcation of the new spirit and the reforming man. However, the sort of change that has been encouraged, consciously or not, is going in the direction of further economic prosperity. As long as this goal is stressed, the

³⁵ Kyong-Dong Kim, "Toward a Theory of Integrated Rural Development: A Humanistic Perspective," *Social Science Review*, Seoul National University, 2 (December 1977), pp. 101-117; also see K. D. Kim and On-Jook Lee, "Korea's *Saemaul Undong*," *op. cit.*

³⁶ Kim and Lee, "Korea's *Saemaul Undong*, *op. cit.*

consumer orientation and economic achievement motivation encouraged through the *Saemaul Undong* is going to keep promoting individuation of the people and hence individualism-by-default. This is exactly why the new *Saemaum Undong* element has been added. But the effectiveness of such a program has yet to be seen. And the trend of atomization and individuation prevailing in the whole society is going to create tension with the apparent collectivistic orientation implied in the *Saemaul* and *Saemaum* movements.³⁷

From the social structural point of view, another possible tension is being anticipated. This is related to the issue just discussed above. On the local level, the traditional kinship and class structure has been noted as posing a major obstacle for active rural development. They tend to cause cleavages within the rural village community in the process of decision-making. And they also go against the general trend toward individuation among the villagers. Besides, the widening generational gap is found to be inimical for collective action.³⁸

Another more fundamental tension lies between the widespread democratic practices encouraged at the grass-roots level and the authoritarian rule on the central government level. One of the professed goals of the *Saemaul Undong* is the promotion of democracy in the rural society. In fact, this goal has been attained in many respects at the grassroots level. The moot question is whether or not this tendency of grass-roots democracy would spread out to all levels of the society at large, and whether or not it is going to come into conflict with the national political structure. What is most desired, no doubt, is the further inculcation of the grass-roots democracy and its dissemination all over the country, both horizontally and vertically.³⁹

In discussing these issues, I have concentrated on the *Saemaul Undong*, because it has become the backbone of rural change and development in this country. It has made great strides in the area of rural economic improvement together with the creation of a physical, economic, social, and cultural, environment conducive to economic betterment. The task for the future seems to lie basically in pursuing the path of truly integrated rural development in the context of the broad social, cultural, and economic changes in the society as a whole.

Perhaps, all of these issues may be better understood and better resolved if we recognized the narrowing gap between the urban and rural sectors of the society, primarily due to rapid economic growth and industrialization, together with other socio-cultural transformations oriented to a future image of the post-industrial bureaucratic society characterized by mass production, mass consumption, and mass communication. Rural com-

³⁷ Brandt and Lee, *op. cit.*; and Kim and Lee, "Korea's *Saemaul Undong*", *op. cit.*

³⁸ Brandt and Lee, *op. cit.*

³⁹ Kim and Lee, "Korea's *Saemaul Undong*", *op. cit.*

munities and people may no longer tolerate the severe social, economic and cultural disparities they have experienced so long in comparison with urban areas. Therefore, the future emphasis in rural development programs should be doubly conscious of the need for integrated, balanced, and linked development involving rural people in relation to their urban counterparts. They are going to cry for a better life—a better life for them has been mainly economic betterment thus far—in many spheres of life, comparable to their urban “neighbors.” What I am envisioning may seem too far off in the time horizon. But the future may surprise us considering the explosive changes we are experiencing today.