

CHARACTERISTICS OF POPULATION MIGRATING BETWEEN RURAL AND URBAN COMMUNITIES

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The purpose of this paper is to compare the composition of population migrating from cities to the country with that of population moving from the open country to cities. The assumption that through the process of migration rural communities lose to cities disproportionately large numbers from the superior classes and gain from urban centers misfits and superannuated castoffs is tested further.

The study is based upon data taken from a survey of all population living in the open country of five selected townships in the major type-of-farming areas of Oklahoma from 1930 through 1940. Among 8032 persons enumerated, 87.9 per cent had changed dwelling place at least once during the eleven-year period. The exchange of population between open country and urban areas amounted to only a small proportion of the total number crossing township lines. There were 945 country-to-city migrants and 273 city-to-country movers included in this study.

Children under fifteen and their parents in the age groups from 25 to 44 years predominated in the movement from cities to open country. Country-ward movers were relatively scarce in the ages from 15 to 24 years and 45 years and over. In contrast, nearly one-half of the urban-ward migrants were between 15 and 35 years old. Relatively few children under 15 years of age appeared among country-city migrants.

With reference to sex selection, there were 108.4 males for each 100 females leaving cities for the open country as compared with a male-to-female sex ratio of 98.0 among cityward migrants.

White persons appeared to be considerably more migratory than either Indians or Negroes.

The open country exerts a strong expulsive influence upon single persons, but it welcomes families. Nearly three times as many heads of households and nonfamily persons among country-city as among city-country movers were single at time of migration. Divorce prevailed to a greater degree among both classes of migrants than among nonmigrants. Relatively fewer widowed persons moved landward than urbanward. Families migrating into the country were not larger than those moving to cities.

The cities selected from the open country disproportionately large numbers of persons under 35 years old with more than eighth-grade schooling. If age groupings are disregarded, household heads and lone migrants leaving the open country had no more formal education than those coming into the country from cities.

Heads of households and unattached adults transferring from the open country to cities were more likely to have no property and no occupational experience (other than work on the home farm) than those moving in the opposite direction. City-to-country migrant households did not score lower on Sewell's socioeconomic status index than resident households, and if the information had been available on country-to-city migrant units, it is believed that the scores would not have differed significantly. At time of migration, only 15.6 per cent of the heads of households and unattached adults going into cities owned farms, but in 1940, 23.3 per cent entering the open country lived on their own land. Probably a larger proportion

of household heads and single individuals moving into the country descended from farm-owning families than was the case among those emigrating to cities.

The exodus of tenants and croppers from farming areas was the most striking change in tenure status observed during the depression thirties in the townships surveyed. In the countryward movement, laborers, especially those in the unskilled class, predominated.

Based upon the findings of this study, it can be concluded that city-country migrants were not inferior to country-city migrants with respect to socioeconomic status.

